
AUTHENTICITY: THE PATHWAY TO REAL-WORLD ESP COMPETENCE

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Abstract: *The primary aim of ESP instruction is to utilize genuine materials such as business letters, remote experiments, legal documents, virtual labs, discharge summaries, and comparable resources. Additionally, it employs simulations of real-life scenarios to assist learners in familiarizing themselves with language usage across various professional and academic environments. ESP education places significant importance on role-playing activities that are conducted within contexts necessitating an awareness of cultural norms, which may adversely affect business and professional practices within the corresponding discourse communities. However, in the context of instructing English to engineering students, the authenticity recognized by the instructor may not always correspond to the authenticity encountered by the student. The study of English in the fields of civil and mechanical engineering is intricately connected to the idea of addressing actual problems and equipping students with insights into authentic engineering methodologies. Therefore, it is firmly believed that reintroducing real-life experiences into educational contexts is fundamentally pivotal in addressing the shortcomings found within the education system. This paper presents an example of how to effectively work with authentic teaching materials, specifically focusing on original texts related to engineering. It provides recommendations for designing an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) coursebook tailored for engineering students, outlining the criteria to consider when selecting texts, as well as the authentic learning tasks that should accompany these original texts to enhance their authenticity. The paper also advises on formulating suitable tasks aimed at developing students' critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, ESP practitioners are encouraged to implement a variety of follow-up integration activities and to meticulously evaluate the balance of viewpoints provided, in order to mitigate any negative implications arising from the provocative content. Ultimately, the paper intends to illustrate how the integration of genuine materials within an ESP classroom can foster a more engaging and efficient educational setting, thereby preparing engineering students with the linguistic and communicative skills essential for their future professions.*

Keywords: *ESP, authenticity, real-world experiences, thinking-based teaching, verbal jousts, critical thinking skills*

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INTRODUCTION

Authenticity plays a crucial role in enhancing the importance of creating genuine learning environments. The pursuit of authenticity in both societal and educational settings arises from an awareness of a widespread feeling of inauthenticity (Barnett, 2007). This viewpoint is founded on the assumption that educational systems are artificially designed and excessively simplistic (Jonassen, Strobel, & Lee, 2006; Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, & Coulson, 1992). Additionally, conventional classrooms often provide learning experiences that are predominantly centered around lectures (Nicaise, Gibney, & Crane, 2000). In contrast, a constructivist learning environment requires students to actively build their understanding by integrating their prior knowledge with past experiences, which facilitates their grasp of new concepts or situations (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992; Jonassen, 1991).

Authentic learning experiences often take place in this type of educational framework. Maor (1999, p.46) defined a learning program centered on constructivism that incorporated "simulated authentic learning environments" as one of its fundamental design principles. In the realm of constructivism, criticism has emerged concerning the genuineness of classroom environments. It is posited that the activities carried out within these spaces do not possess real-world significance, as they remain restricted to the academic setting. As a result, the outcomes generated do not adequately engage with or resolve issues beyond the educational context, culminating in the assertion that scholarly endeavors do not provide a substantial contribution to the outside world. Additionally, the target audience for this academic work is predominantly confined to the educator or a limited number of students. Considering the various perspectives on authentic language materials and their application in educational contexts, this paper will define the concept of 'authenticity in foreign language teaching' as the comprehensive integration of original texts with language learning activities that facilitate their effective use in the process of language acquisition.

The concept of authenticity, as explained here, does not view the language classroom as a setting that strips authentic learning materials of their genuineness; rather, it validates and gives purpose to them (Pérez Cañado & Almargo Esteban, 2005). This perspective on authenticity is what promotes the incorporation of authentic materials in ESP courses, characterizing it as an integrative approach to language instruction, where an authentic interpretation of the provided language material is crucial. This course represents a particular type of language instruction, as language learners tend to prioritize the content delivered in the language over the language structures themselves (Wegener, 2008). It is essential for learners to have a certain level of proficiency in a foreign language. Nevertheless, their existing knowledge of the subject matter is of even greater significance. Furthermore, not every authentic text is necessarily suitable for every language class or group of language learners; in other words, the authenticity of a text does not guarantee its relevance to every language context. Furthermore, the use of authentic texts may be more detrimental than beneficial for language learners, as these texts are frequently composed in a language that is excessively intricate for non-native speakers. Consequently, it is essential for ESP instructors to supply their students with not only authentic language materials that are pertinent to their studies, but also a diverse selection of brief authentic texts that will enable students to easily identify and retain the vocabulary and structures.

Classroom research demonstrates that genuine content is essential for ESP lectures as it "reproduces an immersion environment and provides a realistic context for tasks that relate to learners' needs" (Benavent & Sánchez-Reyes Peñamaría, 2011, p.89). Practical tasks or real-life assignments "encourage students to be their authentic selves, thereby increasing confidence and



enthusiasm for learning” (Jernigan, 2017, p.281). In addition to providing a beneficial motivational effect (García-Pinar, 2019), the use of authentic materials and realia in ESP courses—including technical manuals, blueprints, technical drawings, diagrams, tools, safety equipment, site photographs, videos, and topographic charts—immerses students in natural language and real-world challenges, thereby integrating them into their prospective professional community. The authenticity of an ESP course “refers not only to the form, contents, and the communicative goal of the texts but also, and most importantly, to the purpose of reading” (Sznajder, 2001, p.390). Ideally, the materials chosen for educational purposes should merge language acquisition with additional professional growth. Students and educators can utilize genuine resources as a tool to “link the formal, and to some extent artificial, environment of the classroom with the real world... [where] the students will eventually be using the language they are learning” (House, 2008, p.55).

Nevertheless, students' engagement with authentic language typically requires assistance. Employing authentic materials can pose challenges if the methodology is not selected with care. The initial difficulty that students face fundamentally arises from the language itself. Almost every piece of authentic material necessitates a thorough examination to ensure alignment with the learner's language proficiency (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015). Therefore, “the role of the language teacher is not to delude language learners by adapting the text but to prepare them by giving them awareness and necessary skills to understand how the language is used” in the realm of their forthcoming professional communication (Berardo, 2006, p.60). In a thematic ESP course, learners need to be equipped with a comprehensive "toolkit" of terminology and vocabulary items (such as subject-specific vocabulary) relevant to their field of study. This course encompasses not only original texts but also genuine types of tasks for learners, facilitating the authentic application of these texts. To ensure a suitable and focused selection of texts for an ESP coursebook tailored to civil and mechanical engineering students, it is essential to conduct several analyses that will facilitate the initiation of this process. This includes a needs analysis that addresses the specific academic discipline of the students, taking into account both their current and expected needs, aligned with the broader and specific goals of the ESP course, as well as an examination of the students' prior knowledge of the language and their foundational understanding of the discipline.

It can be presumed that coursebooks for ESP in civil and mechanical engineering should not merely be viewed as an efficient method for learning a foreign language in a vacuum, nor as a tool exclusively meant for delivering subject content to students in English. Instead, both the language and subject matter learning dimensions must be acknowledged when fostering effective communication between the texts used as teaching instruments and ESP students as engaged participants. Only in this manner does the content gain greater appeal, and challenges related to the language are skilfully managed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a widespread agreement that ESP programs, characterized by their intensive and specialized nature, provide significant advantages for students' career advancements, as they not only contextualize industry-specific terminology but also foster the soft skills necessary for effective communication within a global professional community. By emphasizing authenticity and adopting learner-centered methodologies, educators can enrich ESP course materials, making them more effective and engaging in supporting their students' professional development.

The concept of authenticity arose simultaneously with a strong support for student-centered learning and is viewed as a key attribute for promoting best practices in diverse educational contexts, including online learning environments (Herrington & Herrington, 2008; Herrington & Kervin, 2007). Providing students with "real-world" experiences has resulted in the inclusion of a variety of



project-based and problem-oriented components in the curriculum, such as student involvement in impressive sustainable projects within civil and mechanical engineering or initiatives concerning community green buildings or the 3D-printed steel footbridge. Comprehensive theories and design frameworks concerning ESP have been established to enhance authenticity through the incorporation of strategies such as simulations, cognitive apprenticeship, and problem-based learning methods. These strategies immerse students in activities that reflect those carried out by professionals, including design tasks and scientific research, while delivering ‘real-world’ scenarios and challenges (Savery & Duffy, 1995). In essence, within an ESP course, educators provide students with opportunities to participate in projects that are meaningful beyond the classroom, imitating genuine work and life circumstances, which involve client interactions, pre-set criteria, and various limitations. The significance of authenticity in an ESP lecture is intricately linked to the types of activities selected by the instructor to involve students in the educational experience. We firmly assert that group learning, task-based learning, and content-based learning promote genuine interaction in the learning process. For example, instead of requiring students to work on abstract projects that do not have any real-world relevance—such as building a bridge model with toothpicks or pasta and evaluating its strength and load capacity—they could concentrate on collecting data related to specific topics, such as analyzing traffic patterns, tracking water usage in their homes throughout the year, designing water filters for insights into environmental engineering, or constructing windmills to investigate mechanical engineering. This would allow them to examine practical approaches for reducing traffic congestion and water usage. Research has shown that numerous essential elements motivate students to participate in a particular activity and later follow a corresponding career path. One such element is that the experience is genuine, significant, and corresponds with their personal perception of reality (Hong, 1996).

Genuine materials in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are regarded as an essential resource for exposing learners to realistic communication scenarios they may face in their respective fields of research or employment. According to Tominac Coslovich and Borucinsky (2010), the educational significance of authentic materials lies in their ability to offer both educators and students valuable perspectives on language evolution, along with developments occurring outside the classroom that pertain to current events or pertinent fields of study when utilized in an ESP setting. Furthermore, Kelly et al. (2002) emphasize that authentic materials introduce realistic language into the classroom; by immersing students in the nuances of the target language culture, a more favorable learning attitude emerges. There are two key principles that can inspire students during the learning process. The first principle involves a problem-solving approach to tasks, which increases student engagement when they tackle real-life problems. The second principle states that learners exhibit greater motivation when acquiring knowledge that aids in addressing challenges in their professional careers. Torregrosa Benavent and Sánchez-Reyes Peñamaría (2011) assert that authentic materials enhance motivation among learners in specific language domains where extra practice may be beneficial. Consequently, the incorporation of authentic materials in ESP classrooms is essential in closing the divide between language acquisition and actual professional requirements. By emphasizing authenticity, educators can cultivate a stimulating and relevant learning atmosphere that promotes both language skills and practical usage. David and Șerban-Oprescu (2019) assert that authentic materials provide both linguistic and socio-cultural advantages, including enhanced language acquisition and usage, a deeper comprehension of language functioning in particular contexts, improved communication abilities, and heightened cultural awareness (David & Șerban-Oprescu, 2019: 168). They also highlight psychological benefits such as greater motivation, increased self-esteem, refined "autonomous" learning skills, and a "sense of achievement" (David & Șerban-Oprescu, 2019: 169). Nurmetov et.al (2025, p.236) believe



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“that the use of authentic materials in ESP not only enriches the educational experience but also equips students with the language skills and contextual knowledge essential for their future careers, reaffirming the importance of adapting teaching approaches to meet the evolving needs of specific professional fields”.

ESP courses are designed to meet specific criteria. Primarily, these courses are goal-oriented, meaning they are developed to cater to the unique needs of the learner (Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans, M.J. St John, 2009). Additionally, ESP may utilize a methodology that differs from that of General Purpose English instruction. The methodology employed in ESP affects the activities relevant to the specific disciplines it addresses, creating a curriculum that highlights specialized language (grammar, vocabulary, register), skills, discourse, and genres related to these activities (Dudley-Evans, M.J. St John, 2009). As noted by Robinson (1991), ESP courses are generally confined to a limited duration, during which the objectives of the course are required to be met. Usually, these courses address adult learners, which include individuals attending higher education institutions, employees of organizations, or students in vocational education programs. Although most ESP courses assume that participants possess a basic understanding of the language structure, there are occasions when they can be successfully taught to learners at the beginner stage of their language education (Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans, M.J. St John, 2009).

Numerous methodologies have shown their effectiveness throughout various time frames, and as time moves forward, new innovations have surfaced to meet changing demands. The modern viewpoint asserts that language teaching takes place within a defined context, where the educators' pedagogical expertise and the application of appropriate instructional techniques are crucial elements for enabling a smooth educational experience (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Recent methodologies in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) have transitioned towards a learner-focused and exploratory model, in contrast to the traditional, educator-centred, drill-based approach. The incorporation of technology in language education during ESP lectures offers various advantages. It boosts student participation and collaboration during productive tasks, which enhances the authenticity of the learning experience and promotes the development of independent learning abilities and strategies. Web-based tasks can foster learner autonomy, enhance communication competencies, stimulate collaborative learning, and encourage critical thinking. The essential competencies for engineering students, namely communication, critical thinking, and teamwork, are crucial as they rely heavily on technology, which is significantly advantageous for language acquisition. This highlights the importance of integrating technology into the Engineering English curriculum. Additionally, the literature review offers a thorough analysis of diverse English teaching methodologies, encompassing both traditional techniques and modern approaches. Nevertheless, a significant research gap persists concerning direct comparisons of various methods to ascertain which is most effective in meeting specific learning objectives. While certain individual studies may examine the effectiveness of specific techniques, there is a marked lack of thorough comparative research that systematically analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of multiple strategies.

Given that our ESP students may come from a diverse array of high schools and institutions nationwide, it is crucial for them to improve their knowledge and skills to reach a consistent level of competency. Clearly, every language user has a somewhat broad "unconscious" comprehension of language mechanics. Nevertheless, our methodology for teaching English applicable to civil and mechanical engineering offers further revelations as defined by linguists, prompting ESP learners to assess the efficacy of these descriptions and analyses while relating them to their own intuitions. This viewpoint regarding language promotes a thorough comprehension of its internal composition (form) and the various uses of language in everyday communication (function). While a multitude of research has explored the pros and cons of utilizing authentic resources in educational settings (e.g.,



Islam & Mares, 2003; Kelly et al., 2002; Torregrosa Benavent & Sánchez-Reyes Peñamaría, 2011, etc.), there has been comparatively limited investigation into the strategies and methodologies for adapting materials for instructional purposes (e.g., Borucinsky & Jelčić Čolakovac, 2020; Islam & Mares, 2003; Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, 2019) as well as adjusting the levels of authenticity in educational resources.

As noted by Torregrosa Benavent and Sánchez-Reyes Peñamaría (2011, p.93), authentic materials “motivate and immerse learners in specific areas of the target language in which practice is needed”. Genuine materials can inspire students by instilling the sense of being capable of understanding authentic content, thereby providing the learner with the drive to enhance their learning abilities (Buzarna-Tihenea & Nădrag, 2018, p.147).

Incorporating genuine materials into the ESP classroom can greatly enhance student motivation, as it improves their educational experience, provided that the materials are pertinent to the students' specific academic field. Authentic materials hold significant value for engineering students since they encourage engagement in their studies by presenting exposure to the 'real' language. Nonetheless, if the implementation of these texts is not paired with suitable authentic tasks, the overall impact on learning can be quite negative. It is our firm belief that when creating an ESP course for students of civil and mechanical engineering, two categories of inquiries should be considered. The first category pertains to the development of the coursebook that fulfills methodological standards, thereby assisting students in comprehending intricate engineering texts and enhancing their language abilities. The second category emphasizes the structuring of language exercises to align with real-life language practices, resulting in a deeper understanding of original texts.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out to evaluate how the incorporation of authentic materials in ESP classes influences the communicative competencies of engineering students and their motivation levels. Our research began with the premise that employing authentic materials in language instruction would enable students to improve their communicative skills in the target language, boost their overall confidence in using their knowledge in real-life communication scenarios, and ultimately enhance their interest and motivation towards learning English. For these specific reasons, we conducted multiple interviews with our second-year students from the Civil and Mechanical Engineering Faculties to assess their perceptions regarding the use of authentic materials, as well as the advantages and challenges they faced during their exposure to such materials. The results of the interviews indicated that teaching ESP through authentic materials significantly benefited students' language acquisition and communicative skills in the target language. Consequently, we have incorporated authentic materials in various methods while planning and organizing teaching and learning activities, with the intention that ESP instructors will implement them widely and effectively in their lectures. Furthermore, the interviews examined the fundamental aspects that enhance authenticity in ESP classes, highlighting how materials, tasks, and instructional methods contribute to establishing a learning atmosphere conducive to professional communication. Provided that the authentic materials engage the learners, teaching and learning can occur in a manner that is friendly to the learner. Consequently, English teachers are encouraged to focus on the needs and interests of their students to ensure that their primary objective of teaching is fulfilled productively, with materials that remain pertinent and effective in addressing the changing needs of the learners.



FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The resources utilized to enhance participants' educational experience must adhere to a specific set of criteria. This includes immersing learners in language within a variety of contexts, providing them with current information on subjects they find engaging, and aiding them in developing a deeper understanding of language use in real-world situations. In essence, these materials must be authentic. It is widely recognized that students are genuinely motivated to learn only when the instructional content consistently meets their needs. Indeed, this signifies that as students comprehend the intent behind their studies and the teaching materials, engaging with intricate engineering texts in English becomes progressively easier. Complex authentic texts might compel learners to step beyond their comfort zones and endeavor to grasp challenging and unfamiliar language. Additionally, when confronted with such circumstances, learners are motivated to independently seek out unfamiliar terms or utilize their existing knowledge of the subject to infer the meanings of certain words. Nonetheless, as elaborated later in this article, overly complex language can dishearten learners and lead them to doubt their own capabilities.

The coursebook ought to promote language activities that concentrate on enhancing language skills essential for achieving proficiency in English for specific purposes. This includes: 1) skills for reading comprehension, 2) translation abilities, encompassing translation from English to the native language and back, and 3) skills for summarizing both oral and written texts. It is critical to foster the aforementioned language skills and to implement teaching activities designed to practice specific engineering terminology through the use of synonyms, antonyms, and translation. These activities must align with those utilized in the process of acquiring knowledge in the subject's native language, which includes typical practices in teaching engineering sciences. Examples of such practices involve making inferences through reading, summarizing the text post-reading, analyzing and interpreting information, as well as presenting oral and/or written summaries. A solid grasp of technical terminology allows them to proficiently read documentation, participate in coding communities, and comprehend best practices. Moreover, understanding specific terminology enables developers to convey information clearly with colleagues, work collaboratively on projects, and resolve issues more effectively. Consequently, a strong grasp of pertinent terminology not only improves individual skills but also promotes teamwork and creativity within groups, thereby leading to successful project results.

Here is a captivating and genuine activity focused on Engineering materials, which stands as a fundamental and vocabulary-rich subject within the realms of Civil and Mechanical Engineering studies.

- Pre-Reading Task/ Prediction activity/ Warming up activity
- Instructions: Examine the title "Engineering materials" and quickly read the opening sentences of the text. Anticipate which aspects of engineering may be discussed. Consider factors such as *properties*, *usability*, or *interactions*. Engage in a discussion with a partner or write down your reflections.

This activity engages their existing knowledge and establishes a reason for reading. It enables students to anticipate certain terms based on the context and exchange their thoughts on the subject matter with their classmates.

- Vocabulary Pre-Teaching
- Instructions: Familiarize yourself with the subsequent terms: *damping*, *elastomers*, *creep*, *cast iron*, *anisotropy*, *stainless steel*, *embrittlement*, and *refractory*. Compile a list of these terms and provide a concise definition or explanation for each, drawing on your previous knowledge.



▪ Match the words or phrases in column A with their definition in column B (Ionițiu (a), 2025, p.52):

▪ A	▪ B
▪ 1. damping	▪ a. a hard, relatively brittle alloy of iron and carbon that can be readily cast in a mold and contains a higher proportion of carbon than steel (typically 2.0–4.3 percent).
▪ 2. elastomers	▪ b. the property of a material which allows it to change or assume different properties in different directions as opposed to isotropy.
▪ 3. creep	▪ c. a substance that is resistant to heat.
▪ 4. cast iron	▪ d. a natural or synthetic polymer having elastic properties, e.g. rubber.
▪ 5. anisotropy	▪ e. a significant decrease in the ductility of a material, which makes the material brittle.
▪ 6. stainless steel	▪ f. slow movement, especially at a steady but almost imperceptible pace.
▪ 7. embrittlement	▪ g. a decrease in the amplitude of oscillation as a result of energy being drained from the system to overcome frictional or other resistive forces.
▪ 8. refractory	▪ h. a form of steel containing chromium, resistant to tarnishing and rust.

The assigned activity facilitates the development of familiarity with essential terminology that enhances understanding. Subsequently, students engage in a thorough reading of the text, focusing on specific terminology associated with the subject, and proceed to correlate the glossary of terms with their corresponding definitions. This process is regarded as the preliminary phase of retaining new terminology. Through the process of matching new terms to their definitions, students are able to commit them to memory within a contextual framework.

Moving forward, we will attempt to demonstrate the effectiveness of four communicative teaching strategies that are based on cognitive processes: guided discussions, role-based group activities, the application of thinking maps, and creative writing, all aimed at enhancing students' professional competencies and general cultural awareness. “The thinking and communicative learning environment created through the use of specially selected instructional strategies serves as a key factor in the development of the professional communication skills” (Kulamikhina et al., 2020, p. 214), which in combination with “global education”, collaboration, mediation, and conflict resolution become the “skills most sought after in private and public corporations today” (Diachkova et al., 2021, p. 394). The activities employed in the teaching process highlight a multifaceted approach to education. The methodologies utilized in the educational process exemplify a



comprehensive approach to learning. Predictive activities, or the engagement of existing knowledge, create a cognitive structure that enhances understanding in later sessions. In light of the constantly evolving landscape of global issues and international relations, the skill to critically interact with genuine content has grown increasingly crucial. Teaching that is centered around thinking investigates, stimulates, and assesses the learning capabilities of students, enabling them to evolve into self-directed and intrinsically motivated learners (Yusuf, 2017, p. 213). When this thinking-centered approach is integrated with communicative practices within authentic real-world contexts, it facilitates the application of the experiences acquired by students in their future endeavors (Kulamikhina et al., 2020, p. 211). Specifically, students enrolled in English courses linked to Civil and Mechanical Engineering must develop the ability to connect these lessons to their future career goals. Given the importance of technical vocabulary for those studying engineering, a highly effective approach to mastering new terminology involves engaging in collaborative activities that prompt students to investigate the subtleties of associated terms. By analyzing and differentiating terminology, students can enhance their understanding of meanings and increase their capability to utilize these concepts effectively in practical situations. In this regard, learners should strive to articulate new terminology in their own expressions, apply it contextually, and comprehend how it integrates within a broader context.

Ultimately, it is important to recognize that grasping the intricacies of the situation and addressing the requirements of students from diverse backgrounds is not a straightforward task. Nevertheless, it is feasible to transform an uncomfortable classroom experience into a valuable opportunity. Frequently encouraging students to express their experiences in a course can significantly reduce the stress associated with this emotionally charged subject, thereby fostering an inclusive and democratic atmosphere, in addition to promoting self-reflection and self-awareness. For example, to enhance their understanding of civil engineering design, students may analyze the most significant and catastrophic structural failures, engaging in discussions where they share their perspectives. This undertaking not only hones their analytical abilities but also cultivates a deeper appreciation for the importance of deliberate design decisions. The capacity to assess real-world cases equips students to tackle intricate problems in their future professional endeavors, thus closing the divide between academic instruction and industry demands.

The students' contentment regarding follow-up activities, which they believe aided in managing authentic engineering texts—such as discussion tasks (verbal exchanges, round-tables, debates), critical thinking tasks (analytical and critical questions, mind maps, countering arguments), integration activities (project work, case studies), and vocabulary enhancement (thematic vocabulary, euphemisms)—is often dependent on their prior knowledge of the language as well as the subject matter. Guided discussions that concentrate on systematic, collaborative thought processes while honing technical English and engaging in verbal exchanges that mimic debates with rapid, organized interactions to foster critical thinking and argumentation serve as effective thinking-oriented communicative techniques for ESP. These discussions propel learners to go beyond mere language practice, immersing them in reasoning, evaluation, and argumentative skills.

To foster fluency in technical English and enhance higher-order thinking through organized collaborative dialogue, the following steps outline the implementation of guided discussions in your English for Specific Purposes (ESP) lectures: begin by crafting a realistic scenario (such as *engineering materials, foundation types, or engine types*) and formulating a series of guiding questions that necessitate analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, while also providing students with language support related to essential technical vocabulary and functional phrases. Subsequently, facilitate a brief brainstorming session on the subject, assigning students to collaborate in pairs or groups and motivating them to utilize reasoning, contrasting, or concluding connectors.



If you are interested in enhancing quick thinking, argumentation, and persuasive communication within technical settings, consider engaging in verbal jousts. Here is a step-by-step guide for implementation: select a controversial technical assertion (for example, "*Steel offers superior performance compared to concrete in modern civil constructions/ Deep foundations are frequently utilized when erecting high-rise buildings/ The pros and cons of thermal engines.*"). Subsequently, develop language scaffolds for argumentation that will assist your students in crafting a formal, technical, succinct, and persuasive rebuttal. Begin by organizing your students into two opposing teams, with each team delivering brief arguments (lasting 30–60 seconds) in alternating turns, promoting rebuttals and counterarguments through the use of discourse markers.

In accordance with the recommendations set forth by Hess (2009) and Kulamikhina et al. (2020), the resolution of contentious issues during the ESP lecture was facilitated through engaging discussions alongside *critical thinking activities*, specifically problem-solving scenarios, analysis, and deliberation on a particular technical subject. During these activities, learners are generally presented with a series of provocative questions and are required to ascertain the topic and the thesis of the article. This task can only be accomplished if they adhere to the author's reasoning and grasp their perspective. It is our belief that the effectiveness of these tasks increases when they follow contrasting texts, especially when there are significant differences between two or more articles (or between an article and a video clip). For example, provide students with two brief written and visual descriptions of various insulation materials, prompting them to compare the pros and cons, and to determine which material is more efficient and their reasoning behind this conclusion.

Task-based activities that promote *analytical thinking*, such as mind-mapping texts, appear to be an effective strategy for assisting students in comprehending the author's reasoning. Extracting genuine information from authentic texts can be both stimulating and motivating for students, as these resources showcase the evolution of language usage that is not present in textbooks. Engineering texts frequently contain complex terminology and organized information. Mind maps deconstruct this content into visual and logical clusters, facilitating easier understanding and retention for learners. The graphical organization of the reasoning within the text is crucial when students are tasked with identifying the inconsistencies in a particular approach or theory. Visual representations facilitate the identification of logical fallacies or other errors (such as inadequate or excessive exemplification or irrelevant arguments). Furthermore, a significant benefit of mind maps is that students can subsequently utilize them as prepared drafts for composing argumentative essays and engaging in verbal debates. In essence, mind mapping holds considerable importance in ESP as it serves as a strategic tool for planning presentations, reports, and discussions while also fostering logical progression and structured communication in professional settings.

A student-centered adaptation of this follow-up task requires learners to seek out differing ideas that oppose those presented in the original text's mind map. They must venture beyond the course material and aid in the expansion of the course in their inquiries. The purpose of this assignment is to instruct students that the viewpoints conveyed in the articles are open to being contested in class. This exercise additionally guides learners to reorient the narrative by considering the understanding models of different cultures (Breeze, 2017). The ability to recognize opposing viewpoints is crucial for students' capacity to solidify their own ideas, as they value the range of perspectives offered, asserting that even "negative" content can serve as a basis for further discussion.

Genuine content in an ESP course tailored for Civil and Mechanical Engineering students typically includes recent press releases, news articles, and declarations from public officials or prominent figures, including CEOs. Many of these declarations warrant detailed discussion and can be utilized for comprehensive classroom analysis regarding potential implications. As noted by Jernigan (2017), the *analytical interpretation* of such news allows students to learn how to read



'between the lines.' Furthermore, brief follow-up role-playing activities, in which one student assumes the role of the CEO while others take on the roles of journalists, provide them with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the situational context. Such activities additionally afford students a highly desired chance to "address the critique." Role-based group work holds significant value in ESP as it reflects genuine professional interactions while fostering the development of linguistic and interpersonal skills. Through the simulation of authentic professional environments and the encouragement of cooperation and teamwork, students enhance their practical language abilities by engaging in negotiations, clarification, reporting, and persuasion, utilizing specialized terminology pertinent to their field.

In response to Berardo's (2006) appeal for an expanded inventory of ESP resources, equipping students with essential topic-specific vocabulary significantly enhances their capacity to engage with authentic materials and articulate perspectives during classroom discussions. It is imperative to implement targeted vocabulary instruction prior to students' introduction to authentic materials. One potential approach to facilitate comprehension of complex engineering documents is to provide students with a compilation of unfamiliar terms and expressions essential for understanding the text *before* it is presented in its entirety. These terms and phrases ought to be defined in English, allowing students to consult this list both during their reading and after they have finished. Vocabulary-centered exercises serve as an especially effective approach in technical education, where a strong grasp of specialized language is crucial. Activities such as matching tasks, sentence completion, and multiple-choice questions are all crafted to enhance familiarity with the terms. Provided that students engage in essential vocabulary practice related to their subjects, they develop the ability to interpret the metaphors and euphemisms found in original feature articles. The process of acquiring subject-specific vocabulary can also significantly invigorate discussions. Continuous exposure to key terminology, alongside its application in various contexts, fosters long-term retention, thereby equipping students with the linguistic accuracy required for effective professional communication in the field of engineering.

In accordance with the recommendations provided by Diachkova et al. (2021) regarding the enhancement of soft skills to navigate cultural and conceptual differences within the educational environment, a consistent practice of vocabulary related to civil and mechanical engineering was integrated into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes. This integration included argumentation exercises designed as *verbal jousts*, which were significantly valued by the students. These verbal jousts equip participants with the skills necessary to construct well-organized arguments and enable students to articulate their points effectively. During these activities, students have the option to either assume one of the roles proposed by the instructor or draw from a randomized role card. This approach encourages them to develop their arguments for a position they may not personally endorse. Verbal jousts, alternatively referred to as structured debates or argument-based exercises, hold significant value in ESP as they meld language practice with critical thinking within professional settings. Students engage in activities that enhance their functional language abilities, such as courteously expressing agreement or disagreement, presenting supporting evidence, and defending their viewpoints. This approach promotes logical reasoning in English beyond mere memorization. Furthermore, verbal jousts foster what is described as "multimodal" learning by encouraging students to draw on arguments they have previously encountered in news articles or have absorbed from authentic videos, as well as from other digital and multimodal sources (Xia, 2020). Multimodal resources, including videos, interactive quizzes, and VR simulations, enhance the learning experience by making it dynamic and pertinent, thereby minimizing boredom and boosting learner motivation. Strategies that incorporate multiple modalities, particularly those emphasizing visual aids to elucidate abstract concepts, offer contextual audio and video examples for practical application.



This approach fosters interactive activities, such as role-plays and simulations, to strengthen comprehension. It is important to acknowledge that instructors must offer students direction on how to engage with digital and multimodal resources while creating digitally-mediated multimodal genres (Xia, 2020: 156). Consequently, multimodal learning in ESP is of great significance as it incorporates various modes of communication—including text, visuals, audio, and interactive components—to improve language learning and professional skills.

Additional speaking assignments (for example, briefing the delegation, reporting to a senior official, prioritizing key points of significance) can effectively combine problem-solving activities with the generation of student-created content. This process ultimately aids the educator in fostering a *field-independent learner* who is equipped to cultivate essential professional skills. Problem-solving assignments replicate real-world workplace scenarios—such as addressing client grievances, identifying problems, or negotiating resolutions—rendering the learning experience practical and readily applicable. Numerous problem-solving activities are geared towards group collaboration, such as meetings, role-playing, and case studies. These efforts foster cooperative learning, enhance interpersonal communication abilities, and build confidence in utilizing English within professional environments. Through the resolution of authentic problems in an engaging and purposeful manner, students recognize the clear significance of English in their professional paths, thereby boosting their motivation and retention.

Students are required to conduct individual preliminary research to express informed opinions regarding the subject matter. By doing so, students actively engage in content creation that illuminates various local, national, and cultural issues. Additionally, the aim of this task is to diminish the distinction between students' information searches for solely educational reasons and to cultivate a practice of consistent fact-checking for their prospective professional aspirations. Ultimately, the *collaborative and integrative activities* suggested by Diachkova et al. (2021, p. 394) within a soft skills development framework for 'global education'—including project work on sensitive subjects, case studies of contentious issues, panel discussions, and structured classroom debates—serve various functions. Such collaborative and integrative activities are crucial in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education, as they mirror the manner in which professionals engage in real-world scenarios and facilitate the development of both linguistic and occupational skills among learners. Typically, in most specialized disciplines, tasks are seldom performed in isolation. Professionals work together across various departments and assimilate knowledge from diverse sources. ESP learners are required to engage in activities that mimic teamwork and interdisciplinary communication. Collaborating on impactful tasks renders learning vibrant and pertinent. Learners recognize the role of English in enhancing their collaborative skills for future career opportunities, thereby increasing their motivation.

In conclusion, a model task that can harmonize various classroom backgrounds is one that, in various aspects, invites students to engage in critical thinking. It directs their comprehension of authentic materials, encourages them to undertake a more substantial level of analysis, addresses emerging differences in viewpoints, and inspires them to produce supplementary content (such as mind maps, reviews, etc.). The activities presented in this section illustrate a departure from traditional, lecture-driven instruction, positioning students at the heart of the learning experience and enabling them to take responsibility for their education. This instructional strategy corresponds with constructivist learning theories, which highlight the significance of active, experiential learning in developing a profound understanding.



CONCLUSION

We have established that a crucial element of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is the incorporation of authentic teaching materials into the classroom. In the context of ESP instruction, the utilization of authentic materials involves reading, understanding, and interpreting texts that are authored by native speakers for purposes other than education. Given that original texts can often be quite intricate and intellectually challenging, particularly in the field of engineering, this paper aimed to demonstrate that such texts can be effectively employed in the instruction of English to students specializing in civil and mechanical engineering. We have provided several practical suggestions not just for ESP educators but also for students, aimed at significantly enhancing their teaching and learning abilities through the implementation of four communicative teaching strategies based on critical thinking. These strategies include guided discussions, role-based group activities, the application of thinking maps, and creative writing exercises. To successfully realize this goal, the selection of engineering texts must be both appropriate and intentional, taking into account students' prior language and subject knowledge as well as their current and future career requirements. The process of choosing texts and utilizing them in the teaching of ESP relies on the premise that students possess an adequate level of both linguistic and communicative ability, enabling these texts to stimulate their previously acquired competencies and to connect them with new knowledge and language experiences that are pertinent to their future careers. The careful selection of genuine engineering texts in a textbook can considerably enhance students' motivation and increase their consciousness that these texts provide a chance to engage with the discourse and vocabulary that are directly applicable to them, while also addressing their professional requirements.

By combining genuine materials with clearly articulated instructional strategies, teachers are able to develop an engaging and interactive learning environment that promotes both involvement and the acquisition of skills. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of this approach is significantly dependent on a deep comprehension of student requirements, along with the ongoing modification of materials to align with industry changes and technological progress.

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