
CONFERENCE ARTICLE

Developing Professional English Communication Skills Of Non-Philological Students Through Digital Simulations And Interactive Learning Tasks

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the methodological potential of digital simulations and interactive learning tasks in developing professional English communication skills among non-philological university students. The study focuses on the integration of simulated professional situations, digital role-playing activities, collaborative problem-solving tasks, and technology-supported assessment into English language instruction. The research employs theoretical analysis, comparative examination of pedagogical approaches, and methodological modelling to propose a structured framework for profession-oriented communicative learning. Particular attention is paid to the development of fluency, interactional competence, professional vocabulary, and the ability to respond appropriately in workplace-related situations. The proposed framework combines contextual preparation, simulation-based communication, and reflective evaluation. The findings of the conceptual analysis suggest that digital simulations can create meaningful opportunities for authentic language use when supported by purposeful instructional design. The study emphasizes the importance of aligning digital communication tasks with students' future professional responsibilities.

Keywords: Digital simulations, professional English, non-philological students, communicative competence, interactive learning, role-playing, English for specific purposes, digital pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing internationalization of higher education and professional activities has strengthened the importance of English language proficiency among students specializing in non-linguistic disciplines. Future engineers, economists, medical professionals, and specialists in other fields are expected to use English for exchanging professional information, participating in international projects, interpreting specialized documentation, and communicating with foreign colleagues.

However, the ability to understand grammatical structures and professional terminology does not necessarily guarantee effective communication in real occupational contexts. Students may successfully complete written assignments while experiencing difficulties explaining technical processes, expressing professional opinions, participating in meetings, or responding to unexpected questions.

This discrepancy highlights the need to integrate practical communicative situations into English language instruction. Digital simulations offer opportunities to reproduce selected features of professional communication environments and involve learners in purposeful language use.

The theoretical foundations of this approach can be associated with task-based language teaching, which emphasizes the performance of meaningful activities involving language use. Ellis (2003) describes task-based instruction as an approach in which learners engage in activities organized around communicative outcomes rather than the isolated reproduction of linguistic forms [1].

In non-philological education, this principle becomes particularly relevant because students require language skills directly applicable to their specialized fields.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the methodological possibilities of digital simulations and

interactive learning tasks and to propose a structured approach to developing professional English communication skills among non-philological university students.

Materials And Methods

The study is based on theoretical and methodological analysis of scientific literature devoted to English for Specific Purposes, communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and technology-mediated instruction.

The principal research methods include comparative analysis, theoretical synthesis, pedagogical modelling, and instructional task design. These methods are employed to identify instructional conditions under which digital simulations can support meaningful professional communication.

The methodological foundations of the study incorporate three complementary perspectives. The first is the communicative approach, which prioritizes purposeful interaction and the appropriate use of language in specific situations. The second is the English for Specific Purposes approach, which connects language instruction with learners' academic and professional requirements. The third is experiential learning, which emphasizes the relationship between practical experience, reflection, and conceptual understanding.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) identify learners' specific needs as an essential consideration in designing English language instruction for academic and occupational purposes [2]. Accordingly, the present study proposes that simulated learning situations should reflect the communicative requirements of students' future professions.

The proposed framework consists of three instructional stages: professional-context preparation, digital simulation-based interaction, and reflective communication assessment. It is presented as a conceptual model requiring subsequent empirical

verification.

Results And Discussion

The theoretical analysis indicates that digital simulations may provide several pedagogically significant opportunities for developing professional communication skills among non-philological students.

One important possibility is the contextualization of learning activities. Unlike decontextualized grammar exercises, simulated professional situations require students to use linguistic resources to accomplish specific communicative goals. For example, engineering students may explain equipment malfunctions, discuss technical solutions, or present project proposals. Economics students may conduct simulated business negotiations, evaluate market situations, or participate in online professional meetings. Similarly, medical students may practice explaining healthcare procedures or communicating professional information through appropriately designed educational scenarios.

The effectiveness of such activities depends on the extent to which students are required to interpret information, formulate responses, negotiate meaning, and cooperate with other participants.

Digital role-playing activities represent another methodological opportunity. Video conferencing platforms, collaborative online environments, and scenario-based educational applications can facilitate communicative interaction without requiring highly specialized simulation software. Teachers may distribute professional roles, establish a communication problem, and provide students with task-specific information.

For example, in a simulated international business meeting, one student may represent a project manager, another a technical consultant, and a third a foreign partner. Participants are expected to introduce proposals, clarify conditions, ask questions, and reach a collective decision. Through this activity, learners can practice language functions associated with professional negotiation, clarification, persuasion, and agreement.

A further methodological advantage involves the integration of language learning with problem-solving. Interactive digital tasks encourage students to combine professional knowledge and English language resources when addressing practical challenges. Such integration is important because professional communication requires not only linguistic accuracy but also the ability to select relevant information and express field-specific ideas clearly.

On the basis of the theoretical analysis, a three-stage instructional framework is proposed.

The first stage, professional-context preparation, involves introducing the communicative situation, identifying relevant professional vocabulary, analysing model dialogues, and establishing assessment criteria. Digital videos, short professional texts, and terminology exercises can be employed to activate learners' prior knowledge.

The second stage, simulation-based interaction, requires learners to participate in a digitally supported professional scenario. The tasks may include role-playing, virtual meetings, collaborative presentations, or decision-making activities. During this stage, the teacher primarily acts as a facilitator, providing support without unnecessarily interrupting communication.

The third stage, reflective communication assessment, focuses on analysing students' performance through teacher feedback, peer evaluation, and self-assessment. Recorded presentations, digital rubrics, and reflective reports may help learners identify strengths and areas requiring further improvement.

A practical application of this framework can be illustrated

through the learning task entitled "Solving a Professional Problem in an International Team." Students receive a scenario involving a field-specific challenge and are assigned different professional responsibilities. They research possible solutions, discuss alternatives in English, and present a jointly developed recommendation.

Assessment may be organized according to five criteria: communicative fluency, professional vocabulary accuracy, interactional responsiveness, logical organization of ideas, and successful completion of the assigned task.

The proposed approach also has certain limitations. Students with limited language proficiency may need additional linguistic scaffolding before participating in complex simulations. Differences in digital literacy and technological accessibility should also be considered. Moreover, the educational value of simulation-based learning cannot be determined solely by the number of digital activities completed; it requires systematic evaluation of observable communicative performance.

These considerations demonstrate that digital simulations should be incorporated into a carefully planned instructional sequence rather than treated as independent technological innovations.

As the present study is conceptual, its proposed methodological advantages represent theoretically grounded possibilities rather than experimentally confirmed improvements in students' language proficiency.

Conclusion

Digital simulations and interactive learning tasks offer promising methodological opportunities for developing professional English communication skills among non-philological university students. Their principal educational value lies in creating meaningful communicative situations that connect language learning with professional knowledge and occupational responsibilities.

The proposed three-stage framework integrates professional-context preparation, simulation-based interaction, and reflective communication assessment. This structure provides a basis for organizing English language instruction around professional communication tasks rather than isolated linguistic exercises.

The study suggests that the integration of digital simulations into English for Specific Purposes instruction may support students' ability to express professional opinions, participate in collaborative discussions, and respond appropriately to field-specific communication challenges.

Future research should investigate the effectiveness of the proposed framework through classroom experimentation, diagnostic assessment, and comparative analysis of communicative competence development across different non-philological specializations.

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