



# KAPITEL 1 / CHAPTER 1 <sup>1</sup>

## TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: EXPLORING EMERGING TRENDS

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### Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of language education, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) stands as a dynamic field at the intersection of language instruction and professional application. As global communication continues to proliferate across diverse industries and disciplines, the demand for targeted, contextually relevant language skills intensifies. ESP, with its tailored approach to meeting the specific linguistic needs of learners in various specialized domains, has become a cornerstone in facilitating effective communication within professional spheres.

This chapter aims to explore new trends in teaching ESP over the past decade. It will focus on new policies and changes in teaching and learning vocational English, ESP, English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), the role of subject knowledge in ESP, and on how mediation skills can be used to foster ESP. As language classrooms become increasingly diverse and interconnected, the chapter will also explore how cultivation of mediation skills becomes imperative for fostering inclusive and communicative language learning environments and their role in revisiting approaches to ESP. Additionally, it will discuss the growing use of artificial intelligence in ESP education.

Exploring emerging trends in ESP research provides educators, researchers, and language practitioners with invaluable insights into the evolving needs and preferences of ESP learners (Basturkmen, 2022; Dou, Chan, & Win, 2023).

By delving into studies such as those conducted by Rafiq, Hashim, and Yunus (2021), which examine sustaining education with mobile learning for ESP, stakeholders can grasp the potential of technological advancements in meeting the educational demands of the contemporary world (Rafiq, Hashim, & Yunus (2021).

Moreover, understanding the pedagogical shifts occurring within the field, as

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highlighted by Rao (2020) and Basturkmen (2021), enables stakeholders to adapt their instructional practices effectively. This adaptation ensures the alignment of teaching methodologies with the evolving demands of the professional world, ensuring ESP instruction remains relevant and impactful (Rao, 2020; Basturkmen, 2021).

Through the lens of research conducted by Dou, Chan, and Win (2023), which explores changing visions in ESP development and teaching, stakeholders gain insights into the past, present, and future vistas of ESP education, allowing for informed decision-making and strategic planning in educational settings (Dou, Chan, & Win, 2023)

This exploration aims to not only shed light on the current state of ESP pedagogy but also to ignite discourse and reflection on the future trajectory of language instruction within specialized domains. Through an in-depth examination of emerging trends, this chapter seeks to empower educators and stakeholders to navigate the complexities of ESP instruction with confidence and foresight.

### **1.1. Bridging vocational English, ESP, ESAP and English for employability**

In recent years, there has been a notable shift in focus within the field of English language instruction, particularly in the vocational and employment sectors. As globalization continues to reshape the dynamics of the job market, proficiency in English has emerged as a crucial asset for individuals seeking to enhance their employability and advance their careers on both local and international fronts.

The traditional approach to vocational English instruction, which primarily emphasized language acquisition within specific occupational domains, is undergoing a metamorphosis. In its place, a more holistic and multifaceted paradigm is emerging – one that not only equips learners with the linguistic skills necessary for workplace communication but also fosters the development of broader employability competencies (Rodliyah, 2018; Hoang & Le, 2021; Farley, 2022).

National reforms in vocational education and training in the EU and the growing



body of research signifies a fundamental reorientation in the goals and methodologies of English language instruction within vocational contexts. Beyond merely imparting technical vocabulary and workplace communication skills, educators are now tasked with cultivating a range of transferable skills that empower learners to navigate the complexities of today's globalized job market with confidence and adaptability.

The domains of vocational English stand as pivotal arenas where language proficiency intersects with professional competency. The teaching of English within these specialized contexts has traditionally been tailored to equip learners with the linguistic skills necessary for effective communication within specific industries and professions.

However, in response to the evolving needs of today's workforce, there has been a noticeable shift in focus towards a more holistic and competency-based approach to vocational English instruction. This shift is characterized by an emphasis on the development of not only language proficiency but also a diverse range of vocational skills, competencies, and attributes essential for success in the workplace.

One notable trend in vocational English instruction is the integration of task-based and project-based learning methodologies. Rather than relying solely on rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules, educators are increasingly incorporating authentic workplace tasks and projects into the curriculum. This hands-on approach not only enhances language acquisition but also cultivates problem-solving abilities, teamwork skills, and real-world applicability.

Furthermore, there is a growing recognition of the importance of intercultural competence in vocational setting. As workplaces become increasingly diverse and interconnected, the ability to navigate cultural differences and communicate effectively across cultural boundaries is essential. Consequently, vocational English instruction now places greater emphasis on developing learners' intercultural awareness, sensitivity, and communication skills to foster collaboration and harmony in multicultural work environments.

Another trend reshaping vocational English instruction is the integration of technology-enabled learning tools and resources. From interactive e-learning platforms



to virtual reality simulations, educators are leveraging digital technologies to create immersive and engaging learning experiences that mirror real-world workplace scenarios. By harnessing the power of technology, vocational English instruction becomes more dynamic, interactive, and accessible, catering to the diverse learning needs and preferences of today's tech-savvy learners.

Moreover, there is a growing emphasis on the development of specialized language skills and competencies tailored to specific professional domains. Whether in healthcare, engineering, hospitality, or finance, vocational English instruction seeks to equip learners with the industry-specific vocabulary, communication strategies, and cultural norms necessary for success in their chosen professions. This targeted approach not only enhances learners' linguistic proficiency but also enhances their professional credibility and employability within their respective fields.

ESP and ESAP represent specialized branches of English language instruction designed to meet the linguistic needs of learners within specific academic or professional domains.

In higher education settings, ESP and ESAP programs play a crucial role in preparing students for the linguistic demands of their academic disciplines and future careers. These programs are characterized by their tailor-made curriculum, which focuses on developing language skills relevant to particular academic fields, such as engineering, medicine, business, or law.

ESP programs typically prioritize the acquisition of discipline-specific vocabulary, communication strategies, and genre conventions essential for academic success and professional competency within a specific field. For example, students enrolled in an ESP program for engineering may focus on mastering technical terminology, writing research reports, and delivering presentations related to engineering concepts and projects.

Similarly, ESAP programs are designed to equip students with the language skills necessary for academic success in their chosen fields of study. Unlike general English (GE) language courses, ESAP programs integrate discipline-specific content and academic skills training tailored to the students' academic disciplines. For instance,



a ESAP course for international students studying economics may include instruction on academic writing conventions, critical reading strategies, and seminar participation skills relevant to economics-related topics.

Both ESP and ESAP programs employ a variety of pedagogical approaches and materials to facilitate language learning within specific academic contexts. These may include authentic texts and materials sourced from academic journals, textbooks, and professional discourse within the target field, as well as task-based activities, simulations, and collaborative projects designed to replicate real-world academic and professional tasks.

By focusing on the language needs of learners within specific academic or professional contexts, ESP and ESAP programs provide a targeted and efficient means of language instruction that enhances students' academic performance, fosters their integration into academic communities, and prepares them for future career within their respective fields.

In ESP, a fundamental inquiry revolves around the level of subject knowledge required by the instructor. There's a debate on whether educators should possess extensive expertise in the subject matter they teach. Proponents argue that comprehensive subject knowledge is essential; after all, how can one effectively teach the language of business without a background in business? They contend that language and content are intricately intertwined, making it challenging to separate them neatly. Conversely, some assert that expecting teachers to be experts in various fields is impractical. Unlike professionals such as doctors or engineers, educators are primarily tasked with language instruction, not content delivery. This dilemma becomes even more complex when transitioning from academic settings to the workplace.

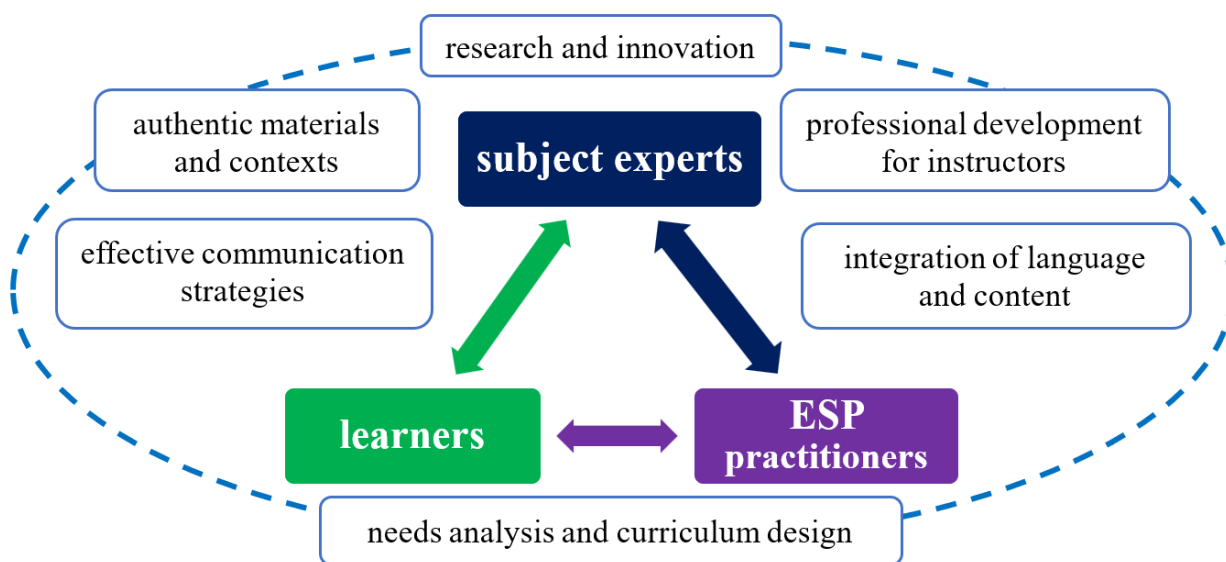
In real-world scenarios, professionals not only require proficiency in professional jargon but also familiarity with the specific language used within their professional communities. This incorporates understanding local contexts and nuanced language usage. Recognizing the inevitable limitations of teachers' subject knowledge, one approach is to acknowledge that ESP can only lay the groundwork for language



acquisition, leaving students to adapt to their specific contexts. Alternatively, educators could receive training in both subject matter and language instruction, although this is rarely feasible in practice.

Another solution involves fostering collaboration between language instructors and subject specialists to ensure comprehensive instruction. Subject experts in ESP play a crucial role in designing and delivering customized language instruction that addresses the specific needs and requirements of learners within various professional fields. By leveraging their disciplinary expertise, subject experts can tailor language courses to incorporate specialized vocabulary, communication styles, and discourse patterns relevant to learners' future careers. For example, a medical doctor with expertise in ESP can integrate authentic medical materials, such as journals and case studies, into language lessons to provide learners with practical exposure to the language they will encounter in clinical settings.

In Figure 1 we attempt to illustrate the interconnected roles of ESP practitioners, subject experts, and learners within the modern ESP course.



**Figure 1 – ESP and subject knowledge**

Incorporating authentic materials and real-world contexts is essential for effective ESP instruction. Subject experts are uniquely positioned to provide learners



with access to authentic materials and contexts relevant to their professional domains. By drawing on their disciplinary knowledge, subject experts can integrate authentic texts, documents, and communication scenarios into language lessons, enabling learners to engage with language in meaningful and authentic ways. For instance, an engineer with expertise in ESP can incorporate technical reports, engineering diagrams, and project specifications into language instruction to enhance learners' comprehension and communication skills in engineering contexts.

Professionals in specific fields often require specialized communication strategies to effectively convey complex ideas, instructions, or information. Subject experts in ESP can teach learners how to navigate disciplinary conventions and develop effective communication strategies tailored to their professional contexts. For example, a legal expert in ESP can provide instruction on legal writing techniques, argumentation strategies, and negotiation skills to help law students communicate effectively in legal settings.

ESP instruction aims to integrate language learning with disciplinary content, enabling learners to develop both linguistic proficiency and subject knowledge simultaneously (Ibrahim, 2019). Subject experts play a crucial role in facilitating this integration by designing interdisciplinary language courses that connect language skills development with relevant disciplinary concepts, theories, and practices. By aligning language instruction with disciplinary content, subject experts can enhance learners' ability to apply language skills in authentic professional contexts.

Training subject experts to become ESP instructors is essential for maintaining the quality of language instruction within specific professional contexts. Professional development opportunities, such as workshops or courses on pedagogical techniques and language teaching methodologies, can equip subject experts with the skills and strategies needed to effectively teach ESP courses and support learners' language learning goals. By investing in the professional development of subject experts, institutions can ensure the delivery of high-quality ESP instruction that meets the evolving needs of learners and industries.

Subject experts are instrumental in conducting needs analyses and designing ESP



curricula tailored to the linguistic and communicative needs of learners within specific disciplines. By collaborating with stakeholders, including employers, industry professionals, and learners themselves, subject experts can identify language proficiency requirements and develop targeted instructional materials and assessments aligned with learners' professional objectives. Through systematic needs analysis and curriculum design, subject experts can ensure that ESP courses are relevant, effective, and responsive to the changing demands of the workforce.

Engaging subject experts in ESP research is essential for driving innovation and advancing best practices in language teaching and learning. By conducting empirical studies, exploring new methodologies, and disseminating research findings, subject experts can contribute to the ongoing development and refinement of ESP pedagogy and practice. Through research and innovation, subject experts can address emerging challenges, explore new opportunities, and enhance the effectiveness of ESP instruction in preparing learners for success in their chosen professions.

Subject experts play a vital role in enhancing language instruction and professional development within the field of ESP. By leveraging their disciplinary expertise, subject experts contribute to customized instruction, authentic materials and contexts, effective communication strategies, integration of language and content, professional development for instructors, needs analysis and curriculum design, and research and innovation. As the demand for specialized language skills continues to grow in various professional domains, the role of subject experts in ESP will remain essential in preparing learners for success in the global workforce.

Over the past decade, these aspects of ESP instruction have undergone significant transformation driven by a prioritization of students' needs and a shift towards more tailored and flexible course designs. By placing greater emphasis on student-centered learning and flexible course design, ESP programs have become more responsive to the diverse linguistic and communicative needs of learners, thus ensuring their relevance and effectiveness in preparing individuals for success in the global workforce.

Moving on to the EMI courses in higher education, we observed that EMI has





gained prominence in recent years due to globalization, internationalization of higher education, and the growing demand for English-taught programs by both domestic and international students.

In EMI contexts, English is utilized as the primary language of instruction across various academic disciplines, ranging from sciences and humanities to business and engineering. EMI programs are typically offered in universities and colleges where English proficiency is a prerequisite for academic success and where the institution aims to attract a diverse student body from around the world.

EMI programs present unique challenges and opportunities for both students and educators. For students, EMI offers access to high-quality education, international networking opportunities, and enhanced employability in the global job market. However, it also requires proficiency in academic English, critical thinking skills, and adaptability to diverse cultural and academic norms.

For educators, teaching in an EMI context necessitates not only proficiency in English but also cross-cultural communication skills, pedagogical flexibility, and the ability to scaffold complex concepts effectively for non-native English speakers. Additionally, educators must strive to create an inclusive learning environment that accommodates students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and fosters their academic and linguistic development.

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research and best practices aimed at addressing the challenges and optimizing the benefits of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education (Sukardi, Sopandi, & Lestari, 2023; Hultgren et al., 2023; Lei & Hu, 2022; Arnó-Macià, Aguilar-Pérez, & Tatzl, 2020; Wu & Tsai, 2022; Curle & Derakhshan, 2021). These studies have provided insights into trends, foci, challenges, and strategies related to EMI implementation in various contexts, including science learning, European higher education, the Asia Pacific region, internationalized universities, and research methodologies (Sukardi et al., 2023; Hultgren et al., 2023; Lei & Hu, 2022; Arnó-Macià et al., 2020; Wu & Tsai, 2022; Curle & Derakhshan, 2021).

Additionally, conceptualizations of EMI, such as the English-medium paradigm,



have contributed to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its implications for teaching and learning (Schmidt-Unterberger, 2018).

Strategies such as language support programs, teacher training initiatives, and curriculum adaptation have been implemented to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of EMI programs and to ensure that all students have equal opportunities for academic success and personal growth.

In this dynamic landscape of higher education, ESP, ESAP, and EMI programs play instrumental roles in facilitating academic and professional success, promoting intercultural understanding, and preparing students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world.

Going beyond the limits of traditional English instruction in order to integrate elements of career readiness, intercultural competence, digital literacy, and critical thinking skills into the curriculum, the EFL practitioners have presented the the concept of English for Employability.

The primary goal of English for employability courses is to enhance students' linguistic proficiency in English within professional contexts while also fostering a range of transferable skills essential for workplace success. These skills may include effective communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, and digital literacy, among others.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on enhancing the employability skills of higher education graduates, with researchers and educators delving into various conceptual frameworks and methodological options to address this imperative (Suleman, 2018; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Studies such as those conducted by Small, Shacklock, and Marchant (2018) provide contemporary reviews that offer valuable insights for higher education stakeholders seeking to understand and respond to the evolving landscape of employability. Concurrently, research by Donald, Ashleigh, and Baruch (2018) sheds light on students' perceptions of education and employability, underscoring the importance of facilitating career transitions from higher education into the labor market. Moreover, Miranda et al. (2021) present case studies in engineering education that explore the core components of Education 4.0 in



higher education, highlighting the integration of authentic workplace simulations, experiential learning opportunities, digital technologies, and online platforms.

Within this context, English for employability courses in higher education play a crucial role in equipping learners with the necessary language skills, communication strategies, and soft skills required for success in the global job market (Suleman, 2018; Succi & Canovi, 2020). These courses, as informed by contemporary research and practice, extend beyond traditional language instruction to incorporate elements of career readiness, professional development, and intercultural competence into the curriculum (Small et al., 2018). The primary goal of such courses is to enhance students' linguistic proficiency in English within professional contexts while also fostering a range of transferable skills essential for workplace success. Through the integration of authentic workplace simulations and experiential learning opportunities, coupled with the utilization of digital technologies and online platforms, educators are actively exploring diverse avenues to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of English language instruction in vocational contexts (Miranda et al., 2021).

In the early 2000s, English language courses primarily focused on essential skills for socializing, participating in meetings, negotiating, and delivering presentations. However, over the past decade, there has been a noticeable shift towards more specialized and needs-specific courses, particularly in the realm of English for employability.

From the integration of authentic workplace simulations and experiential learning opportunities to the use of digital technologies and online platforms, educators are exploring diverse avenues to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of English language instruction in vocational contexts.

Alongside traditional business communication skills, there's a growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy and online presence in today's professional landscape. Nowadays, English for employability courses typically cover a wide range of topics and activities tailored to the needs and aspirations of students preparing to enter the workforce. We suggest that these may include:

1. *Professional Communication Skills*: Instruction in business correspondence,



email etiquette, telephone communication, and interpersonal communication skills to prepare students for effective communication in workplace settings.

2. *CV and Cover Letter Writing*: Guidance on crafting compelling resumes, curriculum vitae (CVs), and cover letters tailored to specific job opportunities, as well as strategies for showcasing relevant skills and experiences.

3. *Interview Preparation*: Mock interviews, role-playing exercises, and strategies for answering common interview questions to help students feel confident and prepared for job interviews.

4. *Networking and Job Search Strategies*: Instruction on networking techniques, online job search platforms, and strategies for identifying job opportunities and building professional connections.

5. *Professional Etiquette and Cultural Awareness*: Exploration of workplace norms, professional conduct, and cultural differences in business environments to promote intercultural competence and effective collaboration in diverse teams.

6. *Presentation and Public Speaking Skills*: Opportunities to develop and refine presentation skills, public speaking abilities, and persuasive communication techniques essential for delivering effective presentations and pitches in professional settings.

7. *Problem-Solving and Decision-Making*: Exercises and case studies designed to develop students' problem-solving abilities, critical thinking skills, and decision-making processes relevant to real-world workplace scenarios.

As such, contemporary English for Employability courses now integrated traditional modules with various digital marketing platforms such as LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram, and social media management, catering to the demands of professions requiring strong online engagement and branding. This shift underscores the dynamic nature of English language instruction, which continually adapts to reflect the changing demands of the global job market and technological advancements.

By integrating these components into the curriculum, English for Employability courses provide students with a comprehensive toolkit of linguistic and soft skills that enhance their employability and prepare them for success in the competitive job market.



The discussed courses of English language instruction share several key similarities. Firstly, they all prioritize teaching English within specific contexts or purposes, whether vocational, academic, professional, or general communication. Secondly, they aim to develop various language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, tailored to the specific needs of learners. Thirdly, they emphasize the practical application of language skills, ensuring relevance to learners' real-life situations, whether in the workplace, academic setting, or everyday communication. Fourthly, each approach integrates language learning with relevant content knowledge, whether vocational, academic, or general, to enhance understanding and proficiency.

Furthermore, they provide targeted instruction to meet the specific linguistic needs of learners within their chosen field or purpose, ensuring effective communication and skill development. Ultimately, despite differences in focus and scope, the overarching goal of all these approaches is to equip learners with the language skills necessary for effective communication and success in their chosen contexts, whether vocational, academic, professional, or everyday life.

Transitioning to Ukrainian tertiary education context, let's explore these types of English courses offered in postsecondary education institutions across Ukraine from 2014 to 2024. The data collected for this analysis were gathered from 43 Ukrainian institutions through a survey of EFL practitioners, providing a comprehensive overview of English language education trends in the country.

Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of General English, Vocational English, ESP, ESAP, EMI, and English for employability courses, highlighting their unique differences and specifics within the Ukrainian educational framework over the past decade.



**Table 1 – Types of English courses offered in postsecondary education institutions across Ukraine from 2014 to 2024**

Course type	Differences	Type of institution (I) in Ukraine, academic year (AY)/ learner's CEFR levels (L)
<b>General English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designed to teach English language skills in a broad and general context, without specific vocational, academic, or professional focus.</li> <li>▪ Typically covers foundational language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, with an emphasis on everyday communication.</li> </ul>	<p><b>I:</b> tertiary education institutions</p> <p><b>AY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. pre-enrolment; English language program for normally international students and less frequently Ukrainian citizens willing to take an intensive course to improve their national test results</li> <li>b. BA, MA in translation or education</li> </ul> <p><b>L:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A0-B1 (some institutions offer higher levels for preparation, but the A0-B1 intensive courses tend to be more popular)</li> <li>b. A0-C2 (depending on the chosen first language)</li> </ul>
<b>Vocational English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tailored towards specific vocational contexts, such as healthcare, tourism, or engineering.</li> <li>▪ Focuses on developing language skills necessary for workplace communication and tasks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>I:</b> post-secondary VET institutions (e.g. (technical schools, professional colleges)</p> <p><b>AY:</b> 1-2; English language course for VET (domestic industry, agroindustrial complex, construction industry, trade, public catering, service industry, transport industry, housing and utilities, telecommunications)</p> <p><b>L:</b> A2-B1</p>
<b>ESP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A broader term encompassing various specialized areas beyond vocational contexts, including academic, scientific, or technical fields.</li> <li>▪ Designed to meet the specific linguistic needs of learners in</li> </ul>	<p><b>I:</b> short-cycle tertiary (colleges) and tertiary education institutions (institutes and universities)</p> <p><b>AY:</b> 1-4 for associate or bachelor's degree programmes, 1-2 for MA</p>



	particular disciplines or professions.	Programmes, 1 for PhD programmes.
<b>ESAP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Specifically targets the academic language needs of learners within a particular academic discipline or field of study.</li> <li>▪ Aims to prepare students for academic success in their chosen subject area at tertiary education level.</li> </ul>	<p>Most institutions deliver ESP programmes during the undergraduate years; some allocate some courses for higher levels</p> <p><b>L:</b> A2-B1</p>
<b>EMI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focuses on the use of English as the language medium for delivering academic content across various subjects.</li> <li>▪ Often implemented in educational settings where English is not the primary language.</li> </ul>	<p><b>I:</b> tertiary education institutions (institutes and universities)</p> <p><b>AY:</b> 1-4 for associate or bachelor's degree programmes, 1-2 for MA programmes, first for PhD programmes. Apart from international students, Ukrainian citizens may opt for elective courses with EMI or are obliged to attend mandatory ones. The landscape has shifted towards a higher prevalence of EMI courses due to revised accreditation procedures mandating specific percentages of EMI for postgraduate students. This alteration reflects an evolving educational environment aimed at enhancing English proficiency and aligning with international standards.</p> <p><b>L:</b> B2-C2</p>
<b>English for employability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Specifically geared towards preparing learners for success in the job market or workplace.</li> <li>▪ Emphasizes not only language skills but also other employability skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.</li> </ul>	<p><b>I:</b> tertiary education institutions, centres for professional excellence</p> <p><b>AY:</b> first year for certificate programmes, MA and PhD programmes; needs based corporate courses.</p> <p><b>L:</b> A0-C1</p>

Source: [compiled by the author]



Observing modern Ukrainian context, we conclude that vocational English, ESP, ESAP, EMI, and English for employability are specialized forms of English instruction tailored to specific contexts such as workplace communication, academic disciplines, or professional development. They differ in their focus and scope, targeting vocational, academic, or professional language needs. General English, on the other hand, provides foundational language skills without specific vocational or academic focus.

English for employability courses in higher education are gaining popularity and are designed to equip learners with the language skills, communication strategies, and soft skills necessary to succeed in the global job market. These courses go beyond traditional language instruction by integrating elements of career readiness, professional development, and intercultural competence into the curriculum.

Overall, over the past decade, there has been a trend towards more specialized and needs-specific language courses, reflecting the evolving demands of the global job market and educational landscape. These courses prioritize practical language skills relevant to specific contexts, such as business communication or academic discourse. Additionally, there is an increasing emphasis on integrating language instruction with content knowledge, fostering cross-disciplinary understanding and communication. As technology continues to reshape the way we communicate and work, there is a growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy and online communication skills in language education.

## **1.2. The future of ESP and English for employability**

English holds a prominent and indispensable role in contemporary society. The demand for English language acquisition has surged notably, especially for employment purposes, serving as a primary motivator for language learning over recent decades. English, functioning as a lingua franca (ELF), is employed across diverse contexts spanning business, academia, and travel, offering numerous advantages such as easing international communication and fostering global understanding.

However, alongside its benefits, the use of English as a lingua franca presents challenges, including the potential for misinterpretations and the necessity for





intercultural competency. Consequently, it becomes imperative to cultivate English language proficiencies that are pertinent to a globalized environment and to advocate for cross-cultural comprehension and communication.

Research conducted by Alapati, Mandava, and Ch (2023) delves into the potential of communication skills in the ESP classroom to bolster employability. Similarly, Ionitiu (2020) presents a case study highlighting ways to improve ESP students' employability skills, underscoring the practical strategies that educators can implement to prepare learners for the workforce. In line with this focus, studies such as that by Züleyha and Qureshi (2021) explore the relationship between ESP course design and employability, particularly in specialized fields such as tourism. This small-scale exploratory study sheds light on the significance of tailoring ESP courses to the specific needs and demands of professional sectors, thereby enhancing graduates' readiness for employment.

Looking ahead, Chi and Vu (2023) discuss the nexus between ESP courses and Vietnamese graduates' employability, emphasizing the importance of English language education in facilitating graduate employability in Vietnam. Their work underscores the pivotal role of ESP courses in equipping graduates with the language skills and specialized knowledge necessary to thrive in the job market.

Collectively, these studies reflect a growing recognition of the pivotal role that ESP courses play in enhancing graduates' employability skills. Moving forward, further research and innovation in ESP course design and delivery are essential to ensure that graduates are adequately prepared to meet the demands of the ever-changing global job market.

In 2015, in order to create opportunities for improving employability skills, upskilling workers and ensuring the quality of vocational education and training (TVET), standardizing and recognizing achievement of skills and knowledge, important for employment and progression, the British Council, in partnership with Manipal City and Guilds, Trinity College London and the National Skills Development Agency, presented a report exploring the role of English in the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). Its particular focus was on English as a Skill for Employability



for entry-level and semi-skilled employment (Prince & Singh, 2015).

The report highlights the critical need for English language proficiency in many professions and sectors for professional success, especially in a fast-globalizing economy. As the research was conducted in India, the authors recommend creating a Common Indian Framework of Reference for Languages (Prince & Singh, 2015).

Interpreting the research results for Eurasian context, the recommendation may include creating specific descriptors for country national languages and English that can be mapped to the CEFR for global equivalences. Such national and English language framework should be built by offering each sector within the economy the opportunity to define their language and soft skill requirements. The national-level descriptors need to be broad enough to allow for variations within each sector.

Consequently, the report suggests that providing options for language levels and soft skills achievement within the country-specific Qualification Packs (QP) for job roles could potentially reduce the need to multiply the development of QPs for different contexts with the same core technical requirements (Prince & Singh, 2015).

In 2023, the British Council presented a research project report 'The Future of English: Global Perspectives' that explores the roles and uses of English language globally. The research project used David Graddol's 'English Next' (2006) project as a starting point and aimed to initiate a conversation based on its findings. Graddol's study was commissioned by the British Council to explore the impact of globalization on the uses and roles of English, 15 years into the future. (Prince & Singh, 2015).

The report projected 16 future trends for the English language in global perspective. To test the 16 predicted trends, a series of roundtable discussions involving high-level policymakers and influencers from various parts of the world was planned. The aim was to gain a macro-level understanding of the issues from different perspectives. The discussions had two purposes: firstly, to evaluate the 16 predictions that were developed in the first phase of the project, and secondly, to gather opinions from stakeholders about the future of English in their contexts based on their expertise, experiences, observations, and insights (Patel M. et al., 2023).

As for the perspectives on ESP, let us consider the trends 1, 2, 5, 6, and 9



discussed in the report (Patel M. et al., 2023).

- Trend 1: the number of English language learners globally is likely to remain the same.
- Trend 2: online English language learning will be a significant growth area.
- Trend 5: English as a medium of Education (EME) will continue to be widely employed in higher education. However, in some countries, policies for basic education will favour English as a subject over English medium education.
- Trend 6: the widening of programmes to cater for ESP will continue.
- Trend 9: English will continue as the leading global lingua franca despite the growing economic and geopolitical power of a number of non-anglophone countries (Patel M. et al., 2023).

The pandemic of 2021 disrupted the world and moved social, educational, and professional life online, highlighting the importance of interaction and engagement in this new environment. We also observe that effective communication and language skills still will remain fundamental to employability, and this report significantly contributes to this aspect.

New trends in English for employability include the increasing importance of soft skills such as intercultural communication and adaptability, as well as the need for English language proficiency in emerging industries such as artificial intelligence and data analytics. These trends reflect the evolving demands of the job market and the need for workers to possess a diverse set of skills to succeed in a globalized economy.

In the research on embedding employability into curriculum, Lowe (2023) suggests five recommendations to enhance the graduate employability of widening participation students. These include: developing their ability to write a job application or personal statement tailored to a personal specification, write a graduate CV and modify it according to different roles, respond to interview questions with tangible examples and elaboration, expose them to a variety of careers beyond the conventional options, and provide them with at least one practical experience, such as an extracurricular activity or placement, beyond their degree study. These suggestions aim to incorporate employability into the curriculum and improve the students' career



prospects after graduation (Lowe., 2023).

Employers will keep seeking workers who possess a range of soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, in addition to technical skills. As a result, English language teaching and learning need to focus on developing both language proficiency and employability skills to prepare learners for success in the job market.

### **1.3. Revisiting the Role of Mediation in ESP**

Mediation encompasses various aspects, including relaying information, facilitating communication, and mediating concepts, all of which play a significant role in language learning and teaching contexts. This section explores the concept of mediation as a crucial skill in teaching ESP, drawing upon the framework provided for EFL in the Common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR) Companion Volume with New Descriptors (2018).

In the landscape of language teaching, the concept of mediation has emerged as a fundamental skill for both language learners and educators. Defined within the framework of the CEFR, mediation involves facilitating communication, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, and aiding in the construction of meaning in multilingual contexts.

The CEFR delineates mediation activities into three main groups: mediating a text, concepts, and communication. Each group encompasses specific tasks and skills that are essential for effective language mediation (CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors, 2018, p. 106):

#### *Mediating a text*

- Relaying specific information – in speech and in writing
- Explaining data (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.) – in speech and in writing
- Processing text – in speech and in writing
- Translating a written text – in speech and in writing
- Note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings, etc.)



- Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)
- Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)

*Mediating concepts*

- Collaborating in a group
- Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers
- Collaborating to construct meaning
- Leading group work
- Managing interaction
- Encouraging conceptual talk

*Mediating communication*

- Facilitating pluricultural space
- Acting as intermediary in informal situations (with friends and colleagues)
- Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, integrating mediation activities into language pedagogy can enhance students' language proficiency and intercultural competence. Educators can design tasks that encourage students to relay information, collaborate in group activities, and navigate cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, fostering empathy and emotional intelligence among learners is crucial for effective mediation, as it requires sensitivity to the perspectives and emotional states of others.

Mediation skills are indispensable in language teaching and learning, serving as a bridge between languages, cultures, and individuals (Piccardo, 2019; Piccardo, North, & Goodier, 2019). By incorporating mediation activities into English language teaching methodologies, educators can empower students to become effective communicators and intercultural mediators (Piccardo, 2019; Fischer, 2024). As language classrooms become increasingly diverse and interconnected, the cultivation of mediation skills becomes imperative for fostering inclusive and communicative language learning environments (Piccardo, North, & Goodier, 2019; Folinazzo, 2024). According to Fischer (2024), meaningful tasks and scenarios play a crucial role in developing mediation skills at university language centres, making language learning



relevant to the learner.

Based on our findings, it is evident that integrating mediation skills into ESP instruction has the potential to significantly augment the efficacy of language acquisition within specialized domains. Consequently, we propose that leveraging mediation techniques can notably enhance the teaching of ESP by:

1. *Customized Communication Skills.* ESP often requires learners to communicate specialized information within their field. Mediation activities, such as relaying specific information, explaining data, and facilitating communication, can help learners develop the language skills necessary for effective communication in their professional context.
2. *Cross-cultural Competence.* Many ESP learners operate in multicultural and international environments. By engaging in mediation tasks that focus on facilitating pluricultural space and acting as intermediaries in informal situations, learners can enhance their cross-cultural competence and adaptability, which are essential for successful communication in diverse professional settings.
3. *Content Understanding.* Mediating concepts involves facilitating access to knowledge and concepts, which is particularly relevant in ESP where learners need to grasp complex subject matter. By engaging in activities that require learners to construct meaning and facilitate conceptual exchange, educators can help learners deepen their understanding of specialized content while developing their language skills.
4. *Collaborative Learning.* ESP often involves collaboration and teamwork within specific professional contexts. Mediation activities that encourage collaborating in groups, leading group work, and managing interaction can foster collaborative learning environments where learners can exchange ideas, solve problems, and negotiate meaning together, mirroring the collaborative nature of many professional settings.
5. *Real-world Relevance.* Mediation activities reflect real-world communicative tasks that ESP learners are likely to encounter in their professional lives. By



engaging in tasks that simulate authentic communication scenarios, learners can develop the language skills and strategies necessary for effective communication in their specific field.

6. *Empathy and Emotional Intelligence.* Effective mediation requires empathy and emotional intelligence, as mediators need to understand and respond to the perspectives and emotional states of others. By incorporating mediation activities that focus on developing empathy and emotional intelligence, educators can help learners cultivate the interpersonal skills necessary for successful communication in professional contexts.

Incorporating mediation skills into ESP instruction can enrich language learning experiences by providing learners with opportunities to develop language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, content understanding, collaborative skills, and interpersonal skills that are directly applicable to their professional contexts. By bridging the gap between language learning and professional communication, mediation can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of ESP instruction.

Through an analysis of mediation activities outlined in the CEFR, the importance of mediation skills for language educators, we designed practical activities for integrating mediation into ESP teaching.

#### *Activity 1. Information Relay*

- Divide students into groups, each representing a different profession or field related to the ESP focus (e.g., business, healthcare, engineering).
- Provide each group with a specialized text (e.g., a business report, a medical journal article, an engineering manual).
- Instruct students to relay the information from the text to another group whose members are unfamiliar with the content.
- Encourage students to use language mediation skills such as simplifying complex concepts, providing explanations, and ensuring understanding across different language proficiency levels.

#### *Activity 2. Collaborative Data Analysis:*

- Present students with graphs, charts, or data sets relevant to their ESP field.



- In small groups, students analyze the data and identify key findings or trends.
- Each group prepares a brief presentation to explain the data to the rest of the class, focusing on clear explanations and effective communication of technical information.
- Encourage students to use mediation techniques to ensure that their presentations are accessible to classmates with varying levels of expertise in the subject matter.

*Activity 3. Advanced Role-Plays:*

- Create role-playing scenarios based on typical professional situations encountered in the ESP field (e.g., negotiating a business deal, consulting with a patient, solving an engineering problem).
- Assign each student a role and provide them with specific information relevant to their role.
- Students engage in the role-play, using mediation skills to facilitate communication, clarify misunderstandings, and negotiate solutions.
- After the role-play, facilitate a debriefing session where students reflect on their use of mediation techniques and discuss strategies for improving communication in similar situations.

*Activity 4. Conceptual Exchange Challenge:*

- Select a complex concept or topic relevant to the ESP field and provide students with background information and resources for further exploration.
- In pairs or small groups, students engage in a conceptual exchange task where they discuss the concept, ask questions, and share their understanding with each other.
- Encourage students to use mediation techniques such as paraphrasing, clarifying, and providing examples to ensure mutual understanding and promote deeper conceptual learning.

*Activity 5. Cross-cultural Communication Workshop:*

- Organize a workshop focusing on cross-cultural communication in the context of the ESP field.





- Present case studies or scenarios that highlight cultural differences and potential communication challenges.
- Facilitate group discussions where students analyze the scenarios, identify cultural differences, and brainstorm strategies for effective communication and mediation in cross-cultural contexts.
- Encourage students to reflect on their own cultural perspectives and develop empathy and cultural sensitivity towards others.

*Activity 6. Translation and Interpretation Practice:*

- Provide students with authentic texts or audio recordings related to their ESP field, such as industry-specific documents, presentations, or meetings.
- Assign students the task of translating written texts or interpreting spoken content from the source language to the target language, or vice versa.
- Encourage students to focus not only on linguistic accuracy but also on conveying the intended meaning and context accurately, demonstrating their mediation skills in cross-linguistic communication.

*Activity 7. Problem-Solving Challenge:*

- Present students with a real-world problem or challenge relevant to their ESP field, such as a technical issue, a business dilemma, or a medical case study.
- In small groups, students analyze the problem, brainstorm potential solutions, and discuss their ideas using specialized language and terminology.
- Facilitate a group discussion where students negotiate and evaluate different solutions, applying mediation techniques to reach consensus and make decisions collaboratively.

*Activity 8. Virtual Simulations:*

- Utilize virtual simulation platforms or role-playing software to create immersive scenarios that replicate authentic professional situations in the ESP field.
- Assign students different roles within the simulation, such as clients, professionals, or stakeholders, and provide them with specific objectives and communication tasks.



- Students navigate the simulation, interacting with virtual characters and responding to dynamic challenges, while employing mediation skills to manage communication effectively in a simulated professional environment.

*Activity 9. Peer Teaching and Feedback:*

- Divide students into pairs or small groups, with each group focusing on a specific topic or aspect of the ESP curriculum.
- Assign each group the task of preparing a mini-lesson or presentation to teach their assigned topic to their peers.
- After the presentations, facilitate peer feedback sessions where students provide constructive feedback to their classmates, emphasizing effective communication strategies and mediation techniques.

*Activity 10. Virtual and Cultural Exchange Project:*

- Initiate a collaborative project that encourages students to explore and exchange cultural perspectives related to their ESP field.
- Pair students from different cultural backgrounds and assign them the task of researching and presenting on how cultural factors influence practices, norms, and communication styles in their respective countries or regions.
- Students use mediation skills to facilitate cross-cultural understanding, promote empathy, and navigate potential cultural differences in professional contexts.

These activities offer diverse opportunities for ESP learners to engage in meaningful language practice, develop critical thinking skills, and enhance their ability to communicate effectively in specialized professional settings through the application of mediation techniques.

In the context of ESP, mediation skills play a significant role in enhancing communication proficiency, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and deepening comprehension of specialized content. By integrating mediation activities into ESP instruction, educators can effectively prepare learners to navigate professional contexts, collaborate with peers, and communicate with confidence in their respective fields.



## **1.4. Current trends in using generative Artificial Intelligence in ESP classrooms**

In education, Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly in the form of large language models (LLMs), has garnered significant scholarly interest for over a decade (Selwyn, 2016; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Pavlenko & Syzenko, 2024). However, the emergence of large language models (LLMs), notably ChatGPT, in late 2022 has triggered multiple conceptual and empirical studies on conversational AI's potential impact on traditional teaching and learning methods. The confluence of AI and language learning has been a focal point within this discourse.

In response to the adoption of the Recommendation on the use of AI in Higher Education by UNESCO (2021), the organization has released several seminal publications, including a Start Guide and a joint UNESCO IESALC Manual on AI in Higher Education (2023). These publications provide guidance on implementing AI recommendations within the framework of UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). Researchers globally have begun investigating the institutional function of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education, probing its ramifications for universities. Despite the abundance of resources available to educators concerning the utilization of AI tools, practices across universities exhibit considerable variance, and directives for incorporating AI tools into formal educational settings remain somewhat constrained. This highlights the imperative for a more comprehensive inquiry into these matters to achieve a deeper understanding of their prospective implications.

In this section, we attempt to examine studies regarding the integration of AI within educational setting, with a particular focus on ESP contexts. By synthesizing the existing literature, this paper explores the contemporary landscape of AI applications in ESP language acquisition.

In language education, there is a consensus among researchers regarding the significance of LLM capabilities. Several studies address the accessibility of LLMs in language teaching and learning, highlighting their utilization in various aspects such as automated corrective feedback, machine translation, conversation practice, and chatbot-driven text generation exemplified by OpenAI's ChatGPT-3. The potential of



generative AI, particularly ChatGPT, is often emphasised in enhancing language skills for non-native English speakers through a variety of AI-generated listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities.

Another area of current research focuses on pedagogy in language teaching, exploring methods, strategies, and techniques. Teachers' attitudes toward generative AI, particularly the popularity of ChatGPT, have been subject to investigation. A recent study commissioned by the British Council examines the influence of generative AI on the English language teaching landscape and teachers' perceptions thereof (Edmett et al., 2023). While many English language teachers acknowledge AI's potential as a supplementary tool for tailored resources and skill improvement, concerns regarding over-reliance, reduced human interaction, and AI's limitations in understanding language subtleties and cultural nuances are prevalent. Despite recognizing AI's promise, there is a consensus that it should complement rather than replace human-led teaching.

A more recent study by Meniado (2023) highlights ChatGPT's supportive role in English language teaching, learning, and assessment, while also addressing challenges such as inaccurate responses and educational disparities. Moreover, recent studies delve into English language instructors' perceptions of using generative AI tools, stressing the importance of building instructors' familiarity and confidence with AI-driven teaching tools, addressing their concerns, and providing tailored support and professional development opportunities (Meniado, 2023).

In language education, there is a growing recognition among educators that the integration of Generative AI marks a significant shift in pedagogical approaches, offering novel avenues for enhancing traditional teaching methods. Tools such as ChatGPT, driven by sophisticated deep learning algorithms and natural language processing, are capable of facilitating interactive conversations, delivering instant feedback, and providing personalized support to cater to individual learning needs. As students navigate the complexities of academic studies, this technology serves as an additional educational resource, streamlining tasks, and often collaborating in the learning process, surpassing the limitations of conventional learning materials and



textbooks.

Generative AI is changing how we can teach and learn languages, bringing about a shift from traditional approaches to more personalized and dynamic ones. Liao et al. (2023) argue that LLMs deserve more recognition and exploration in the ESL context as generative AI has revolutionized traditional methodologies (Liao et al., 2023).

According to Liao et al. the potential of integrating generative AI, specifically ChatGPT, enhances the language skills of non-native English speakers. Focusing on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and using the "instruction-reply" approach, the authors outlined how generative AI technology can be correlated with English language learning (Liao et al., 2023).

Researchers attempted to investigate the cases of correspondence between ChatGPT core technological competencies and four English competencies. In particular, they looked at how the technology of speech recognition and synthesis, adaptive learning, intelligent recommendation, natural language processing, and attention mechanism can assist in the development of receptive language skills, and how speech recognition and synthesis, reinforcement and adaptive learning, intelligent recommendation, natural language processing, and zero-shot learning can be used to assist productive skills (Liao et al., 2023). The authors conclude that the "instruction-reply" method may be used to explore the effectiveness of generative pre-training of artificial intelligence and reveal significant auxiliary capabilities for English ESL learning. However, the study acknowledges limitations, including language mechanics, usage thresholds, language recognition differences, and knowledge boundary discussions (Liao et al., 2023).

Additionally, in recent studies on the application of ChatGPT in higher education, scholars revisit students' roles and suggest how ChatGPT can be incorporated at different stages of learning (Sabzalieva & Valentini, 2023). Adapting some of the suggested roles to the language learning and teaching contexts, and immersing students in authentic ESP contexts are compared in Table 2:



**Table 2 – ChatGPT for GE and ESP classrooms: suggested roles and activities**

GE classroom	ESP classroom
<i>Possibility engine</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students can use ChatGPT to regenerate responses in order to examine alternative scenarios for the cases to better develop reading skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Generate alternative responses for business correspondence emails, focusing on different levels of formality and tone.</li> <li>▪ Regenerate technical instructions for operating machinery, emphasizing clarity and precision in language use.</li> <li>▪ Create variations of legal contracts, highlighting key terms and clauses in different contexts.</li> </ul>
<i>Socratic opponent</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students can use AI to improve the structure of a conversation or debate.</li> <li>▪ Teachers can invite students to use ChatGPT to prepare arguments for discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Debate the ethical implications of scientific research within the medical field, focusing on language for argumentation and persuasion.</li> <li>▪ Discuss the economic impact of environmental policies in the context of sustainability, using specialized terminology related to environmental science and economics.</li> <li>▪ Argue for and against the implementation of technological advancements in the agricultural industry, considering language nuances in technical discussions.</li> </ul>
<i>Guide on the side and exploratorium</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guide on the side role may serve as a content and idea generator for classes/courses (e.g., discussion questions)</li> <li>▪ Support students in learning specific grammatical concepts.</li> <li>▪ ChatGPT can be asked to simplify explanations or find advanced cases with corresponding examples.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Simplify complex medical concepts for a lay audience, providing clear explanations and relatable examples.</li> <li>▪ Explore advanced engineering principles through case studies and real-world applications, highlighting key terminology and practical implications.</li> <li>▪ Break down legal precedents and case law into digestible segments, facilitating understanding for students studying law or related fields.</li> </ul>



<i>Personal tutor</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ChatGPT can provide personalized feedback based on information provided by students or teachers.</li> <li>▪ Educators may use the feedback tool for more personalised and quicker responses to written assignments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide feedback on engineering project proposals, focusing on language accuracy and coherence in conveying technical ideas.</li> <li>▪ Offer guidance on writing academic research papers in the field of psychology, emphasizing proper citation and academic language conventions.</li> <li>▪ Assist with preparing presentations on business strategies, ensuring clarity and effectiveness in communication for professional audiences.</li> </ul>
<i>Study buddy</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This role attempts to practice AI-supported reflective learning. Based on the skills students want to practice or better develop, they may train ChatGPT to prepare for exams, job interviews and presentations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Practice medical interview scenarios, role-playing patient consultations and medical history assessments, focusing on language for effective communication and empathy.</li> <li>▪ Conduct mock negotiations for international business deals, incorporating language for negotiation, persuasion, and compromise.</li> <li>▪ Prepare for academic conferences by practicing presentations on cutting-edge research topics, refining language for clarity and impact.</li> </ul>
<i>Dynamic assessor and motivator</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ helps students and teachers interact with ChatGPT in a tutorial-type dialogue asking ChatGPT for ideas about how to extend students' learning or provide a summary of the current level of knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess students' understanding of engineering concepts through interactive quizzes and discussions, providing tailored feedback and reinforcement.</li> <li>▪ Motivate students to engage in collaborative projects within their field of study, guiding them through the language and communication challenges they may encounter.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate students' progress in mastering legal terminology and concepts, offering personalized study plans and resources for further improvement.</li> </ul>

Source: [compiled by the author]



In general, these varied roles highlight how ChatGPT can serve as a versatile resource for teaching and learning GE and ESP, spanning a range of language skills, interactive and authentic situations.

In our recent study (Pavlenko, Syzenko 2024), we focused on students' frequency of using Generative AI for different types of assignments, levels of their satisfaction with the experience of using ChatGPT and their perceptions of the impact of Generative AI on the quality of learning.

Our research contributes to the body of literature by offering a detailed examination of the particular instances of employing ChatGPT in educational settings and assessing its influence on learning outcomes. This underscores the importance of consolidating ongoing initiatives by universities to integrate AI, delineate ethical boundaries, and capitalize on the enriched learning opportunities it offers to students.

In November 2023, data collection for this study occurred through an online survey utilizing a Google Form questionnaire distributed to students from two Ukrainian universities. The survey targeted a sample of 247 participants selected through random sampling methods. Predominantly, participants were between 18 to 24 years old, comprising 71.7% of the total sample, followed by those aged 25 to 34 years (13.7%) and 34 to 44 years (14.6%). Regarding educational attainment, the majority were Bachelor's degree students (65.2%), followed by Master's degree (27.9%) and Doctorate degree (6.9%) students.

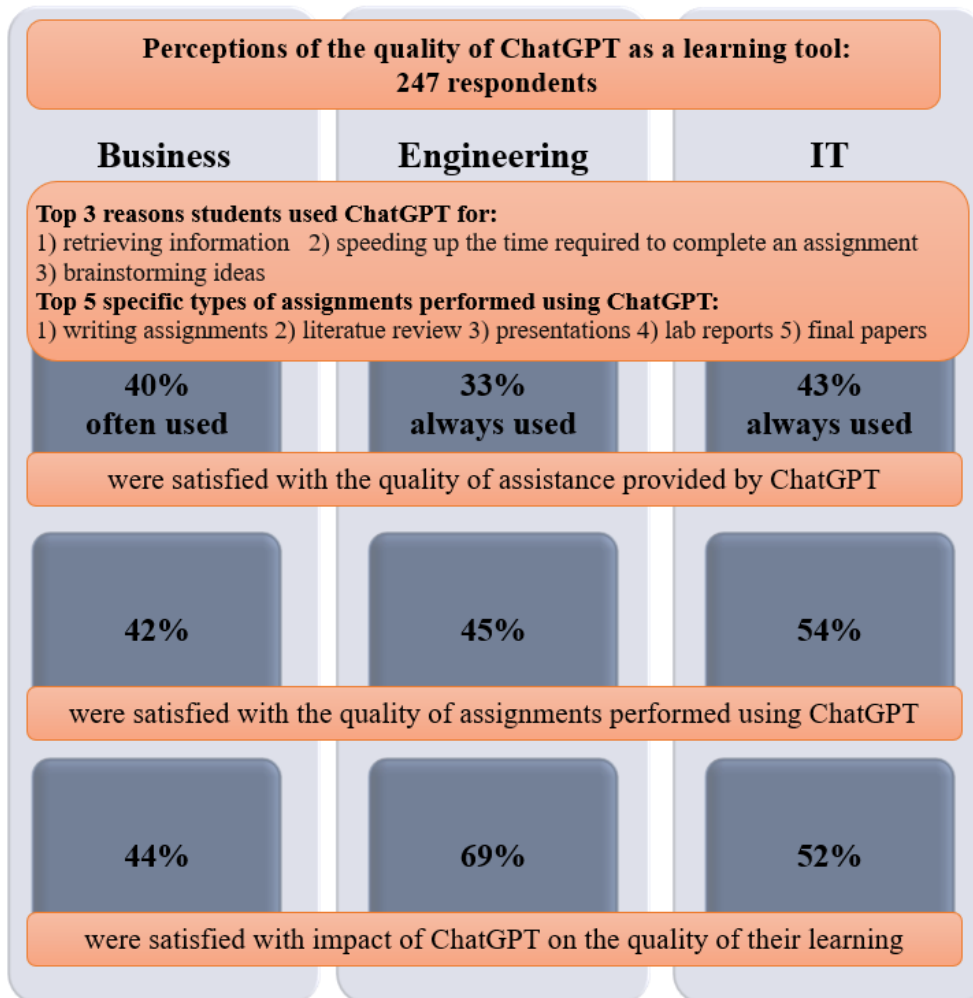
The questionnaire included two sections: demographic information and elements addressing research objectives. Participants' satisfaction levels with ChatGPT support and perceptions of its impact on learning quality were gauged using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

To fulfill our research aim of gaining insights into students' perspectives on the quality of support provided by ChatGPT for their academic learning needs, we posed several research questions. We focused on identifying the most common types of learning assignments students use ChatGPT for, gauging the level of satisfaction with ChatGPT's assistance, and examining the perceived impact of ChatGPT on the learning process. Through these questions, we aimed to comprehensively understand how



students engage with and perceive the role of ChatGPT in their educational contexts.

To gather insights, we asked students two sets of questions. The first set focused on how often and what kind of assignments students use ChatGPT for. The second set aimed to understand students' thoughts on the quality of ChatGPT's results and its impact on their learning. Figure 2 presents our main findings and our interpretations.



**Figure 2 – Students’ perceptions of the ChatGPT as a learning tool**

The results presented in Figure 1 indicate that Information Technology (IT) students exhibit the highest frequency of ChatGPT usage, particularly in the category of "always" using the tool for academic tasks. This suggests a strong reliance on ChatGPT among IT students, possibly due to the technical nature of their coursework and the need for assistance in coding, programming, and technical writing. Conversely, the purposes for which students use ChatGPT are quite diverse. They mostly use it for



information retrieval emerging as the most common use. This finding underscores ChatGPT's role as a valuable tool for accessing and processing information, facilitating research, and expediting the completion of assignments. Moreover, the significant proportion of students using ChatGPT for brainstorming ideas underscores its utility in generating creative solutions and overcoming writer's block.

Interestingly, most students from three domains agree in their insights into the specific types of assignments they use ChatGPT for. Writing assignments and literature reviews emerge as the most common tasks, indicating ChatGPT's substantial contribution to language-related assignments and academic writing. Additionally, the use of ChatGPT for presentations, lab reports, and final papers highlights its versatility in assisting with various academic tasks, including content generation, organization, and scientific documentation.

Results show that students' satisfaction levels and perceptions of ChatGPT's impact on learning quality. While overall satisfaction levels are relatively high across disciplines, there are variations in the degree of satisfaction and perceived impact. Engineering students express the highest levels of satisfaction with ChatGPT's assistance and its impact on learning quality, suggesting a strong alignment between the tool and their academic needs. In contrast, Business students demonstrate a notable appreciation for the outcomes of ChatGPT-assisted tasks, particularly in terms of assignment quality and learning impact. However, there are indications of ambivalence within each discipline, with some students expressing neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, possibly reflecting varying expectations or experiences.

Overall, these results underscore the diverse and multifaceted nature of ChatGPT usage in higher education, highlighting its potential as a versatile tool for supporting students across a range of academic tasks and disciplines. Moreover, the findings emphasize the importance of considering discipline-specific factors in evaluating students' satisfaction and optimizing ChatGPT's effectiveness in diverse academic settings (Pavlenko & Syzenko, 2024).

Despite limitations such as a small sample size and focus on only three academic disciplines, this study provides valuable insights into the use of generative AI in



academic settings. It calls for academic institutions to reconsider their attitudes towards AI in education and reevaluate their role in developing students' skills in effectively using AI tools.

Future research should delve deeper into the factors influencing technology adoption and explore prompt writing strategies' impact on the quality of results obtained. Variations in prompt styles across disciplines may introduce complexity in interpreting results, highlighting the need for nuanced approaches to AI integration in language learning contexts.

The findings of this study hold significant implications for language learning, especially in the context of ESP and the use of ChatGPT as a supporting tool. Exploring the potential of ChatGPT for enhancing ESP, Kovačević (2023) highlights its effectiveness and time-saving benefits in various aspects of lesson preparation, implementation, and student assessment. The discussion includes ChatGPT's applications in ESP alongside an overview of its broader role in education and language learning, culminating in considerations regarding its overall utility as a teaching tool (Kovačević, 2023)

Firstly, the high levels of satisfaction with ChatGPT's assistance across different academic disciplines underscore its potential as a valuable aid in language-related tasks. In ESP, where learners often encounter specialized vocabulary and technical language, ChatGPT can assist in tasks such as information retrieval, text editing, and content creation, thereby facilitating language acquisition and proficiency development within specific professional domains.

Furthermore, the diverse applications of ChatGPT, ranging from brainstorming ideas to creating visuals, suggest its versatility in supporting various language learning activities. For ESP students, this versatility is particularly advantageous as it enables them to engage with authentic materials and tasks relevant to their fields of study, thereby enhancing their domain-specific language skills and communicative competence.

Additionally, the nuanced satisfaction profiles observed across different academic disciplines underscore the importance of tailored approaches to ChatGPT



integration in language learning contexts. Educators and curriculum designers in ESP programs should consider discipline-specific factors, such as prompt styles and linguistic variations when incorporating ChatGPT into language learning activities. By aligning ChatGPT use with the unique needs and expectations of ESP learners, educators can maximize its effectiveness in supporting language acquisition and skill development within specialized professional contexts.

Overall, the findings suggest that ChatGPT has the potential to significantly contribute to language learning, particularly in ESP, by providing learners with personalized assistance, facilitating task completion, and enhancing language proficiency within specific professional domains. Moving forward, further research and exploration into the optimal integration of ChatGPT in ESP curricula and its impact on language learning outcomes are warranted to fully harness its potential as a transformative tool in language education.

## **Conclusions**

In this comprehensive exploration of teaching ESP, we have not only examined emerging trends but also illustrated the interconnected roles of ESP practitioners, subject experts, and learners within the ESP course. Recognizing the pivotal role of subject experts, we emphasized their instrumental contribution in conducting needs analyses and designing ESP curricula tailored to the linguistic and communicative needs of learners within specific disciplines. This collaboration underscores the importance of transferable skills essential for workplace success, as ESP courses aim to equip students with the language proficiency and communicative competence necessary for their future careers.

Moreover, we shed light on the evolving landscape of English for employability courses, which now typically cover a wide range of topics and activities tailored to the needs and aspirations of students preparing to enter the workforce. Through our exploration of GE, vocational English, ESP, ESAP, EMI, and English for employability courses, we highlighted their unique differences and specifics within the Ukrainian



educational framework over the past decade.

Incorporating mediation skills into ESP instruction emerged as a key theme in our discussion, highlighting its potential to enhance the effectiveness of language learning in specialized contexts. We explored how mediation can benefit teaching ESP and suggested 10 activities for integrating mediation into ESP teaching methodologies. Additionally, we compared the use of AI, particularly ChatGPT, in General English and ESP classrooms, proposing roles for students, teachers, and activities for English learning. We also discussed the potential of AI in fostering ESP learning, recognizing its capacity to support language instruction and enhance students' language proficiency.

Looking ahead, the forecast for trends in ESP teaching and learning emphasizes several key strategies and shifts in pedagogical approaches:

1. *Enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration.* We anticipate greater collaboration among ESP practitioners, subject experts, and industry professionals to ensure ESP curricula remain relevant and effective. We suggest a rise in dialogues and needs analyses aimed at customizing ESP courses to meet the distinct linguistic and communicative requirements of learners across various disciplines. Subject experts and stakeholders are likely to take on more active roles in evaluating and facilitating meaningful language practice and application.

2. *Integration of emerging technologies.* The integration of emerging technologies, particularly AI-driven tools like ChatGPT are likely to enhance ESP instruction. We expect the incorporation of AI-driven activities and resources into ESP classrooms to provide personalized learning experiences and support students' language development.

3. *Emphasis on mediation skills.* We anticipate a greater emphasis on developing mediation skills within ESP instruction to prepare students for effective communication in multilingual and cross-cultural contexts. Moreover, the integration of mediation activities into ESP curricula is likely to enhance students' language proficiency and intercultural competence.

4. *Promotion of active learning.* Active learning strategies and interactive pedagogies within ESP classrooms are likely to engage students in the language



learning process through collaborative projects, problem-solving tasks, and real-world simulations.

5. *Continuous professional development:* We expect a growing emphasis on ongoing professional development opportunities for ESP practitioners to stay updated on emerging trends, pedagogical approaches, and technological advancements in language teaching.

As AI technologies become more prevalent in language teaching, ESP educators will likely prioritize ongoing training to acquire the necessary skills for effectively integrating AI tools into their teaching practices. In addition, the integration of AI tools presents implications for prompt engineering in ESP. We believe that will empower ESP practitioners with the skills for refining and optimizing prompts tailored to specific language learning objectives and professional contexts. Specifically, this will become a tool to design prompts that stimulate critical thinking, problem-solving, and language proficiency development in alignment with the evolving needs of learners.

By embracing these forecasted trends, ESP practitioners can enhance the effectiveness of ESP instruction and equip students with the language skills and competencies needed for success in their academic and professional contexts. Through collaborative efforts, innovative pedagogies, and the integration of emerging technologies, ESP teaching and learning can evolve to meet the evolving needs of learners in today's globalized world.