Teaching ESP – New Strategies and Approaches

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Abstract: The 21st century has become the epoch of the increasingly interconnected world that has faced the social integration caused by the migration, regional conflicts or natural disasters. As a result of the latter, different minority groups settled in new countries and made attempts at being incorporated into a mainstream society. The process of integration necessitated a rapid assimilation via giving newcomers the possibility of living and getting an education. As a result, many groups of multilingual learners appeared throughout the world.

The paper deals with the innovative approaches to teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) via translation, heteroglossia, translanguaging as well as code-switching. It is based on eight years’ experience gained at the Department of English Philology at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU). The methodology is oriented to the multiethnic groups of students and considers the modern approaches to teaching the vocabulary, grammar and translation. The accent is put on the acquisition of the specialized terminology via labelling, plying between terminological units as well as corpus-based analysis.

Keywords: acquisition, ESP, language, migration, multilingual education.

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Introduction

“Human migrations have been fundamental to the broad sweep of human history and have themselves changed in basic ways over the epochs. Many of these historical migrations have by no means been the morally uplifting experiences depicted in mythologies of heroic conquerors, explorers, and pioneers” (Migration, n.d.). It is noteworthy that throughout the centuries, the purposes and results of the movement of population have been associated with a tribal life, conquests, colonization, aspiration towards industrialised cities, wars, mobilities, armed conflicts, etc. Moreover, migration has had a “profound impact on civilization. The most significant effects of migration for people’s life have been changes in population distribution, multicultural societies, contact language change, economic effects and others” (Udina & Stepanova, 2018).

Nowadays, the core reason for the movement of migrants throughout the world is the ongoing globalization that causes the merging of nations, commodities, traditions, information, resources, etc. The world population acquires the global consciousness that is accompanied by multiple challenges. One of them is the tendency of shaping a multilingual society that deals with multilingualism. The latter influences a linguistic stability. As a result, some world languages forcibly shift. A language shift occurs when the use of a language is reduced in a certain domain or replaced by another language (Chen, 2010). If we view a language as the primary medium of human social interactions, which is a building block of social relations (Wu, 2019), than we can easily imagine that big languages are often led to spread, while small languages are led to shift throughout the history (Chen, 2010). As a result, big languages become dominant, while small ones face marginalization and even extinction.

Nowadays, the most spreadable language (lingua franca) of the world is English. It is believed that the knowledge of lingua franca is directly associated with a successful global citizenship. Representatives of Georgia as well as other countries aspire to the mastering of the English language. This fact changes classroom landscapes and methods of teaching. Moreover, Georgia's transformation into a global touristic country requires a growing number of well-trained guides as well as
interpreters and translators, who can translate into English booklets and books dealing with the history, art, archaeology, ethnography and statehood of Georgia. Translators are also needed for bilingual journals presenting papers/researches in humanities (archaeology, history, manuscript studies, literary studies, etc.).

The paper presents the innovative methods of teaching ESP oriented towards the multiethnic groups of students. The methodology of research includes observation and analyses. The paper discusses a simultaneous usage of different approaches and gained results that open up a bunch of opportunities (successful passage of MA entrance exams, appropriate job opportunities, achievements in a scientific life, etc.) to the students.

**Historical development of the methods of teaching**

Initially, let us discuss the historical development of teaching techniques that encompass *Grammar-translation Approach* (the 1800s and early 1900s), *Communicative Language Teaching* (the 1980s), *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (the 21st century), etc. The transition of the techniques has been associated with the global tendencies. In the 1800s and early 1900s, language learning was treated as the means for an intellectual training and literature reading. The emergence of *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) in the 1980s was regarded as a response to the changing conceptualisation of a language, which was considered as a tool for communication instead of an intellectual training (Wu, 2019).

The 21st century brought a new flow of challenges. As a result, a permanent migration/movement of the world population, emergence of a growing number of cross-national projects, necessity of raising an intercultural awareness, an overwhelming number of inter-state activities and aspiration towards a global citizenship changed frequency and contours of the usage of the English language. All the above mentioned made a significant impact on educational policies and classroom activities. Educators started looking for new techniques of teaching English. *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) became one of the most welcome methodologies, while an intercultural dialogue and multilingualism started being considered as “a fundamental principle of language education policies in Europe and
elsewhere in the world” (Grigule, 2011). Multilingual educational strategies became oriented towards teaching English for Specific Purposes. The latter refers to teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language which, in contrast to other pedagogical approaches, bases the course contents and objectives on target learners’ specific needs. Thus it is frequently contended that ESP is an umbrella term which covers a range of diverse teaching contexts. They are broadly defined as English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Professional Purposes (EPP) (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2018). As Hutchinson & Waters believe, ESP is a phenomenon resulting from the development of human activities. It was not a planned or a coherent movement, but rather the phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends (Rao, 2019). English for Specific Purposes is also regarded as a branch of English language teaching, which is mainly associated with business English, technical English, medical English, etc. However, it is also claimed that ESP aims to prepare learners to communicate effectively in tasks prescribed by their field of study or work situation. More precisely, it aims at providing learners with the requisite English language skills in order to carry out written and oral communication in academic as well as professional communicative situations (YousafZai & Fareed, 2019).

It is worth mentioning that English for Specific Purposes first emerged in the early 1960s and since its inception, it has grown in significance. Apparently, the rise of ESP as the major branch of language teaching in the past fifty years should be attributed to the spread of English as a global language (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2018). As Swales states, “one of the ironies of the emergent field of ESP is that its very success in catering to the needs of non-native speakers has contributed to the overpowering position of English in today’s worlds of sciences, scholarship, and business” (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2018). Moreover, the foundation of all ESP is the simple question: Why does a learner need to learn a foreign language? (Donesch-Jezo, 2012).

The paper presents the innovative methodology of teaching ESP via translation, heteroglossia, code-switching and translanguaging.
**Heteroglossia, code-switching and translanguaging**

It is generally believed that heteroglossic practices in education facilitate the connection of students’ home languages and literacy practices with universities’ literacy practices in ways that are relevant to their lives (Kiramba, 2016). Code-switching “is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event” (Waris, 2012). Translanguaging can be associated with the process of making meaning, shaping experience, gaining understanding and knowledge through the usage of two languages (Baker, 2011).

The concept of translanguaging originated in Wales. It considered the description of different discursive practices of bilinguals (Rabbidge, 2019). In the beginning of the 21st century, translanguaging became conceptualized as a pedagogical practice (Baker, 2011). The researchers have found that in a number of bilingual/multilingual CLIL or second/additional language education contexts, teachers have actively deployed translanguaging in a variety of classroom scenarios to fulfill communicative as well as pedagogical purposes. The examples include explaining subject content, eliciting students’ L2 output, facilitating interpersonal communication, creating a welcoming atmosphere, etc. (Zhou & Mann, 2021). A simultaneous incorporation of translanguaging and heteroglossia into classroom activities gives good results, because as the increasing body of research suggests, heteroglossic practices stipulate the connection of learners’ home and target (institutional) languages and literary practices. If the monoglossic tradition corroborates only monolingual repertoires, heteroglossic beliefs and practices view multiple languages of bilinguals as co-existing. Moreover, bi-/multi-lingual educational policies respond to local interests, ideologies and contexts (Garcia, 2009). The paper presents the innovative practice of teaching ESP. The major accent is put on the acquisition of the specialized terminology (via plying between terms, corpus-based analysis, labeling, translating, etc.) and a simultaneous incorporation of translanguaging, heteroglossia as well as code-switching into the classroom activities.

Before presenting the innovative practices, let us discuss the historical background that facilitated the formation of the multiethnic
society and stipulated “working-out” of new strategies of teaching in pluriethnic groups of students.

**Migration in Georgia**

Georgia has always been a small multiethnic country. It faced numerous invasions and different flows of migrants. Historically, Georgia became a homeland of many Armenians, Azeris/Azerbaijanis, Russians, Ossetians, Yazidis, Ukrainian, Kists, Greeks, Germans and others. According to the 2014 census conducted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat), the ethnic Georgians represented 86.8 percent of the total population. Next in line, the largest ethnic groups were the Azeris (6.3 percent) and the Armenians (4.5 percent). Other ethnic groups accounted together for 4 percent of the population (Ventura, 2017). The official census also revealed “a decline in the share of ethnic minorities from 16.2 percent in 2002 to 13.2 percent in 2014” (Bobghiashvili et al. 2016). Despite this fact, nowadays, Georgia is inhabited by a significant number of ethnic minorities, especially, by the Azerbaijanis and the Armenians.

It is noteworthy that before the 19th century, the Georgian kingdoms were home to the small groups of the Armenians and many of them were assimilated with the local population. Experiencing the ongoing oppression on the territories of their settlement, the Armenian refugees often resettled in the Georgian kingdoms, mainly, near the borderline regions. During 1829-1831, 30,000 Armenian refugees from Arzrum resettled in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Abbasov et al., 2016).

In contrast to the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis represent the largest national minority. They mainly live in the historical-geographical province of Kvemo Kartli in the southwest corner, in Kakheti and Shida Kartli (in the east) as well as in Tbilisi and Rustavi. The majority of them are Shi’a Muslims, though there are Sunnis as well. Driven by the military and political circumstances, their ancestors came from Persia and Turkey in the late feudal period with the aim of settling down in the southeastern provinces of Georgia. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the number of Azeri migrants was much smaller than of other ethnic groups (Komakhia, 2004). However, nowadays, they outnumber all other ethnic minorities. Despite this fact, the Azerbaijanis as well as the Armenians face some problems of
integration into the Georgian society. The problems have been fueled by a poor knowledge or no knowledge of the state language (Georgian) that has hindered socialization and occupation of positions at governmental institutions and organizations.

Since 2009, Georgia’s government has been making attempts to solve the problem of integration via the promotion of the educational programs ensuring teaching the state language to the representatives of ethnic minorities. One of the most important programs is the "1+4" Scheme. It offers simplified procedures for the representatives of ethnic minorities, inter alia, the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, to enroll in higher education institutions of Georgia by passing only one exam in their native language, with one year dedicated to the training in Georgian followed (in case of obtaining 60 credits) by four years of undergraduate studies in a program of their own choice (Third Report submitted by Georgia Pursuant to Article 25, 2017).

The "1+4" Scheme was created in 2010 and since its inception hundreds of the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis have been enrolled in higher education institutions of Georgia, especially, in Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU). Nowadays, dozens of non-Georgian students study at the Faculty of Humanities. Many of them wish to obtain the specialization in the field of English philology. Accordingly, the professors of the Department of English Philology try to implement successful strategies of teaching ESP in multi-ethnic groups of students uniting the Georgians, the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis, etc. Let us discuss one of the courses designed for the preparation of translators.

Abstracting and reviewing of the English text

In 2013 the new course “Abstracting and reviewing of the English text” (ARET) was created at the Department of English Philology. The major importance of ARET was its orientation to teaching ESP via translation. The specialized topics of the course were related to the manuscript studies, archaeology and history. The course was attended by the students of different nationalities: the Georgians, the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis, etc.

For the achievement of better results, ARET was designed to meet the following criteria: less theory, more practice - only four
theoretical units (covering six hour of teaching) and the permanent acquisition of the techniques of translation; translation of the published academic papers; teaching oriented to translinguaging, heteroglossia and code-switching (based on five languages: Georgian, English, Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani); the complex methodology adapted to different types of learners with various ethnical backgrounds; simultaneous promotion of fluency in ESP and GSP (Georgian for Specific Purposes). Let us discuss each criterion.

Less theory, more practice

The majority of the courses taught at TSU are focused on theory. Less attention is paid to practice. ARET presents an innovative attitude in this respect. It is a one-semester course comprising 30 hours. Only four units are taught during this period. The rest of the teaching hours are dedicated to the translation of publications from Georgian into English and vice versa.

It is worth mentioning that the theoretical material transfers the knowledge needed for the creation of a valid scientific work by means of teaching the language and structure of papers, monographs, theses, etc. After the completion of the course, the students are aware of the peculiarities of the formatting, structuring and reviewing of a scientific work. The main accent is put on the major and secondary parts of a publication, different styles of referencing, peculiarities of citation, plagiarism, etc. Accordingly, the students are ready for the creation of their MA theses, papers, monographs, etc. competence as researchers using descriptive statistics and the factors academic staff provided as the reasons for their research competence.

Translation of the published academic papers

ARET is oriented to the translation of already published academic papers, which are unknown to the students. The latter get acquainted with published passages only after the preparation of their translations. Dealing with the language of the academic journals assists students in perceiving academic English, its peculiarities, style and

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1 These papers were presented in the issues of the peer-reviewed bilingual Journals Spekali and Kartvelologist, which publish papers in two languages: English and Georgian.
rules. Moreover, they get acquainted with plying between terms and solving the problem of untranslatability via transliteration or labelling i.e. creation of new lexical units. The lecturer assists the students in understanding these techniques. She uses different online corpora as guides during the analyses of terminological units, specific phrases, collocations, synonyms, etc.

**Teaching oriented to translinguaging, heteroglossia and code-switching**

At the initial stage, ARET dealt with the bilingual studies i.e. translating the specialised texts from Georgian into English and vice versa. However, during the teaching activities the particular obstacles appeared. Some non-Georgian students were not fluent in Georgian. Therefore, they could not understand the Georgian texts perfectly. This fact made them inactive, marginalised and reluctant to participate in classroom activities. The teacher started experimenting and translated difficult Georgian sentences into Russian. This fact activated those students, who were fluent in Russian. However, non-Russian-speaking learners remained marginalized. The teacher widened the circle of the used languages and asked the Armenian and the Azerbaijani students (who mastered Georgian) to translate the Georgian sentences into Armenian and Azerbaijani. As a result, at the following stages of teaching, the simultaneous usage of home and target languages activated all learners, broadened their learning opportunities and developed proficiency in the languages of instruction.

**The complex methodology**

The framework of ARET enables the teacher to supervise the selection, pacing and sequencing of all learning activities. Accordingly, each practical part of a seminar considers the following:

**Activity 1 – Warming-up** that deals with an introduction of a new topic. The lecturer writes the lists of new words/phrases related to it in the languages of instruction. In case of necessity, Russian, Armenian or Azerbaijani counterparts are presented by the students in an oral form;
Activity 2 – Translation of a piece of an unknown text that deals with an individual work, a pair-work and a group-work. The latter is usually chosen by ethnically non-Georgian learners, who use home and target languages for the creation of final English versions of source texts written in Georgian. During translation, the learners are allowed to use different bilingual (Georgian-English, Armenian-English, etc.) and multilingual dictionaries. Moreover, they use online corpora created by the former Lexicographic Centre of TSU. The students work on specific terms/phrases via the method of corpus-based analysis i.e. searching for meanings via determining proper contexts and sentential environments.

Activity 3 – When all the activities are over, the lecturer asks the students to read their translations. During the discussion of each sentence, all lexical, grammatical and stylistic mistakes are corrected. Correction often relies on the method of comparons nos langues, i.e. the contrastive analysis and the error analysis - the methods endorsed by educational institutions in the US and Europe (Tvaltvadze & Kurdadze, 2011). Comparons nos langues requires the comparison of students’ repertoires (home languages) with the target language (English). Comparison covers grammatical rules, syntax, semantics, etc.

Activity 4 – After discussing the students’ translations, the lecturer reads an original translation of a source text/passage presented in a particular academic journal. The students get acquainted with academic English, its peculiarities, style and rules. Moreover, they compare their translations with academic ones. The students discuss the possibilities of the usage of different grammatical constructions, lexical or terminological units, synonyms, etc. As a result, the best pieces of translation are chosen. Their number varies from two to four.

The above-mentioned stages depict the usage of the heteroglossic approach in association with VAK/VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic&Tactile) learning styles. The given complex encourages auditory, visual and even kinaesthetic learners, who prefer
to learn via experiencing – doing, touching, performing (Gvelesiani&Tvaltvadze, 2011), opening dictionaries, searching for new words/phrases, navigating, etc. A simultaneous usage of the home and target languages during analyses and discussions enhances the understanding of subject-area concepts, specific terms and phrases. The usage of *comparons nos langues* activates almost all learners, broadens their learning opportunities and develops proficiency in the languages of instruction: Georgian and English.

**Promotion of fluency in ESP and GSP**

Translation of specialized texts from English into Georgian and vice versa promotes fluency in ESP and GSP, especially, in cases of those representatives of ethnic minorities, which are not fluent in Georgian. Dealing with the original Georgian publications enables them to memorize specific terms and phrases presented in the fields of archaeology, manuscript studies and history. Working with the bilingual corpora improves the students’ comprehension and the speed at which information can be retrieved and memorised.

**Making presentations**

ARET fuels the students’ interest in the science. During the studies, every student is obliged to create and pass a presentation dealing with the problematics of translation. Each presentation represents a scientific work oriented to a comparative analysis of the data of at least two languages. A topic may cover the problematics of translation of poems, terminological units, phrases, proverbs, etc. The students are free in their choice. After making presentations and considering the lecturer’s recommendations, the students are encouraged to make advancements in their scientific lives via participating in conferences or submitting papers to journals.

**Outcomes**

Several years’ observation and comparison of the results of the first and final translations prepared by the students revealed that at the end of
the course the students’ vocabulary was enriched, grammar was improved, style was perfected. Moreover, the process of translation took less time. ARET apparently provided the learners with the requisite English language skills for carrying out written communication in an appropriate academic field.

Accordingly, ARET may be treated as the innovative course modelled in accordance with the contemporary challenges. It is the only undergraduate course of the Department of English Philology, which is dedicated to teaching ESP via translation of texts written in humanities. ARET is oriented towards the improvement of students’ writing skills, which fuels their interest in science. The majority of the best learners successfully pass the entrance exams and become MA students of the programs of translation studies, for instance, *Translation and intercultural studies (based on Georgian and English languages)*, *Translation theory and translation practice*, etc. Afterwards, they start working as interpreters or translators at international or local companies, organizations, journals, etc.

**Conclusions**

Today’s Georgia faces important challenges. Firstly, Georgia’s transformation into a global touristic country requires the professional training of interpreters, guides and translators. Moreover, a growing number of incoming tourists requires the creation of English booklets and books dealing with the history, art, archaeology, ethnography and statehood of Georgia.

Secondly, Georgia gradually becomes a global country oriented towards the implementation of joint projects/programs. The growing number of international scholarly activities stipulates the creation of bilingual journals presenting papers/researches in humanities (archaeology, history, manuscript studies, literary studies, etc.). The translators of the journals need to be specialised in the terminology related to these specialities.

Thirdly, the growth of transnational migrants, who cross linguistic, cultural and geographic boundaries requires the transformation of classroom environments and student bodies into more linguistically and culturally diverse settings (Kwon, 2018).
Accordingly, the usage of diversified methodologies of teaching becomes crucial at higher educational institutions.

The paper deals with the presentation of the innovative course ARET and the methodology of teaching ESP via translation. The major accent is put on code-switching, heteroglossia and translanguaging, which afford learners’ opportunities to utilize their full linguistic repertoire, without socio-political rules of separation, in order to achieve a greater overall academic success (Rabbidge, 2019). This success is apparently achieved - several years' observation of the students attending ARET has revealed that the usage of translanguaging during classroom activities: creates a friendly classroom atmosphere based on the equality of learners; enhances almost all students' participation; ensures students' non-marginalisation; promotes a better understanding of a class content; ensures a better understanding of the meaning of a new vocabulary; prevents students from routinized, teacher-led interactions.

After the completion of the course, the students' academic achievements grow. Their writing-style is perfected, while grammar and vocabulary are improved. The students' proficiency in the languages of instruction (Georgian and English) achieves a higher level. As a result, they easily become MA students of the programs of translation studies. They start working as guides and provide incoming tourists with the information about history, archaeology and statehood of Georgia. The knowledge of academic English enables the students to diversify their scientific lives via publishing papers or participation in local/international conferences.

Finally, we may claim that ARET is the only course of the Georgian educational space that provides all the above-mentioned by means of meeting the following specific criteria: teaching oriented to multi-ethnic groups of students; less theory, more practice; translation of the published academic papers; teaching oriented to translanguaging, heteroglossia and code-switching (based on five languages); complex methodology adapted to different types of learners; simultaneous promotion of fluency in ESP and GSP.
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