

# **Teaching English for Specific Purposes to the Specialists of International Relations at Higher Education in Kazakhstan: experience and challenges**

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## **1. Introduction**

A problem of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is actual nowadays. Researchers show the dependence between the leading language theory and teaching languages: e.g., in 1960-s students mainly analyzed sentences (see Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; ESP in European Higher Education, 2008; The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes, 2013 for more details). It seemed that since the introducing communicative approach, and globalization process lots of ESP teaching problems should disappear: for instance, content and material choice, students' motivation and etc. However, researchers continue to discuss the situation with ESP teaching and name similar problems across the world. Of course, it is possible to observe some changes in practice and attempts to solve the special problems in different specialties and counties.

This paper focuses on teaching ESP to the students at Kazakh-German University (GKU) in Kazakhstan. The peculiarity of the university is that students learn two foreign languages: English and German. Both foreign languages are given equal number of hours and taught during three years: the first two years program is made up of 180 hours of General language a year, six hours a week of each language. At the end of the second course students have to achieve B2 level of language proficiency in both languages. This two-year program is followed by sixty hours of English/German for Specific Purposes in the third year. The third year program prepares students for studies with foreign lecturers who mainly teach in German. So, in teaching German there is a clear-set goal, that is, to get students ready to attend and complete courses offered by visiting professors, in German. There is a different situation with English in the same respect: 1. English is taught as an international language that may be required in a future career; and 2. the course presents another opportunity to practice the English language along with the German one.

The aim of this article is to share the experience of two ESP practitioners teaching the third year students of International Relations at KGU by focusing on the following: critical evaluation of existing ESP teaching methods both in literature and classroom; identification of existing problems in teaching ESP at Higher Educational level in Kazakhstan (for identification of which the teacher's and

student's questionnaires were used); and discussion of possible solutions and giving recommendations.

## **2. The problem of defining ESP**

English for Specific (Special) Purposes (ESP) is a subdivision of a wider field, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), which could be defined as "...the area of inquiry and practice in the development of language programs for people who need a language to meet a predictable range of communicative needs" (Swales, 1992:300 in Knight & others, 2010). The researchers describe ESP not as a different kind of language but rather as another approach where learner's needs are in focus (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). That means that people do not just learn English, they need it mainly for communication either in their work area or for study and research. Hutchinson & Waters gave even a broader definition of ESP: it is "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning" (p. 19). Using such understanding, the following conclusion could be made: any language course might be called as ESP if there are students with a common purpose for learning a language. So is it enough to have only common aims to call a course ESP? Other questions could be raised as well. How does General English Course differ? Do we need it at all?

Another way to define ESP is to enumerate its peculiar features, which was done in 1988. Since then the characteristics are just slightly adapted. All features are divided into absolute (obligatory) and variable (not necessarily) characteristics. The number of the characteristics is varied in different sources. We use the classification given by M. K. Ahmed (2014):

- I. Absolute characteristics:
  - Existence of "specified needs of the learner";
  - Content related to "particular disciplines, occupations and activities";
  - Appropriate language of those professions;
  - Being "in contrast with General English" (Not everyone agree to include this as the absolute characteristics, Dudley-Evans and St. John, e.g.)
- II. Variable characteristics:
  - Skills (e.g., reading only);
  - Methodology

The modern process of language learning and/or teaching can be divided into learning/ teaching General English or EGP (English for General Purposes), and ESP, which can be further subdivid-

ed into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (Knight & others, 2010). Thus, the problem of finding difference between EGP and ESP is still popular.

Another issue is connected with a variety of EOP courses. In the focus of this paper lies a course of English for students of International Relations (IR). It is interesting to note that in the literature such course is not mentioned. It is possible to find English for Social Studies or English for diplomats; however this specialty differs from these ones. The peculiarities of teaching ESP to the future specialist in IR and other issues connected with teaching ESP at GKU are described in the next section.

### **3. Peculiarities of teaching ESP at GKU**

One of the peculiarities of a foreign language course at GKU in the third year of study is that the course is given only sixty hours a year, or thirty hours a term which means just two hours or one lesson per week. These hours include control and assessment classes too. How sufficient is this kind of course duration? Students' feedback is two-fold: on the one hand, those with higher levels of English are mostly content with everything, on the other hand, those less advanced in English complain of insufficiency of class hours, especially, when German usage grows, which brings the 'German interference' factor (these challenges will be discussed in the section four).

Before talking about teaching English for Specific Purposes (now – Professionally-oriented English) at GKU it is relevant to give an overview of educational programs offered here. The University offers education at three major Faculties: of Economics, Economics and Engineering, and of Social and Political Sciences. Students get prepared for careers in Economics and Business Studies, Engineering, and Social Studies. Thus, students at GKU take courses in ESP for Finance and Banking, Marketing and Management, Information Technologies and Telecoms, Logistics, Energy Engineering, and International Relations.

Our experience of teaching English (ESP included) tells us that teachers of English in Kazakhstan are not usually specially trained for teaching ESP. This is true for GKU, too, where we take the challenge as it is and try our best by intuition mainly. It is a challenge in the environment where a teacher is viewed as a source of knowledge. But how can a teacher who has only General English knowledge and experience qualify to teach a language of a specific field without having the field expertise. Some educational institutions write textbooks and teaching guides of their own, authored by leading professors of those institutions. However, that is a rare case.

At present the situation is a lot 'friendlier' for teachers than it used to be even five years ago because then teachers were forced to search for teaching material wherever possible: colleagues

teaching major courses, textbooks for major courses in native languages, mostly in Russian, articles from newspapers and journals, and so on. Thus, teachers had to get some self-education in order to acquire basic knowledge in the field of their ESP. Now various Oxford or Cambridge University Press-published textbooks in ESP are available in bookshops, and GKU has been keeping track of new supplies to acquire anything appropriate on the market.

#### 4. Challenges of teaching ESP and how to deal with them

It seems that ESP practitioners have similar problems in spite of a specialty or a country. Having adapted the questionnaire of researchers from Pakistan (Abdulaziz & others, 2012) we made a small-scale research among English language teachers of GKU to find out what problems they have while teaching ESP. As the number of teachers is not big: seven teachers conduct ESP courses (we got the answers only from five), the results are not compatible; however, it is enough to illustrate that teachers from different countries have similar challenges and probably solutions could be useful to any interested party.

The following questions were asked:

- 1) Have you been formally trained for ESP teaching? If yes, was it a degree/ diploma/ certificate?
- 2) How long have you been into ESP teaching?
- 3) What ESP courses did you teach?
- 4) What problems have you had while teaching ESP?
- 5) How did you solve the problems?

At first, we present the chart showing what problems ESP practitioners have at GKU (see Figure 1); and then describe the most challenging issues in more details.

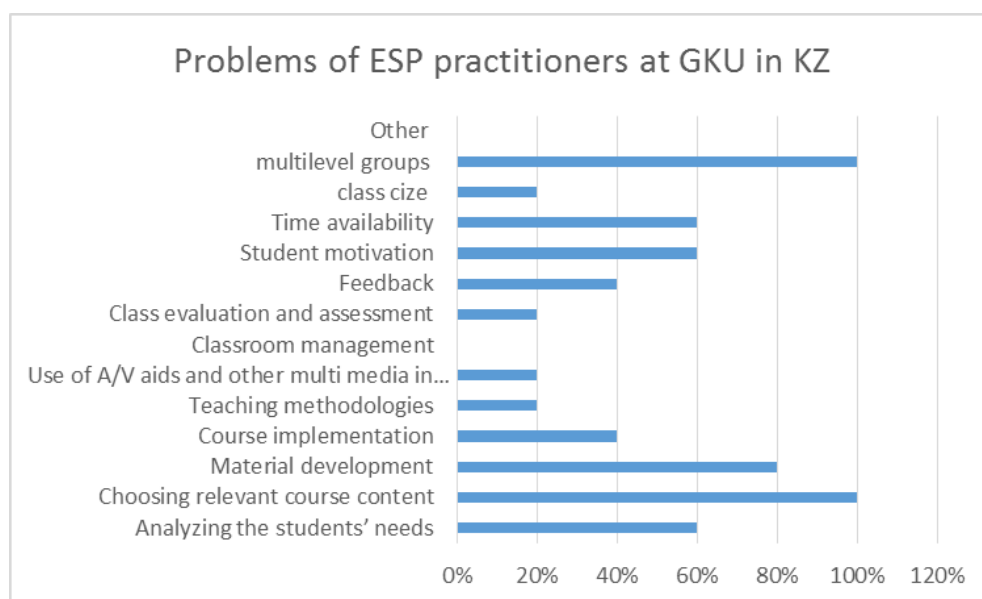


Figure 1

One of the reasons for difficulties in teaching ESP mentioned in the literature is lack of teachers' knowledge of ESP teaching (Abdulaziz & others, 2012). We mentioned this above as well. To our surprise, the research shows that it is not so obvious. The practitioners having either studied ESP as another degree or having a special course in a master program have the same problems as people without special training. Just one interesting observation: teachers with a degree in another specialty, Finance, e.g. prefer to teach ESP only in one specialty, and practitioners without special degree teach a variety of courses.

Abdulaziz & others (2012:442) found out that the biggest problem in Pakistan is students' motivation, enumerating a number of reasons for it: from students' attitude to bad classroom conditions. In our case, learners' motivation is on the third place; while the biggest problems are course content selection and multilevel groups. Material development is on the second place. Abdulaziz & others (2012:444) also describe course content selection as one of the biggest challenges: "The contents are either irrelevant to the culture and/or are not in accordance with the students' needs". It seems that teachers are not able to find appropriate ready-made material for the needs of their students; it results in problems with writing ESP material, urgent changes in a syllabus, and a lack of student motivation.

Another big problem in Pakistan is connected with large classes and time availability. Originally, we thought that the problem of class size is not applicable at GKU as the number of students is 8 – 14 in one group. However, one of the respondents marked this as a problem. There could be two possible explanations: experience of a respondent with larger classes and/or, on the contrary, small numbers of students could cause problems as well. For example, organizing role-plays or simulations of real life situations might require a definite number of participants, so it could be difficult to organize such work if there are not enough students. As for time limit, it is a problem at our university, as the ESP class is only once per week for 90 minutes (cf. with EGP classes, three times per week for 90 minutes each). The main solution here is that students are given lots of tasks for their self-study.

Rather high position belongs to the problem of analyzing students' needs in both countries (60 % in our case). This question is really important, as everything from students motivation to classroom management depends on learners needs. In spite of recommendations given in every book of ESP, it is complicated to make a proper need's analysis questionnaire; and even more problematic to interpret the results and organize the course to satisfy all needs.

Other challenging issues exist but probably more of individual cases, e.g. teaching methodologies, usage of A/V aids and other multi media in the classrooms and class evaluation (20 %). It is interesting that the problem of classroom management has not been mentioned by teachers of GKU,

while in Pakistan 13 per cent of teacher have the problem with discipline in the classroom. The explanation lies in the number of students in a group.

It is obvious that most of the problems are not specific for ESP courses. Teachers of General English have almost the same challenges. However, there are some peculiarities connected with teaching ESP in general and ESP for IR in particular. In looking at challenges of ESP teaching at GKU we will observe the experience of teaching ESP for International Relations in academic year 2013-14. The issues deal with teaching resources, multi-level groups, learner participation, and course design.

#### **4.1 Challenge one: teaching resources**

It seems that textbook issues in ESP are not basically different from those in General English. Foreign language teaching practice at GKU is peculiar in that we do not usually stick to one textbook no matter whether we teach General English or ESP. There are the usual problems with textbooks: incompatibility of some material in them with the local culture, which makes it harder for students to perceive the material; a textbook may not agree with individual level demands of students, which raises a need for material adaptation; textbooks may not go well with course duration, which causes teachers to think of ‘time-fillers’; some material may need including more tasks and exercises according to the needs of students. As was said, the mentioned issues are true for both General English and ESP.

Textbooks in Business English (as a type of ESP) have long been on the market, one can find a variety of different titles of books; moreover, they are graded by levels, which makes it easier for teachers to design and teach a course. So, teachers of ESP for Business and Economics have had some material at hand. Since 2011-2012 the book market has been offering textbooks in ESP for Energy, Engineering, and Logistics, which has been convenient for GKU. Unlike those in General and Business English, the other ESP textbooks are not graded according to language levels. Although students start ESP course in the third year, with level at least B1 as pre-requisite, we usually have to adapt the books a lot.

This said, the internationally recognized textbooks with the answer key provided have certainly compensated for the teachers’ lack of field knowledge. Moreover, according to our colleagues’ impressions, they have even enjoyed the very opportunity of a different field experience, even glimpses of it. So, the main task for language teachers remains unchanged: use textbooks together with other teaching resources so to adapt them well. The main positive feature in the whole situation

with ESP textbooks for most specialties at GKU is that they are available, specially designed for ESP.

Textbook availability for ESP for Social and Political Sciences (including International Relations) is different. First of all, there are no ‘western’, that is, published by British or American recognized publishers, specifically ESP textbooks for the field. Instead, some Russian textbooks for English for Diplomacy and International Relations are available on the market. GKU has purchased one titled “English for International Relations” (Kubjas, Kudachkina, 2011) which has a number of peculiarities among which are: firstly, it is written for Russian audience which stipulated choice of texts and tasks relating realia of the Russian Federation in the world; secondly, it presents an intensive course for students with a good level of English; thirdly, among other skills the book focuses on translation skills judging by translation tasks placed in each section of the book. Furthermore, what the University teachers criticize about the book is that the exercise keys are not provided, which significantly complicates lesson preparation keeping in mind that teachers as a rule lack field knowledge. So the book the University acquired can be used quite rarely and needs considerable adaptation.

In the light of lack of appropriate textbooks the question remains: ‘What sources can be used as study material for the course?’ GKU teachers have found the answer in using different authentic material, as well as textbooks for International Relations written in English. There are presently two of the latter: ‘Essentials of International Relations’ by K. Mingst (1998) and a newer one ‘International Relations’ by Goldstein and Pevehouse (2011). Both textbooks are written specially for the discipline ‘International Relations’ (i.e. not for language learning purposes) and none can be used as a main textbook for the course of ESP for International Relations. In fact, studying them presents a serious challenge for teachers, let alone students. Nonetheless, they make up another source of specialist, non-adapted reading material.

Non-textbook materials include articles from online newspapers and journals, such as ‘Foreign Policy’ – a journal focusing on international affairs, and websites of the BBC, New York Times, and others. The sites provide good authentic texts, which are then adapted and/or abridged, that is, prepared for learning. A lot of video materials are taken from Youtube facilities.

In teaching ESP for International Relations we adhere to the theoretical view which holds that information is a key in modern world. Therefore, we place an important role to ‘first-hand’ information that forms discourse concerning different matters on the agenda of International Relations. As this kind of information includes various speeches delivered by famous speakers of importance, we include texts of those speeches into the course. For instance, while observing the period of Cold war



we studied the text of Churchill's Fulton speech; or while looking at the Ukrainian conflict the text and video recordings of President Obama's speech were used.

#### **4.2 Challenge two: multilevel groups**

The problem of multilevel groups has not been studied in Abdulaziz & others (2012) research although they mention teachers' complaints of students' low competence in general English. They have a problem of multicultural groups. In Kazakhstan, in spite of a number of different cultures, there is no noticeable influence of this or that culture on education at the university level. However, the problem of teaching students of different levels in one group is really challenging. The system of teaching languages at GKU allows every student to achieve B2 level (or at least B1). In the first two years of study students are placed in the groups according to their levels: from complete beginners to advanced. However, in the third year the groups are formed according to their future profession. As a result, teachers have students from B1 to C2 levels in one group. It seems that the difference is not so big; however, in practice it leads to some other problems, like choice of texts and shyness of students with lower levels.

In addition, learning two foreign languages simultaneously presents a number of complications for students whose level of English is lower than Upper-Intermediate: there seems to be certain German interference. In most cases, they find it difficult to switch languages; moreover, they face challenges in grammar and vocabulary structure of English, as well as English pronunciation. Among words with which students get mixed up are 'become', 'fast', 'also' apparently because they look alike in both languages but have different meanings. German interference-caused grammar errors include misuse of Present Perfect forms, which are mistakenly used instead of Past Simple. In pronunciation, students tend to pronounce English words by German rules, as they appear to be considerably simpler. Interestingly though, those errors tend to be very seldom with levels C1, C2, that is, more advanced students. The described interferences get more pronounced in the third year as courses conducted in German begin.

#### **4.3 Challenge three: learners' participation.**

In designing an ESP course teachers face a number of complications which are related to the following issues: students' involvement and skills to be developed, topics and linguistic forms to be included in the syllabus. Now that modern methodologies apply learner-centered approach in teaching languages, which teachers at GKU accept, it is natural to involve learners in the educational process as much as possible. In this respect, we expect constructive feedback from students. However, it



is our post-Soviet reality that people here traditionally take up higher education immediately after secondary school, aged seventeen. Numerous surveys show that students' choice of specialty and educational institution is normally stipulated by parents' decision, fashion and demand. Young people's own vocation-triggered decision is a seldom case. Therefore, when teachers attempted at studying learner needs at GKU, they found themselves facing young people hardly knowing their own needs.

A survey conducted in July to study students' feedback to the ESP for International Relations course showed a low level of students' participation: slightly more than a quarter of requested students sent back their responses. In claiming that, we should take into account the summer time when students are taking holidays. The survey was sent to twenty students from two groups. Those who responded were students from a higher level group and happen to be the most motivated and active students. Observing the results as showing a feedback from one group, it is possible to say that half of the higher-level group students did send back their responses. Whether their participation was influenced by group level remains a question. The survey included five questions:

- What were your expectations before taking your Professionally-oriented English course? Options: enlarge my vocabulary; practice speaking on professional topics in English; learn and/or practice academic writing; do research project in English; other.
- What is a useful skill or knowledge you acquired during the course?
- Did course topics agree with your expectations?
- What activities (tests, quizzes, discussions, projects, etc.) should be eliminated from/ added to/ left unchanged in the course?
- Was blended learning helpful while doing the course?

One thing the students are sure about seems to be an opportunity to speak English in class. Thus, when asked the first question, all those who responded ticked 'practice speaking on professional topics in English' in the answers; one also picked 'learn and/or practice academic writing', yet one more picked 'do research project in English' as well. The teacher expected that students would be more enthusiastic in general and about skills other than speaking, in particular. It is interesting still that no one picked 'enlarge my vocabulary' option whereas professional vocabulary building appears one of ESP practitioner's priorities. In answering question two only two out of six participating respondents mentioned 'doing research project in English', of them one also mentioned 'discussing newest political issues'. In response to question three two people gave an affirmative answer, while one gave a negative answer; the other three just missed the question. Even lower activity was shown with question four (only two out of six people participated), and concerning question five, two students mentioned helpfulness of blended learning while one answered negatively, with yet three others

who simply missed the question. It is evident that basically, students chose not to pay serious attention to the survey.

The survey results showed that students in general lack interest in reacting to the subject, they hardly realize that their feedback may contribute to future course design. Their priorities comprise absorbing what is told in class, doing all tasks set to them by the teacher (and doing them well, by most students) in order to get good marks. Their behavior is like that of consumers of some services (educational in this case) without participating in improving those services.

This is also true about the University survey that is conducted every year and is aimed at exploring students' reaction to a course and methods of teaching it. The survey of year 2013-14 showed less than 50% participation concerning languages, ESP included. According to survey experience in general, students mostly participate when they want to criticize. On the contrary, the lack of participation may speak about their contentment, which is good news for teachers.

Moreover, they often see an ESP teacher as a source of their field knowledge. This was demonstrated in an oral discussion during which students made it clear that they expect their ESP teacher to teach them English and help them with their professional disciplines as well. They actually hardly understood the specifics of ESP by which they become a source of knowledge too.

To sum, it is hardly possible to speak about a high level of motivation and maturity by most students, which leaves them incapable of giving serious feedback. The reasons may lie, as was mentioned, in age, as well as psychological (post-Soviet syndrome) factors. Thus, the job of course design is left to teachers solely.

#### **4.4 Challenge four: course design**

As was mentioned above teachers take full responsibility to design a course and it is up to them to decide which skills to develop within the course, which language forms and topics to include. It is evident that they are not guaranteed successful perception of the course by students. More than that, taking into account students' age it is essential that the course be not just educating but contain elements of fun as well.

##### **4.4.1 Skills**

In making the decisions concerning what to include into the course contents we relied on several factors: the fact that most students would continue education with a Master's program, modern higher education standards, feedback from employers and University graduates, students' needs, and teachers' enthusiasm. Skills we focus on include producing a text summary, speaking through various forms of activities, doing a research project and academic writing.

A study involving employers and junior staff of companies made up of university graduates in Kazakhstan revealed that students need to be prepared to quickly summarize contents of different documents and other material in their future job. Consequently, summarizing skill development was included into the ESP program. Throughout the academic year students are given different sized texts for summarizing. A frequent error encountered is learners' slip to evaluations and forecasts whereas they are required to just render the contents of a text impartially.

Developing speaking skills traditionally meets students' needs and wishes, and teachers are quite 'at ease' with the task. During the third year students learn or improve their skills of making presentations, delivering speeches on various topics, participating in discussions both as moderators and speakers, role plays of various mock-up situations.

Unlike speaking skill, doing a research project in English has been a new challenging experience. Nevertheless, we have been trying to include it in order to meet international higher education standards. GKU students tend to continue higher education abroad (in Germany, as a rule), which demands certain skills from them in doing academic research. It is a standard requirement of an educational institution that learners take up some research project and submit papers. At GKU an academic writing course which includes basics of doing research is taught before students are into their third year but this course is conducted in Russian, and it covers the requirements for academic writing in Kazakhstan. This raises a need to study doing research rules and actually practice them in English in accordance with international standards during the ESP course.

In year 2013-14 the research project was done in the second half of spring semester. The main idea was to study media coverage of a country or an event during a certain period of time, analyze it, present results in the form of an oral presentation and a paper. The project agreed with the last topic of the syllabus and was supposed to be done within the semester in several stages: the first month – choose research topic, define aims, prepare and submit outline; the second month – collect data, perform analyses, prepare draft; remaining time – prepare paper for submission, make a presentation of research results.

#### **4.4.2 Course design. Syllabus**

As was mentioned, the ESP for International Relations teaching experience of year 2013-14 revealed a need to optimize syllabus. The syllabus for the course centered around the following modules (three for each semester):

- Globalization in International Relations;
- International Organizations and UN;
- Theories of International Relations;

- State as International Actor;
- International Conflict;
- Role of Mass Media in Modern World.

The choice of module topics was basically stipulated by contents of Goldstein's textbook (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2010): teachers had simply chosen some of the topics to their liking. However, due to textbook-related reasons explained above the actual material from the book has hardly been used. Instead, study was based on up to date texts from newspaper and journal sites. Each module was rounded up by a test and/or creative activity: essay writing, debate or round table discussion, poster or slide presentation, and so on.

The existing syllabus stated the main goals of the course as follows: fluent usage of professional and technical terms; being able to learn foreign experience in the field from different media channels and critically assess the acquired material; being able to speak on professional, business, and every day topics; being prepared for written communication on professional matters. It is obvious that research-related goals were absent from the syllabus. Our task at present is to agree with colleagues on the course goals.

Another syllabus-related issue concerns linguistic forms to be included into the course. According to the current syllabus, grammar material comprises Present and Past Simple, Continuous, Perfect, and Perfect Continuous Tenses, as well as Passive constructions and Modal verbs. However, ESP experience shows that the course duration does not allow paying special attention to the listed grammar topics. Moreover, they make part of course prerequisite which is General English, level B2. This said, it is vital to remember that almost a third of students start their ESP course with only level B1 completed, and even that level can often be questioned which makes it impossible to entirely ignore grammar.

Year 2013-14 experience showed that linguistic forms in ESP for International Relations course at GKU should include such conventional units as Passives, Conditionals, Present Perfect versus Past Simple (to tackle German influence), Modals, as well as a 'new' one, that is Inversion. The latter is particularly frequent in speeches of prominent English speakers, including state leaders and other discourse-forming individuals.

#### **4.5 Solutions**

The solutions to abovementioned problems do not differ very much from those given to EGP courses ranging "from good lesson planning, bringing about a variety in classroom activities, rearranging seating positions of the students for different activities ...; negotiating and describing the

importance of English language learning to them to remembering names of the students, giving individual consultation to the students and conducting pair work activities instead of group work activities” (Abdulaziz & others, 2012:442). More specific recommendations are connected with proper organization of needs analysis; and be ready to incorporate changes into the curriculum even in the middle of the academic year, i.e. to be flexible. It is interesting to note that authenticity is not very important in ESP courses; in addition researchers recommend to write your own material instead of using ready-made one (Hayati, 2008 in Abdulaziz & others, 2012:445). Moreover, it is recommended to use learner’s knowledge as a resource more actively.

They should rather trust the sociolinguistic capabilities, experience and educational knowledge of their students. Perhaps the momentary artificiality experienced in the language classrooms can be ignored for a while in order to keep more focus on assigning the right kind of tasks to the learners.

Hayati, 2008 in Abdulaziz & others, 2012:445

Concerning the resource-related challenge, it is clear that resources to use in teaching ESP are available and appropriate textbooks are provided for specialties other than International Relations. The challenge itself lies in the necessity to adapt the material for effective learning, which appears to be highly time- and effort-consuming. To address the problem GKU teachers have been practicing teaching ESP for a certain specialty, thus collecting teaching material and experience. This is even more important for ‘textbook-deprived’ ESP for International Relations. The best way to deal with the collected material seems to be publishing it in the form of a ready teaching guide or textbook.

As to the second described challenge, a multilevel ESP group at GKU is a reality which we just have to accept, and we do. First of all, we try to convey the idea to new third year students that language requirements are different from those they had in previous years. They are told, for example, that it gets easier to have good marks in the third year because minor language errors are not punished for by lower marks like it happened previously. They have to understand that language accuracy recedes in priority scale giving way to active participation, skills being taught, and vocabulary acquisition. As to so called ‘German interference’, it is necessary to allow time in the course to specifically address the mentioned issues. The situation can be helped by doing exercises, which involve drilling.

The challenge of raising learner participation is quite difficult to tackle. As we see it, the solution lies in encouraging students more by any means possible. For example, publishing the best re-

search project papers or recommending them for conferences may serve as an incentive, and GKU is starting to practice it. In general, taking into account post-Soviet syndrome (if it is real), with time students will realize their own responsibility for their studies more, and so will they realize the urgency of their active participation.

Addressing the problem of course design we are sure that the contents of the course should be selected according to skills we want to develop, students' needs and interests. On teachers' part the recommendation is simple: be open and flexible.

One more group of recommendations worth mentioning focuses on evaluation problems, e.g.; "opting for objective type questions in examination, conducting peer evaluation", and developing evaluation criteria (Abdulaziz & others, 2012:448). We adapted criteria from evaluating IELTS and developed a scale from zero to ten focusing on the following: content and achievement of a task, fluency and coherence, grammar accuracy, and special attention is paid to the usage of terminology.

## **5. Limitations and conclusion**

Teaching ESP is rather new direction in foreign language teaching; and it is a subject of interest of English language teachers' community in Kazakhstan. A need for more research in this area is only growing. This paper is our contribution to studying problems of teaching ESP at higher education and it contains a number of limitations. That is why there are a number of possible directions to follow, as teachers and administration of any educational institution always try to improve the quality of education.

One of the limitations was that there was a very small sample with respect to both interviewing ESP practitioners and students, which is understandable because our aim was to study this issue only at one university of Almaty. Although the results would allow us to find out the niche for a bigger project, they are not enough to allow general conclusions and recommendations.

Another limitation was that the efficiency of given recommendations were not checked on practice. The main reason was the limit of research time and other organizational problems. So another possible stage is to make an experiment to show the efficiency or inefficiency of the recommendations. Working conditions allow us to organize a proper experiment trying different techniques and check their effectiveness. After that it would be possible to develop some workshops for other teachers to improve the quality of teaching ESP.

The process of writing this paper showed that issues related to teaching ESP are peculiar in the following features: firstly, they are basically common worldwide, and secondly, they are closely

connected with each other. Something that teachers are certain about is that they need learner participation to be able to design and constantly improve contents of their courses.

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