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DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS IN ESP CLASSES IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Annotation. Mastering speaking skills are necessary for high school students in order to face the globalization era in this modern world. However, the speaking competences improved by the high school students are still needed to be increased. That is why this research tried to answer some questions: the lack of ESP speaking innovative approaches for students of high schools; what kinds of ESP speaking digital technologies high school students needed; and how effective was the implementation of digital tools in ESP classes. Teachers of English had been asked about using digital tools in ESP lessons and the eleventh grades had been chosen that had 53 students in it. In conducting the study, students were observed and interviewed about using ICT tools in ESP classes to level up their speaking skills and educators were interviewed about the effectiveness of using digital tools in ESP classes to develop students' speaking abilities. The interviews were conducted; questionnaires were given to the students to identify their needs and interests to develop speaking skills in classes. It was found out that the researching was considered effective based on the interview results and very good based on the questionnaire analysis.

Key Words: High school students; digital technologies; integration; innovative approach; speaking competences.

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) concentrate on equipping students with English skills mandatory for professional success in fields such as engineering, business, medicine and IT. Among these skills, speaking remains a critical part, as it enables people to involve in real-time interactions, negotiations, and presentations.

 Digital technologies in ESP classes provide the learning process by means of electronic devices and resources. The main tendency in the development of electronic technologies in learning English language for Specific purposes is the integration of a garget, a mobile phone and the Internet into a single information and communication environment. The implementation of digital technologies into ESP education is proving to be a key of innovation in language learning.

The Kazakhstani education system highlights multilingualism (Kazakh, Russian, and English). ESP in schools aligns with national goals to prepare students for global and local professional environments. Students are increasingly exposed to STEM, business, and tourism sectors, where English proficiency—especially speaking skills—is essential.

In the rapidly developing digital world, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become a vital skill for high school students in Kazakhstan, especially those preparing for careers in fields where English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is significant. As digital tools and technologies permeate all aspects of education, the teaching of ESP must adapt to these changes to remain effective and relevant. This paper focuses on the development of

speaking skills in ESP classes, a key component for success in academic and professional environments.

The digital era offers a wide range of resources and platforms to enhance high school students speaking skills in the learning process. Technologies such as virtual classrooms, interactive language apps, speech recognition software, and AI-driven tools like ChatGPT, DeepSeek can create immersive and engaging environments for practicing speaking skills. These tools provide high school students with access to real-time feedback, authentic materials and opportunities to interact with peers and experts globally.

This paper explores strategies for leveraging digital technologies to develop speaking skills in ESP lessons for high school students in Kazakhstan. It highlights best practices, examines case studies, and offers practical recommendations for teachers to create dynamic and interactive learning experiences. By addressing these aspects, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on digitalization and language education, ensuring that high school learners are supplied with the abilities they crave for thriving in their chosen fields.

Literature review

Integration of Digital Tools in ESP: Digital platforms such as YouTube, Google Classroom, and interactive tools like Padlet and Quizlet are increasingly used to enhance ESP instruction. These tools help simulate real-world scenarios, improve speech perception, and foster active participation in language learning. Researcher Beibitova M. highlighted those modern digital tools are able to support any approaches and methods of teaching English language. Hence, digitalization can be effectively employed to both innovate new methods and enhance existing ones [1] . Research highlights the importance of platforms like KazTube and AiTube, which are locally popular video services, in enhancing language skills. A study by Toleuzhan et al. (2021) mentions how digital technologies cater to both traditional and distance learning formats, supporting personalized and immersive experiences [2] .

Bokayev stated that the most commonly used ICT devices in the educational process include computers, tablets, interactive multimedia tools, electronic textbooks, multimedia resources, video and audio equipment, and online learning platforms to facilitate the working conditions in organizing and managing the teaching and learning process [3] .

Researcher Yeshengazina conducted CLIL experiment among senior classes in Kazakhstani secondary (intellectual) schools; in 2016 revealed that over half of the surveyed teachers involved in the pilot project admitted that they did not achieve the expected academic and content-oriented objectives. The main reason for that were the loss of content and a relatively low English language proficiency level among senior schoolchildren [4] .

A prominent figure in ESP in Kazakhstan, Kunanbayeva has worked on integrating communicative competence into English language education. Her research emphasizes the need for balancing communicative and academic skills while addressing the challenges of ESP in local contexts, such as limited vocabulary and subject-specific discourse proficiency [5] .

Smagulova highlights the importance of achieving a balance between utilizing internet-based tools and traditional teaching methods for foreign language instruction. This approach ensures students have access to engaging and motivating environments while fostering key competencies such as language skills, communication abilities, and innovative thinking [6]

Researchers emphasize that speaking is often considered the most difficult skill to develop in foreign language learning. This holds true for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction as well, which focuses on equipping students with the language skills needed for various professional and workplace contexts to achieve specific objective [7] .

Researchers like Dogoriti and Pange have highlighted how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) supports foreign language teachers in creating engaging environments [8] . Constantinou (2018, 2019) also emphasizes the role of cloud-based tools like Google Suite for flexible and interactive ESP learning [9] .

Many studies note issues such as limited exposure to authentic English communication contexts and insufficient teacher training in leveraging digital tools. For example, Dashtestani and Stojkovic (2015) point out that despite the availability of digital resources, their effective integration remains challenging without adequate teacher education programs [10] .

Studies suggest adopting constructivist approaches, where digital tools create interactive, real-world learning contexts. Authors like Blin (2012) and Bonner and Reinders (2018) discuss leveraging technologies like augmented reality and interactive platforms to enhance learner autonomy and engagement, critical for developing speaking proficiency in ESP settings[11] .

The integration of ESP enhances opportunities for ESP learners by promoting self-directed learning, collaboration, and interaction in real-world communicative contexts. This approach equips students with the necessary skills to meet workforce demands and enables to compete globally by training proficient and innovative leaders and workers [12] .

Fadlia proposed that digital learning materials can enhance students' motivation to learn English. Students found digital content more engaging when it was focused on topics relevant to their competencies. Additionally, teachers acknowledged that digital learning materials were highly beneficial, as they no longer had to spend time creating their own teaching resources. A model for developing digital-based teaching materials proves effective in assisting teachers in preparing content tailored to ESP needs for their future lessons [13] .

Methodology

This study aims to explore the role of digital technologies in enhancing speaking skills of ESP students of high school, focusing on the integration of digital tools into speaking activity classes.

The following research questions guide the investigation:

How are digital technologies currently being integrated into ESP programs to enhance speaking skills of high school pupils?

What are the most impactful digital tools and strategies for fostering interactive and practical speaking proficiency in ESP learners?

What challenges do high school students face when integrating digital technologies to support ESP courses?

The study was conducted at 42 "Ak niet" gymnasium of the eleventh-grade students and 20 English teachers were asked about using ICT tools in ESP classes to develop students speaking skills. There were 53 students in three eleven grades. The students were the combination between males and females and their English level were diverse. 11 A and B grade students are Natural-mathematical direction, and one grade social-humanitarian direction. The first 11 grade students need more speaking activities in Physics, Chemistry, Math, Biology, while the last eleventh grade require speaking activities regarding art, history, and humans right.

 To answer the questions, some instruments were used; such as observation, interview, questionnaire. Observation was used to get information or data about the situation in the teaching-learning process.   Interview was used to gather some prior information about the students' needs in creating the innovative materials for speaking. Then, questionnaires were used to gather information about effective dimensions of preference and personal comments of the students and teachers about the digital tools given. The questionnaire, which covered speaking which was useful to find out the students' achievement result in the form of scores. By conducting the survey, the effectiveness of the using digital tools to enhance speaking skills was calculated.

Results and Discussions

In the research and development, some steps were followed. First, teachers were given a questionnaire to answer to what extent they are considering to use ICT tools to enhance students

speaking competence in ESP classes. Most of the teachers are frequently using digital tools for speaking activities such as Platforms, educational applications, YouTube channels etc. There were some speaking materials for high school students that are used by their teachers. Teachers' answers were different but most of them tent to use digital tools and integrating them is fundamentally important in ESP classes to enhance speaking competencies, because there is a various student with diverse interests and needs.

Further, an eleven-grade-students had been interviewed; the result showed that the students needed more materials to improve their speaking skills especially which are related to their interests and needs, and their future professions. They wanted materials, which were attractive enough. By using the data from the interview, the interactive materials could be created and developed.

ESP speaking materials would be very helpful during the teaching and learning process, moreover facing the real working experiences later on. Based on those analyses some interactive ESP speaking activities would be used for high school students that could help them improve their confidence and speaking competence. An observation was conducted to measure the initial speaking competencies of ESP class students.

Then, the students were suggested to use digital tools like Nerapod, Magic school, Genmo, Blooket, Flipgrid, Pear Deck,Talkpal, Preply, AL Speakers, ChatGPT, Youtube channels both at school and at home during the research period of two weeks. Then they were observed after the period. The result showed that there was significant increase of the students' speaking skills before and after they use some digital tools.

Implementing digital tools in ESP classes stimulate and motivate their students' interest, enhance their motivation, engagement, and performance. The questionnaire was distributed to foreign language teachers to investigate the types of technology they use.

Furthermore, some interviews were carried out with teachers who actively integrated technology into their foreign language classrooms. The aim was to explore the role of digital technologies in the development and enhancement of ESP students speaking skills, how digital tools can support learners' necessity in specialized professional contexts. Some teachers were interviewed about effectiveness

of digital technologies including multimedia resources (videos, simulations, and podcasts), online learning platforms, language learning apps, and virtual classrooms.

Interviewees said that these tools offer learners access to authentic materials, industry-specific vocabulary, and interactive content, all of which are essential in ESP for tailoring lessons to specific professional or academic contexts. However, some of them prefer blended learning approaches that combine face-to-face and digital instruction that are becoming common; they can significantly increase learner engagement and motivation in ESP courses by offering interactive and personalized learning experiences.

Teachers and students from various were chosen for taking part and engaging into the study. Questionnaires were given out to foreign language teachers to collect data on their experience with technological tools in teaching, and short interviews were carried out with selected teachers to grasp deeper insights, feedback about their use of technology. The study also surveyed students to understand their perceptions of how these tools helped them engage in ESP classes.

Conducting an interview

For the qualitative part of the study, ten teachers who incorporated technology into their classrooms were interviewed in-depth. The short interview format provided flexibility, enabling a deeper exploration of how these teachers' implemented technology and their perspectives on its impact. The goal of these interviews was to collect detailed insights into the benefits and challenges of using technology to develop discursive competence.

Data analysis

Data from the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed using a phenomenological approach, enabling the researchers to uncover shared themes and patterns in the experiences of both teachers and students. The qualitative data from the interviews were coded, leading to the identification of various topics, such as the advantages of using technology focusing on ESP aims and the difficulties related to its implementation. The findings were summarized to offer a clear overview of how technology influences the development of ESP among foreign language learners.
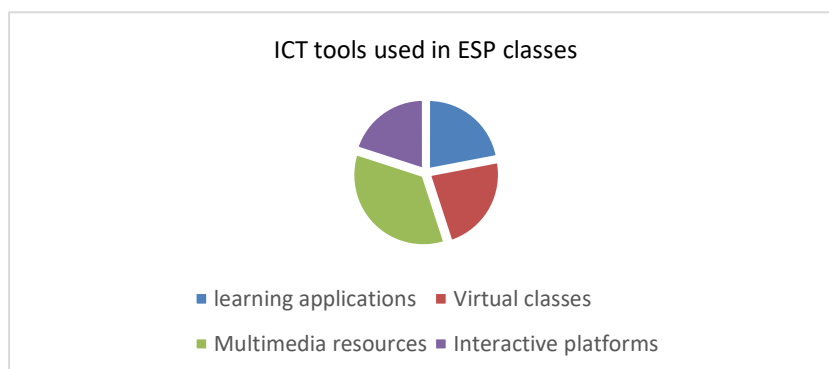
The students' responses have been summarized as follows:

Table 1. The most common response, chosen by 38% of students, highlights the enjoyment and interactivity ICT tools bring to ESP classes.

How do you feel about using ICT tools to improve your speaking skills in ESP classes?	ICT tools are very helpful because they allow me to practice speaking at my own pace. I use apps like Talkpal to record my speech and compare it to native speakers, which has improved my pronunciation	Sometimes I feel overwhelmed because there are so many features, and I don't always know how to use them effectively.	I like using ICT tools because they make the lessons more fun and interactive. Watching videos and practicing with AI feels more realistic than just reading from a textbook
Students 53 respondents	34%	28 %	38%

Students appreciate the engaging and realistic nature of using videos and AI-based tools, which go beyond traditional textbook methods. About 34% of students value ICT tools for the autonomy they offer. These students emphasize the ability to practice speaking at their own pace, citing tools like Quizziz, Talkpal, Grammarly, Genially, Interacty, Kahoot, Youglish as particularly beneficial for improving pronunciation by comparing their speech to native speakers. A smaller group, 28%, expressed feeling overwhelmed by the many features of ICT tools. This indicates that while ICT tools are generally seen as positive, there is a learning curve or usability issue that might hinder some students from fully benefiting from these resources.

Picture 2. Learning Applications are likely popular among teachers due to their accessibility and versatility 22%: Talkpal or Duolingo.

ICT tools used in ESP classes
- learning applications
- Virtual classes
- Multimedia resources
- Interactive platforms

Virtual classrooms 23%, such as Zoom and Google Meet, play a significant role, especially in remote learning or hybrid teaching models. Multimedia resources 35% like

YouTube videos or podcasts, which offer authentic language materials. Though smaller in proportion compared to other categories, interactive platforms 20% like Padlet or Kahoot, Quizlet, Quizizz, contribute to collaborative and gamified learning, promoting active participation and motivation.

Research results

The survey results identified two groups of teachers: those who consistently use technology to promote ESP education while some teachers do not. However, most of them actively incorporated technology, such as interactive platforms and multimedia resources, into their teaching. These teachers had been using technological tools for ages, leveraging them to create online.

Conclusion

The integration of digital technologies into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction has emerged as a transformative approach for developing learning skills for high school students in Kazakhstan. The findings of this study underscore the significant potential of digital tools in fostering interactive, immersive, and profession-specific language learning experiences. Teachers and students alike recognize the value of platforms, applications, and multimedia resources in creating engaging and tailored learning environments that address diverse needs and career aspirations.

The research revealed that digital tools, such as Talkpal, Preply, AL Speakers, and ChatGPT, provide authentic materials and real-time feedback, enabling students to practice speaking skills in realistic contexts. Furthermore, these technologies enhance motivation, confidence, and engagement while catering to the multilingual and multidisciplinary demands of Kazakhstani education.

Despite the positive outcomes, challenges persist, including the need for comprehensive teacher training, access to reliable infrastructure, and alignment of digital content with specific ESP objectives. Blended learning approaches, which combine traditional and digital methods, offer a promising solution by balancing personalized, technology-driven engagement with structured, in-person instruction.

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Кисметова Г.Н., Утегенова Б.Д.
ЦИФРЛЫҚ ДӘУІРДЕ ESP САБАҚТАРЫНДА СӨЙЛЕУ ДАҒДЫЛАРЫН ДАМЫТУ

Аңдатпа. Сөйлесу дағдыларын меңгеру қазіргі әлемде жаһандану дәуіріне бет алған мектеп оқушылары үшін маңызды. Алайда, мектеп оқушыларының сөйлесу дағдылары әлі де жетілдіруді қажет етеді. Сондықтан бұл зерттеу бірнеше сұрақтарға жауап беруді мақсат етті: мектеп оқушылары үшін ESP (English for Specific Purposes) сабақтарында сөйлесу дағдыларын дамытуға арналған инновациялық тәсілдердің жетіспеушілігі; мектеп оқушыларының ESP сабақтарында қандай цифрлық технологияларды қолдану қажеттілігі; цифрлық технологияларды ESP сабақтарына енгізудің тиімділігі. Ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінен ESP сабақтарында цифрлық құралдарды қолдану туралы сұрақтар қойылып, 53 оқушысы бар 11-сынып таңдалды. Зерттеу жүргізу барысында оқушылар ESP сабақтарында ақпараттық-коммуникациялық технологияларды (АКТ) қолдану арқылы сөйлесу дағдыларын арттыру туралы өз пікірлерін білдірді, ал мұғалімдер цифрлық құралдарды қолданудың тиімділігі туралы сұрақтарға жауап берді. Интервьюлер жүргізіліп, оқушылардың сөйлесу дағдыларын дамытуға арналған қажеттіліктері мен қызығушылықтарын анықтау үшін сауалнамалар берілді. Зерттеу нәтижелері бойынша интервью нәтижелеріне негізделген зерттеу тиімді деп , ал сауалнама нәтижелері бойынша өте жақсы деп бағаланды.

Кілт сөздер: жоғары сынып оқушылары; цифрлық технологиялар; интеграция; инновациялық тәсіл; сөйлесу дағдылары.

Кисметова Г.Н., Утегенова Б.Д.
РАЗВИТИЕ НАВЫКОВ ГОВОРЕНИЯ НА УРОКАХ ESP В ЦИФРОВУЮ ЭПОХУ

Аннотация. Овладение навыками говорения является необходимым для старшеклассников в условиях глобализации в современном мире. Однако навыки говорения, которые осваиваются школьниками, все еще требуют улучшения. Именно поэтому данное исследование пыталось ответить на несколько вопросов: отсутствие инновационных подходов к обучению говорению в ESP для школьников; какие цифровые технологии в области ESP необходимы школьникам; и насколько эффективно использование цифровых технологий в ESP уроках. Преподаватели английского языка были опрошены относительно использования цифровых инструментов на занятиях ESP, а для исследования был выбран 11-й класс, состоящий из 53 учеников. В ходе исследования были проведены наблюдения и интервью с учениками, чтобы узнать их мнение о применении ИКТ в ESP для повышения их компетенций в говорении, а также с преподавателями о эффективности использования цифровых технологий для развития навыков говорения. Были проведены интервью, а также даны анкеты ученикам для определения их потребностей и интересов в развитии навыков говорения. Было установлено, что исследование признано эффективным по результатам интервью и очень хорошим по результатам анализа анкет.

Ключевые слова: старшеклассники; цифровые технологии; интеграция; инновационный подход; навыки говорения.