

INTERACTIVE FORMATS OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF NON-PHILOLOGICAL SPECIALTIES: SPEAKING CLUB AND TECH TALKS

ІНТЕРАКТИВНІ ФОРМАТИ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ДЛЯ СТУДЕНТІВ НЕМОВНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ: SPEAKING CLUB TA TECH TALKS

The article focuses on the problem of improving the effectiveness of foreign language training for non-philological students in higher education institutions under the increasing demands for professional communication in English. The relevance of the study is determined by the gap between the requirements of the modern labor market, particularly in the IT sector, and the outcomes of traditional foreign language teaching, which often relies on reproductive activities and does not ensure sufficient communicative competence.

The aim of the article is to provide a theoretical justification and practical analysis of interactive learning formats, namely Speaking Clubs and Tech Talks, as effective tools for developing foreign language communicative competence among non-philological students. The study analyses contemporary approaches to interactive learning, professionally oriented language teaching, and the CLIL methodology, as well as summarizes the results of implementing these formats with third- and fourth-year Computer Science students.

Special attention is paid to the methodology of organizing Speaking Club and Tech Talks sessions, including group work, discussion questions, role-plays, the use of authentic materials, and digital tools for lexical preparation. The analysis of typical students' language errors is also presented. The findings demonstrate that the systematic use of interactive formats reduces speaking anxiety, activates professional vocabulary, and contributes to the development of spontaneous speaking skills, critical thinking, and soft skills.

The article concludes that Speaking Clubs and Tech Talks have significant pedagogical potential in professionally oriented foreign language education for non-philological students and can be effectively integrated into university teaching practice.

Key words: *interactive learning, Speaking Club, Tech Talks, communicative competence, English for Specific Purposes, non-philological students.*

У статті розглянуто проблему підвищення ефективності іншомовної підготовки студентів немовних спеціальностей у закладах вищої освіти в умовах зростання вимог до професійної комунікації англійською мовою.

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена розбіжністю між потребами сучасного ринку праці, зокрема IT-сфери, та результатами традиційного навчання іноземних мов, яке часто орієнтоване на репродуктивні види діяльності й не забезпечує достатнього рівня сформованості комунікативної компетентності студентів.

Метою статті є теоретичне обґрунтування та практичний аналіз інтерактивних форматів навчання (Speaking Club і Tech Talks) як ефективних інструментів формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності студентів нефілологічних спеціальностей. У дослідженні проаналізовано сучасні наукові підходи до інтерактивного навчання, професійно орієнтованого викладання іноземної мови та CLIL-методики, а також узагальнено результати впровадження зазначених форматів у роботі зі студентами 3–4 курсів спеціальності «Комп'ютерні науки».

Основну увагу приділено опису методики проведення занять у форматі Speaking Club і Tech Talks, організації групової та командної роботи, використанню дискусійних запитань, ролевих ігор, автентичних матеріалів і цифрових ресурсів для лексичної підготовки. Проаналізовано типові лексичні, граматичні та фонетичні помилки студентів під час участі в інтерактивних обговореннях. Результати дослідження свідчать, що систематичне використання інтерактивних форматів сприяє зниженню мовленнєвої тривожності, активізації професійної лексики, розвитку навичок спонтанного мовлення, критичного мислення та soft skills.

Дослідження демонструє, що Speaking Club і Tech Talks мають значний методичний потенціал у системі професійно орієнтованої іншомовної підготовки студентів немовних спеціальностей і можуть бути рекомендовані для впровадження у практику викладання англійської мови у закладах вищої освіти.

Ключові слова: *інтерактивне навчання, Speaking Club, Tech Talks, іншомовна комунікативна компетентність, професійно орієнтоване навчання, студенти немовних спеціальностей.*

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Bilokopytova M.O.,

orcid.org/0000-0003-3817-245X

Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages
Alfred Nobel University

Voloboieva A.O.,

orcid.org/0009-0002-7710-6922

Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages
Alfred Nobel University

Problem Statement. Modern higher education is characterized by the growing role of the English language as a tool of professional communication, especially for students of technical specialties. At the same time, traditional methods of foreign language teaching do not always ensure the development of practical oral communication skills required for participation in professional discussions, presentations, and intercultural communication [2, pp. 12–15]. This situation determines the need to introduce interactive learning formats capable of integrating language training with a professional context.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Issues related to interactive learning and professionally oriented foreign language teaching have been addressed in the works of both domestic and foreign scholars [1; 2; 3]. In particular, the use of interactive formats in teaching foreign languages to students of non-philological specialties has been actively explored by Ukrainian researchers. In the studies by S. Svyrydenko (2016), interactive learning is defined as a dialogical form of organizing the educational process that ensures active interaction among all participants and contributes to the

development of students' critical thinking and communicative autonomy.

The effectiveness of Speaking Club formats in developing oral communication skills is substantiated in the research of V. Mirochnyk (2016), who emphasizes the role of regular speaking practice in overcoming psychological barriers and fostering spontaneous speech. O. Onuchak (2023) highlights the appropriateness of using Speaking Club specifically for students of non-philological specialties, as such formats bring learning closer to real-life communicative situations and promote the development of communicative flexibility.

Issues of professionally oriented foreign language teaching and the integration of linguistic and subject-specific content are examined in the works of N. Koval (2011), who notes that combining language training with professional topics increases students' motivation and enhances the practical value of learning. In this context, the Tech Talks format is regarded as an effective tool for implementing the CLIL approach (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in higher education institutions.

Summarizing the findings of Ukrainian scholars (Volkova, 2018; Vakulovych, 2022; Onuchak, 2023), it is possible to identify the main advantages of interactive formats for students of non-philological specialties, including reduced speaking anxiety, the development of spontaneous speech, increased motivation to learn a foreign language, the formation of soft skills, and the professionalization of foreign language communication [2; 4; 5, pp. 24, 35, 21].

Identification of previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. Despite the considerable body of research devoted to interactive methods of foreign language teaching and professionally oriented English language instruction for students of non-philological specialties, several aspects of this issue remain insufficiently explored. Most existing studies focus primarily on the theoretical foundations of interactive learning or on the general advantages of discussion-based formats, whereas the practical mechanisms of their systematic implementation in the educational process of higher education institutions are presented only fragmentarily.

Further analysis is required of the practical experience of organizing and conducting Speaking Clubs and Tech Talks within the framework of professionally oriented English language teaching for students of non-philological specialties, considering their level of language proficiency, field of study, and academic workload. The issue of integrating interactive formats with the principles of the CLIL methodology under real conditions of classroom and extracurricular instruction also remains underexplored.

Special attention should also be paid to the study of typical lexical, grammatical, and phonetic difficulties encountered by students during interactive

discussions and professionally oriented presentations. An analysis of such language errors and communicative barriers is necessary for improving the methodology of conducting Speaking Clubs and Tech Talks and enhancing their effectiveness in developing the foreign language communicative competence of future specialists.

Purpose of the Article The purpose of the article is to substantiate the feasibility of using interactive formats such as Speaking Club and Tech Talks and to analyze their effectiveness in developing the foreign language communicative competence of students majoring in *Computer Science*.

Presentation of the main material. An effective example of using interactive learning formats is the organization of Speaking Clubs—specifically Tech Talks—for 3rd- and 4th-year students majoring in *Computer Science*. These sessions aim to provide students with opportunities to practice English in real professional contexts, discuss current topics in the field of technology, and share experiences.

The sessions can take various forms: pre-prepared topics in a “Flipped Classroom” format with sets of Quizlet cards, discussion questions, or case studies; role-playing activities; development and presentation of student projects; use of authentic videos on specific technical subjects with follow-up discussions in pairs or groups; and student-prepared presentations on relevant technology topics, such as “AI in Everyday Life,” “Cybersecurity Challenges,” “Remote Work Tools and Digital Collaboration,” “Cloud Computing Trends,” and “The Future of Software Development.” As an example, we considered the topic “**Chatbots at Hand.**”

For the effective organization of the session, the instructor prepares in advance a set of lexical flashcards in Quizlet. The set includes key terms, collocations, and expressions related to the topic, for example: *AI-powered tool* – інструмент, що працює на основі штучного інтелекту, *automated response* – автоматизована відповідь, *natural language processing (NLP)* – обробка природної мови, *machine learning model* – модель машинного навчання, *user query* – запит користувача, *data privacy* – конфіденційність даних, *conversational interface* – інтерфейс для спілкування and others.

Such a vocabulary set helps students prepare for discussions, expands their active vocabulary, and stimulates oral communication.

The instructor forms 2–3 teams (or more, depending on the number of students). Each team receives a list of discussion questions. Participants are given 15 minutes for intra-group discussion of answers, arguments, and different points of view. After completing the group work, students return to the common “Breakout room” and present their conclusions. This format promotes collaboration, peer learning, and responsibility for the group's results.

The questions can vary, from general to those involving specific language models (e.g., *Would you rather..., Have you ever..., This or that*). After the first round of discussion, participants change partners or teams. Re-discussing the topic with new partners helps consolidate vocabulary and develop the ability to express thoughts in different situational contexts. Examples of basic discussion questions include: *“What chatbots do you use in your daily life? How helpful are chatbots compared to human assistants? Do you trust AI-generated answers? Why or why not? In what areas can chatbots replace human workers? Should they? What ethical problems can appear while using chatbots? How do chatbots influence communication skills among young people? What are the main advantages and disadvantages of chatbots? How will chatbots change the future of education? Should people learn how to communicate with AI the same way they learn foreign languages? What was the most surprising chatbot experience you have had?”*

Within the framework of the Speaking Club, students are also tasked with creating their own chatbot, developing its concept in detail, and presenting it to the group. This assignment encourages the active use of technical and thematic vocabulary, develops oral communication skills, and fosters creative thinking.

An example of a student presentation concept: *“Our chatbot is called EduBot. It helps students with math and English. It can explain difficult topics, give exercises, and provide feedback. EduBot talks politely and always encourages students. The target audience is schoolchildren and university students who need extra support after classes.”*

This task encourages students to use terms and collocations such as *AI assistant, automated response, user query, personalized recommendations, natural language processing*, as well as conditional sentence constructions, modal verbs, and recommendation expressions (*should, can, need to*).

Role-playing games are an effective tool for developing communicative competence, as they allow students to practice live dialogue, use thematic vocabulary, and employ specific phrases in context. Examples of role-play scenarios include ticket booking via a chatbot, technical support, and learning with an AI assistant.

Example Dialogue 1: Ticket Booking

Student A (user): Hi, I'd like to book a train ticket to Lviv tomorrow.

Student B (chatbot “TravelMate”): Sure! What time would you like to travel?

Student A: Around 10 a.m., please.

Student B: I found two options: 10:05 and 10:30. Which one do you prefer?

Student A: 10:05 is fine. How much is it?

Student B: The ticket costs 350 UAH. Do you want to pay now?

Student A: Yes, please.

Student B: Payment successful. Your ticket is booked!

Example Dialogue 2: Technical Support

Student A (user): Hello, my chatbot is not responding to my commands.

Student B (chatbot “TechHelper”): I'm sorry for the inconvenience. Can you describe the problem in detail?

Student A: When I ask for the weather, it shows an error message.

Student B: Please try restarting the application. If the problem persists, update to the latest version.

Example Dialogue 3: Learning with an AI Assistant

Student A (learner): Can you help me practice English grammar?

Student B (chatbot “EduBot”): Of course! Let's start with the past tense. Can you make a sentence using *went*?

Student A: Yesterday, I went to the library.

Student B: Excellent! Now try a question in the past tense.

Role-playing activities stimulate the use of technical and thematic vocabulary, enhance oral communication skills, and promote situational problem-solving in English, closely simulating real-life professional interactions. Students actively apply thematic vocabulary and grammatical constructions, stimulate critical thinking and creativity, and develop oral communication skills in a real context.

During the Speaking Club sessions on the topic **“Chatbots at Hand”**, several characteristic lexical, grammatical, and phonetic errors were observed. The summary analysis of these errors can serve as a basis for further correction and targeted work with language material.

The analyzed errors indicate that the greatest difficulties arise in the following areas: **Grammar:** formation of degrees of comparison; subject-verb agreement; use of *do/does* and Continuous forms; conditional sentences; indirect questions. **Vocabulary and collocations:** incorrect use of technical terms (e.g., *fastly, peoples, trust to*); confusion between words such as *AI, chatbot, tool, model*; incorrect selection of adjectives and adverbs. **Phonetics:** incorrect pronunciation of words such as *chatbot /'tʃæt.bot/, data* (frequent confusion between */'deɪ.təl/* and */'dɑ:.təl/*), *algorithm, machine*; confusion between long and short vowels (e.g., *ship/sheep, live/leave*). This analysis highlights areas for targeted instructional interventions to improve students' language proficiency and enhance their communicative competence in technical contexts.

Conclusions. The conducted study confirms the effectiveness of interactive English language learning formats, particularly Speaking Club and Tech Talks, in the professionally oriented training of students

in non-philological majors. The use of these formats ensures active application of the foreign language in contexts closely aligned with real professional activities in the IT field.

The Speaking Club format facilitates overcoming the language barrier and developing confidence in spontaneous oral communication. Tech Talks, in turn, enable the integration of language training with professional content and correspond to the principles of the CLIL methodology. Participation in presentations and discussions encourages the use of professional vocabulary and develops structured speaking skills. The use of authentic materials enhances the practical value of the learning process. Interactive sessions contribute to the development of critical thinking, teamwork, and soft skills. Regular implementation of such formats increases students' motivation to study English. Analysis of common language errors allows for targeted adjustments to the teaching process.

Therefore, Speaking Club and Tech Talks have significant methodological potential and can be recommended for implementation in higher education institutions.

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