

## FLIPPED LEARNING AS A PATH TO ACADEMIC AUTONOMY IN ESP COURSES

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*This study investigates the integration of flipped classroom model, which has become a transformative approach in higher education, fostering student autonomy, engagement, and professional competency development, into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses for undergraduate students of psychology, social work, and social pedagogy at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.*

*The article outlines a four-year progression of ESP tasks aligned with curricular objectives and students' growing academic skills. In the first year, learners work with adapted texts and foundational vocabulary; in the second, they engage with theoretical concepts in personality psychology; in the third, they analyse authentic professional articles and simulations; and in the fourth, they complete research-based assignments and academic writing. Out-of-class activities include reading, summarizing, and analysing texts, while in-class work emphasizes discussions, role-plays, debates, and peer feedback.*

*The observations indicate that flipped learning enhances students' confidence, encourages active participation, and supports the development of academic autonomy. At the same time, challenges were identified in designing effective pre-class materials that accommodate different levels of learner readiness. The study also highlights the importance of scaffolding tasks to ensure gradual skill development and the need for continuous teacher support in adapting materials.*

*The study concludes that flipped learning provides an effective framework for integrating language learning with professional skill development and preparing students for participation in international academic discourse.*

**Keywords:** *flipped learning, ESP, psychology, academic autonomy, professional communication.*

### **Гордєєва А. Й., Миколайчук А. І., Хайдер Є. М. Перевернуте навчання як шлях до академічної автономії на курсах ESP**

*У статті досліджується інтеграція моделі перевернутого навчання в курси англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням (ESP) для студентів спеціальностей «психологія», «соціальна робота» та «соціальна педагогіка» Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Перевернуте навчання розглядається як трансформаційний підхід у вищій освіті, що сприяє розвитку академічної автономії студентів, їхній активній участі в навчальному процесі та формуванню професійних компетентностей.*

*У роботі описано чотирирічну прогресію ESP-завдань, узгоджених із навчальними цілями та поступовим зростанням академічної підготовки студентів. На першому курсі студенти працюють*

з адаптованими текстами та базовою професійною лексикою; на другому – опрацьовують теоретичні концепції психології особистості; на третьому – аналізують автентичні фахові статті та виконують симуляційні професійні завдання; на четвертому – виконують дослідницькі завдання й розвивають навички академічного письма. Позааудиторна робота включає читання, узагальнення та аналіз текстів, тоді як аудиторна діяльність зосереджена на дискусіях, рольових іграх, дебатах і взаємооцінюванні.

Результати спостережень засвідчують, що перевернуте навчання підвищує впевненість студентів, активізує їхню участь у навчанні та сприяє формуванню академічної автономії. Водночас виявлено труднощі, пов'язані з підготовкою ефективних позааудиторних матеріалів з урахуванням різного рівня готовності студентів.

Зроблено висновок, що перевернуте навчання є результативною моделлю поєднання мовної підготовки з професійним розвитком і підготовки студентів до участі в міжнародному академічному дискурсі.

**Ключові слова:** перевернуте навчання, ESP, психологія, академічна автономія, професійна комунікація.

**Introduction.** Developing academic autonomy has become a central objective of higher education, as independent learning is closely linked to professional competence, lifelong learning, and the ability to engage critically with specialized knowledge. For undergraduate students of non-philological specialties, such as psychology, social work, and social pedagogy, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses play a key role not only in language development but also in the formation of academic literacy and professional communication skills.

However, working with English-language academic and professional sources presents considerable challenges for many students. Complex text structures, discipline-specific terminology, and conventions of academic discourse, particularly in research-oriented fields such as psychology, often hinder comprehension and reduce learners' confidence in applying knowledge independently [6; 7]. As a result, students may remain dependent on teacher guidance and demonstrate limited readiness for autonomous engagement with materials. In this context, the flipped classroom model is increasingly viewed as a promising approach to supporting academic autonomy. By reorganizing the learning sequence so that initial engagement with content occurs outside the classroom, this model encourages students to take greater responsibility for preparation, while classroom time can be devoted to interaction, application, and reflection [1; 3]. The present study addresses the integration of flipped learning into ESP courses for undergraduate students of psychology, social work, and social pedagogy at the Faculty of Psychology, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

The purpose of this article is to describe how the flipped classroom model was implemented in ESP courses as a means of fostering academic autonomy and professional communication. The study focuses on the organization of learning activities and the progression of tasks across four years of undergraduate study.

**Materials, Methods, Discussion.** The instructional materials used in the ESP courses were selected in accordance with the existing undergraduate curriculum [4] and students' academic level. No changes were introduced to the thematic content of the program; instead, materials were organized to support a gradual transition from guided learning to independent academic work.

Across the four years of study, students worked with a range of materials, including adapted ESP texts, theoretical readings in psychology, authentic professional and academic articles, and research-oriented sources. These materials were supplemented with guided tasks such as glossary compilation, identifying key concepts, outlining texts, summarizing content, and drafting short analytical or research-based texts. The selection and sequencing of materials were designed to correspond to students' developing linguistic competence and professional orientation.

The methodological framework of the course was based on the core principle of flipped learning: initial exposure to content took place outside the classroom, while in-class time was reserved for interactive and applied activities. As Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) define it, flipped learning is characterised by the “transfer of informa-

tion transmission out of class time and the use of class time for learning activities that actively engage students [1:3].” Building on this understanding and as further discussed by Lo and Hew (2020), out-of-class assignments focused on reading, vocabulary work, analysis of key ideas, and preparatory written tasks [6]. This structure allowed students to engage with materials at their own pace and gradually develop self-regulated learning skills.

In-class activities were designed to maximise student interaction and professional communication. Depending on the year of study, these activities included guided discussions, role-plays, debates, simulations of professional situations, and peer feedback on written work. Such organisation enabled students to apply theoretical knowledge, practise discipline-specific language, and collaboratively reflect on content, which aligns with research highlighting the benefits of flipped instruction for active learning and skill development [2].

A distinctive feature of the implementation was the differentiation of tasks across four years of undergraduate study. Task complexity increased gradually in line with students’ academic experience, moving from basic comprehension and vocabulary use to analytical engagement with authentic texts and research-based academic writing. The gradual development of academic autonomy requires systematic scaffolding rather than uniform task design. Observations from ESP classroom practice indicate that students’ readiness for independent work varies significantly depending on their year of study, prior academic experience, and familiarity with professional discourse. For this reason, the flipped classroom model was adapted to support incremental progression. Differentiating tasks across four years made it possible to align learning activities with curricular goals while maintaining continuity in instructional principles. Out-of-class assignments scaffolded independent engagement with materials, whereas in-class activities emphasized interaction, applied practice, and collaborative reflection. This approach allowed students to build confidence and competence gradually, preparing them for advanced academic and professional communication by the final year of study.

To systematize this progression and to demonstrate how flipped classroom principles were operationalized in practice, a structured framework of ESP tasks was developed. This framework captures the relationship between thematic focus, out-of-class preparation, in-class activities, and expected learning outcomes at each stage of undergraduate study. Accordingly, Table 1 presents an overview of differentiated ESP tasks implemented across four years, illustrating the progression of learning activities and outcomes within the flipped classroom model.

Table 1 illustrates a structured progression of differentiated ESP tasks implemented within the flipped classroom model across four years of undergraduate study for non-philological specialties. The framework reflects a deliberate pedagogical logic in which linguistic, academic, and professional competencies are developed incrementally, with each year building upon the skills established at the previous stage.

During the *first year*, the primary focus is placed on the foundations of communicative competence. Accessible themes and adapted texts are used to support vocabulary acquisition and to introduce students to independent work with English-language materials. In-class activities emphasize low-anxiety communication through discussion and role-play, enabling students to apply basic terminology in simple professional scenarios. This stage is essential for building confidence and reducing resistance to active language use.

The *second year* introduces discipline-specific theoretical content, particularly in the area of personality psychology. Out-of-class work requires students to analyze texts and extract key concepts, while in-class activities foster critical discussion and collaborative interpretation. At this stage, students move beyond surface-level comprehension toward conceptual understanding and argumentative communication, which are central to both academic study and professional reasoning.

In the *third year*, the focus shifts to engagement with authentic professional and academic texts. Students are expected to prepare structured outlines and theses based on complex readings, demonstrating the ability to synthesize information and identify key

Table 1

**Differentiated ESP Tasks in the Flipped Classroom  
for Undergraduate Students of Non-Philological Specialties**

Year	Theme	Out-of-Class Work	In-Class Work	Expected Outcome
1st	Balancing Work and Family	Reading adapted texts on work-family balance; compiling a glossary of key terms	Discussion “How to balance family and work?”; role-play “psychologist– client”	Acquisition of basic vocabulary and ability to apply it in simple communicative situations
2nd	Personality: The Big Five, The Dark Triad	Analyzing articles on personality models; extracting key concepts	Group presentation “Personality traits in professional practice”; debates on the impact of the Dark Triad	Understanding of personality theories and ability to discuss their relevance in professional contexts
3rd	Psychotherapy, psychology, psychoanalysis	Working with authentic articles; preparing outlines and theses	Role-play “therapist – client”; discussion on the application of psychoanalysis in practice	Development of skills in handling complex texts and applying theoretical knowledge in simulations
4th	Research and academic communication	Reviewing English-language research articles; drafting literature reviews	Seminar discussion on research design; peer feedback on draft abstracts	Ability to integrate academic sources into research writing and present findings in English

arguments. In-class simulations and discussions require the application of theoretical knowledge in professionally oriented contexts, reinforcing the connection between academic study and future practice.

The *fourth year* represents the culmination of the ESP trajectory, with emphasis on academic autonomy and research communication. Out-of-class tasks involve independent work with English-language research articles [5] and the preparation of literature reviews, while in-class seminars and peer feedback sessions simulate academic discourse. At this stage, students demonstrate the ability to integrate sources into research writing and to communicate academic ideas in English with clarity and professional awareness. Overall, the progression presented in Table 1 demonstrates how the flipped classroom model supports scaffolded development from basic communicative skills to advanced academic and professional competence.

While Table 1 presents the structured framework of differentiated ESP tasks, the following classroom observations illustrate how this progression was experienced in practice. These examples show how the flipped classroom model operated across four years of study, gradually shaping students' confidence, academic literacy, and professional identity.

From our classroom experience with the flipped model, both in outofclass preparation and inclass interaction, we repeatedly observed certain patterns that shaped students' progress and confidence. The first year was consistently the most delicate stage. Students entered university with motivation but often lacked confidence in using English beyond controlled textbook exercises. The theme family, work, balance served as a natural entry point, as it resonated with students' personal experience while introducing professional vocabulary relevant to social and psychological practice. Outofclass work involved reading short adapted texts and compiling a glossary of ten key terms. This task was intentionally simple, yet pedagogically significant: students arrived in class with “their own” vocabulary, which immediately lowered anxiety and increased engagement.

In class, these words began to function in real communication. Discussions such as “How to balance family and work?” often led to personal reflections, while the roleplay “psychologist – client” transformed passive vocabulary knowledge into active professional dialogue. We repeatedly observed how students shifted from memorizing terms to negotiating meaning, and it was at this point that the flipped classroom structure became particularly visible: preparation at home enabled interaction in class.

In the second year, students moved into more abstract territory through engagement with personality theories such as the Big Five and the Dark Triad. Outofclass tasks required careful reading of theoretical texts and extraction of key concepts, which many students initially perceived as challenging. However, the communicative and lexical foundation established in the first year allowed them to approach these materials with greater confidence. Inclass presentations and debates encouraged students to connect theory with professional practice, discussing how personality traits might influence real-life interactions in psychology and social work contexts.

By the third year, students were ready to work with authentic professional and academic texts in psychology, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis. Outofclass preparation involved outlining and formulating theses based on complex readings, demanding both linguistic competence and analytical discipline. Inclass roleplays, such as the “therapist – client” simulation, provided a space where theoretical knowledge was tested through professional interaction. Students often began with hesitation, but gradually developed the ability to explain concepts, adapt terminology, and improvise within professional roles.

The fourth year marked a transition from guided learning to academic autonomy. Students independently selected and analyzed English-language research articles, prepared literature reviews, and drafted abstracts related to their research interests. Inclass seminars and peer feedback sessions simulated academic communication, encouraging students to critique sources, refine arguments, and reflect on academic integrity. At this stage, the flipped classroom functioned not only as a languagelearning model but as preparation for participation in international academic and professional discourse.

**Conclusions.** The integration of the flipped classroom model into ESP courses for under-

graduate students demonstrates clear pedagogical benefits across different stages of study. The differentiated design of tasks ensures that students progress from mastering basic vocabulary and communicative scenarios in the first year to engaging with theoretical debates in the second, handling authentic texts and professional simulations in the third, and finally producing academic writing and participating in scholarly discourse in the fourth year.

Our classroom observations confirm that this progression fosters both linguistic and academic competence. Students gradually acquire the ability to navigate English-language sources, critically interpret content, and apply knowledge in professional contexts. The flipped classroom structure – preparation at home followed by active practice in class – consistently transforms passive reading into meaningful communication, collaborative analysis, and professional rehearsal. We emphasize that the model not only supports language acquisition but also cultivates academic autonomy. By the final year, students demonstrate the capacity to integrate sources into their own research writing, provide peer feedback, and situate their work within international discourse.

From our teaching experience, the most significant outcome is the shift in student perception: English is no longer seen merely as a subject to be passed but as a tool for expressing ideas, negotiating meaning, and participating in academic and professional communities. The flipped classroom thus proves to be an effective approach for preparing non-philological students to meet the demands of both their future careers and the global academic environment.

Future research may focus on evaluating the long-term impact of differentiated flipped classroom tasks, particularly in relation to students’ ability to produce independent research texts and to engage in international collaboration.

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