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## The use of multi-disciplinary links in teaching a foreign language

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**Abstract.** The article discusses the issue of interaction of various academic disciplines during training and the potential for interdisciplinary relationships in the educational process in order to prepare a competent and competitive specialist. Particular attention is paid to the need to find ways of the most effective use of interdisciplinary connections, to identify the maximum benefits of a productive combination of educational material from various branches of knowledge. The methods of cross relationships and interactions of various disciplines are becoming more and more relevant. These methods are considered as a common means of implementing integrated education. Methodologically correct and competent implementation of interdisciplinarity in the educational process has many opportunities to expand the general and specialized knowledge of students, develop their skills, especially when it comes to teaching a foreign language, in particular English. The article focuses on the use of an interdisciplinary approach in teaching the general English course and the English language course for special purposes, and interdisciplinary connections are researched as an effective tool for the qualitative development of the general and professional competence of future specialists. The use of interdisciplinary connections of a foreign language and other academic disciplines (Ukrainian language and Literature, History, Geography, Rhetoric) is demonstrated on the example of the author's development of an interactive quiz lesson in English on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the outstanding Ukrainian poetess Lesya Ukrainka. The article presents a number of examples of assignments and exercises that clearly illustrate the wide possibilities of interdisciplinary relationships for the preparation of high-quality educational material, improving the level of students' English, as well as their general level of professional competence.

**Key words:** multi-disciplinary teaching, foreign language, multi-disciplinary approach, multi-disciplinary activity, professional communication skills.

## Використання міжпредметних зв'язків на заняттях з іноземної мови

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**Анотація.** У статті розглядається питання взаємодії різних навчальних дисциплін під час навчання та потенційні можливості міждисциплінарних зв'язків в освітньому процесі для підготовки високо компетентного та конкурентоспроможного фахівця. Особлива увага звертається на необхідність пошуку шляхів найбільш ефективного використання міждисциплінарності, виявлення максимальних переваг і перспектив плідного поєднання навчального матеріалу із різних галузей знань, оскільки методи перехресного взаємозв'язку та взаємодії різних дисциплін стають все більш актуальними та розглядаються як поширений засіб реалізації комплексного навчання. Грамотне впровадження міждисциплінарності містить у собі багато можливостей для розвитку професійних знань і навичок студентів, особливо коли мова йдеться про викладання іноземної мови, зокрема англійської. Фокусується увага на застосуванні міждисциплінарного підходу у викладанні англійської мови та англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням, а міжпредметні зв'язки досліджуються як ефективний інструмент якісного розвитку загальної і фахової компетентності майбутніх спеціалістів. У роботі демонструється використання міждисциплінарних зв'язків іноземної мови та інших навчальних дисциплін (української мови та літератури, історії, географії, риторики) на прикладі авторської розробки інтерактивного заняття-вікторини з англійської мови з нагоди 150-річчя видатної української поетеси Лесі Українки. В роботі подається низка прикладів міждисциплінарних завдань і вправ, які наочно ілюструють необмежені ресурси та

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можливості міждисциплінарних зв'язків для підготовки якісного навчального матеріалу, підвищення рівня володіння англійською мовою, а також загального рівня професійної компетентності студентів.

**Ключові слова:** міжпредметні зв'язки, іноземна мова, міждисциплінарний підхід, комунікативні навички, фахова компетентність.

## Использование межпредметных связей на занятиях по иностранному языку

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается вопрос взаимодействия различных учебных дисциплин в ходе обучения и потенциальные возможности междисциплинарных связей в образовательном процессе с целью подготовки компетентного и конкурентоспособного специалиста. Особое внимание уделяется необходимости поиска путей наиболее эффективного использования междисциплинарных связей, выявления максимальных преимуществ продуктивного сочетания учебного материала из различных отраслей знаний, поскольку методы перекрестных взаимосвязей и взаимодействий различных дисциплин становятся все более актуальными и рассматриваются как распространенное средство реализации комплексного обучения. Методически правильное и грамотное внедрение междисциплинарности в учебный процесс обладает множеством возможностей для расширения общих и профильных знаний студентов, развития их умений и навыков, особенно если это касается обучения иностранному языку, в частности английскому. В статье фокусируется внимание на применении междисциплинарного подхода в преподавании общего курса английского и курса английского языка для специальных целей, а межпредметные связи исследуются как эффективный инструмент качественного развития общей и профессиональной компетентности будущих специалистов. Демонстрируется использование междисциплинарных связей иностранного языка и других учебных дисциплин (украинского языка и литературы, истории, географии, риторики) на примере авторской разработки интерактивного занятия-викторины по английскому языку по случаю 150-летия выдающейся украинской поэтессы Леси Украинки. В работе представлен ряд примеров заданий и упражнений, которые наглядно иллюстрируют широкие возможности междисциплинарных связей для подготовки качественного учебного материала, повышения уровня английского языка студентов, а также их общего уровня профессиональной компетентности.

**Ключевые слова:** межпредметные связи, иностранный язык, междисциплинарный подход, коммуникативные навыки, профессиональная компетентность.

### 1 Introduction

**The topicality of the research.** In the educational process it is very important to search multi-disciplinary links and discover interdisciplinary relationships, but the most important is to see the prospects of interdisciplinarity and get out the maximum advantages and benefits of it. Competent utilization of interdisciplinarity can give lots of opportunities for the development of students' professional knowledge and skills, promote and enhance the efficiency of future specialists, especially if it deals with teaching a language. Furthermore, teaching a foreign language can be actually understood as a multi-disciplinary activity.

Nowadays multi-disciplinary teaching a foreign language and the use of interdisciplinary links and relations in the educational process at a higher school can be considered as an important issue of advancing the level of professional competence of graduates, improving their professional communication skills as well as expanding outlook and advancing multicultural competence.

**The degree of scientific research of the issue.** Nowadays techniques of cross- practice linkages and interaction of various disciplines are becoming more widely used, it is a very popular method of high-quality training of specialists; although the idea of interdisciplinarity itself is not new in educational science at all [2].

Multi-disciplinary links and interdisciplinary relationships have been considered by many outstanding scholars and educators.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was touched back by such famous educational reformer as John Amos Comenius; later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the issue was raised by Johann Pestalozzi, a Swiss pedagogue, educational reformer and starter several educational institutions; Konstantin Ushinsky who is considered to be the founder of scientific pedagogy in Russia.

Since at present the relevance of interdisciplinary links is growing, it is the object of research in the studies of many both native and foreign methodists. Tony Dudley-Evans, Maggie Jo St John, Yu. Chabansky, S. Honcharenko, V. Evdokimov, V. Lozova, A. Belyaeva, V. Ilchenko and others modern researchers have studied the issue in their works and this fact proves that interdisciplinarity studying is becoming leading in the context of training high-quality specialists.

The multi-disciplinary links can contribute a lot in the development of cognitive activity, education and a systematic approach to knowledge; they can be instrumental in developing various high-quality learning content. In light of the above the issue requires further research.

**The aim** of this article is to define the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language, English in particular.

The main tasks of the work are to present that teaching a foreign language is a multi-disciplinary activity; to demonstrate the educational opportunities of multi-disciplinary teaching and show how students can benefit from multi-disciplinary links of English with other disciplines (Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature, Ukrainian History, Geography, Eloquence Training) and give examples of multi-disciplinary exercises and activities, using the content authoring of an interactive English lesson-quiz, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of a prominent Ukrainian writer and poetess Lesia Ukrainka.

## ***II Materials and Methods***

Today high-quality training of any competent and efficient specialist is impossible without interdisciplinary integration, which is based on interdisciplinary linkages and is performed thanks to a multi-disciplinary approach.

The educational process, which is built on the principles of interdisciplinary integration, requires a systematic approach. This means that the implementing of interactive methods of teaching a foreign language, using modern techniques and advanced technologies in the educational process, assuming experience in both a foreign language for academic purposes and for occupational purposes should be one of the priorities of educational and methodological activities of any foreign language teacher, English teacher in particular.

Modern researchers consider the concept of interdisciplinarity as the most common method of implementing integrated learning.

The more students have multi-disciplinary activities to do and the better they are able to perform interdisciplinary assignments, the better they remember and understand the learning content, which means that multi-disciplinary links are established and used correctly, as students can see them and get advantages out of them. In this case we can speak about the level of interdisciplinarity in learning process and its reflection in students' minds.

Students learning results testify acquired experience of interdisciplinary application of knowledge, and hence the level of awareness of multi-disciplinary links and interdisciplinary relationships. In fact, it provides a new method for quantitative assessment of multi-disciplinary links.

It should be said that in the process of studying various courses using the multi-disciplinary approach students simultaneously gain experience in applying the acquired knowledge in future professional activities, which indicates a new competency level [3]; in other words learning a foreign language develops both linguistic and professional skills and abilities of students as well as their knowledge and competence. Improving English language level and professional communication skills, students get the opportunity to express themselves with confidence and progress in their career.

Multi-disciplinary approach contributes to creation situations and conditions when students can use the acquired knowledge and skills.

When speaking of multidisciplinary teaching and considering multi-disciplinary links and looking into a matter of interdisciplinarity it is necessary to point out that learning content that students train during different courses should not be simply duplicated; it should be used to motivate further educational activities of students, update basic knowledge, skills and abilities, clarify the content of things and phenomena, substantiation, process modeling etc.

The knowledge of a foreign language is very important and essential nowadays. It is not only reliable basis for process of communication, it has become a part of professional competence; therefore, it is the inexhaustible source of technological progress as it enables rapid rate of the exchange of information and

further development of solving global problems.

Whereas professional competence nowadays should include, in addition to sound professional knowledge, high level of development of professional communication skills, the idea of active expansion of students' proficiency in English is becoming more and more popular.

It is a hot topic at a higher school where the importance of teaching and learning English for specific purposes (ESP) is obvious.

Multi-disciplinary approach becomes a great help in acquisition a foreign language, mastering its rules and developing communication skills.

A foreign language, all the more English, is a great example of openness to interaction with other disciplines; whereas some scholars like Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John understand ESP (English for Specific Purposes) as a multi-disciplinary activity [4].

Today it is difficult to disagree, that interdisciplinary links and relations can be very effective for meeting students' needs; whereas multidisciplinary teaching provides students with the right tools to help them interact confidently in the real world and achieve the professional and personal success they are working towards. Moreover, special attention is paid to the use of methodological techniques and tools for the skill development within several disciplines, which allows students to gain new knowledge.

### III Results

We will try to demonstrate the educational opportunities and prospects of multi-disciplinary teaching and show how students can benefit from links of a foreign language, in our case English, with other disciplines (Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature, Ukrainian History, Geography, Eloquence Training) using the example of the content authoring of an interactive English lesson-quiz, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the outstanding Ukrainian poetess Lesia Ukrainka.

To celebrate a significant anniversary of Larysa Petrivna Kosach, an outstanding figure in the Ukrainian literature and culture, there has been prepared an open English interactive lesson for the first-year students of nonlinguistic specialties. The purpose of the lesson is not only to improve students' English communication skills, but "ensure the cultural and spiritual development of the personality, educating the youth at a higher school in the spirit of Ukrainian patriotism" according to the Educational Act of Ukraine [1].

The celebration was held in the form of an interactive game-competition dedicated to the life and creative work of the great Ukrainian poetess. It should be said that a game in the educational process can be very useful; it serves not only as an 'amusing activity', but also as a technique to carry out many pedagogical tasks. As explained by J. Heathfield, "a game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun... Games should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus" [5].

The interactive lesson-competition, which we present, consists of several parts.

There are different activities and games aimed to progress in English speaking, listening, and grammar through a combination of interactive exercises that help to improve a language level and speak more confidently and effectively. They can be done both in pairs and groups.

**Exercise 1.** *The first part of the lesson was a report competition.*

The students were asked to prepare reports-presentations about Larysa Petrivna Kosach.

This kind of activity requires some preparation, so it was the student's homework which they had to do in advance. The topics of the reports were as follows: "Lesia Ukrainka's Biography", "Love and Tragedy in Lesia's Life", "Interesting Facts about Lesia Ukrainka", "My Favourite Lyrics by Lesia Ukrainka"; students could have chosen any topic they liked or develop their own project.

This assignment can be particularly handy as students' reports make use of variety of techniques. They may be enacted around the certain topic, may be based on the use of active vocabulary or learners' own experience.

The interdisciplinary relationships between English and Ukrainian Literature and History here are obvious. The task sounds simple – it is necessary to tell about a well-known person in English, but multi-functional, as students practice translation and interpretation skills from their native language, improve speaking skills (skills to make logical, structured and coherent statements) as well as the ability to speak in public, which is an important component of future professional competence (public-speaking skills, the ability to present own research and get interested the audience in projects and developments etc.).

**Exercise 2.** *The second part of the lesson was a quiz.*

The students had to give detailed answers to questions about the life and career of a famous Ukrainian poetess. The task was as follows: “Answer the questions and score one point for each correct answer”.

Table 1. Quiz “Life and Career of Lesia Ukrainka”

No.	Questions	Answers
1.	What is Lesia Ukrainka’s real name?	<i>Larysa Petrivna Kosach-Kvitka</i>
2.	Where was Lesia Ukrainka born?	<i>Novograd-Volynsky town, Volyn (now Zhytomyr oblast)</i>
3.	Who were Lesia’s parents and what did they do?	<i>Olha Drahomanova-Kosach, writer and publisher; Petro Antonovych Kosach, lawyer</i>
4.	How many children were there in her family?	<i>6, Larysa had 2 brothers and 3 sisters</i>
5.	When did she write her first poem?	<i>at the age of 9</i>
6.	What Ukrainian composer was a good friend of Lesia’s family?	<i>Mykola Lysenko</i>
7.	When was the pseudonym Lesia Ukrainka used first?	<i>At 13, when her first published poem, “Lily of the Valley” appeared in the literary magazine Zorya in Lviv.</i>
8.	What is the title of her first collection of poems?	<i>On the wings of songs, 1893</i>
9.	What course book was designed by Lesia Ukrainka to teach her younger sisters?	<i>“Starodavnia istoriia skhidnykh narodiv” (Ancient History of the Eastern Peoples)</i>
10.	Could Lesia Ukrainka play any musical instrument	<i>Piano</i>
11.	Who is her dramatic poem “Oderzhyma” (The Possessed) devoted to?	<i>Serhii Merzhynsky</i>
12.	Where did Lesia Ukrainka die?	<i>Suramy, Georgia</i>
13.	What literary piece of Lesia Ukrainka became the basis of the video game created by Colabee Studios?	<i>The Forest Song</i>
14.	On which banknote can you see a portrait of Lesia Ukraine?	<i>On a denomination of UAH 200</i>

The quiz contains exercises not only to practise speaking skills, but vocabulary as well. They are developed on the basis of Lesya Ukrainka's poems translated by Percival Cundy. These assignments have got direct links to literature. There are examples of such exercises.

**Exercise 3.**

Put the lines of the poem in the correct order (Fig. 1).

Guess what Lesia Ukrainka's poem it is.

Key answers:

Contra Spem Spero:1-C, 2-D, 3-B, 4-A.

1.	A) Drearily and sadly pass away?
2.	B) Should my days of youth be spent in woe
3.	C) Hence, dark thoughts! Away, ye autumn mists!
4.	D) Golden spring is here, she's here today!

Fig. 1. Answer sheet of exercise 3

**Exercise 4.**

Fill in the gaps with the words below (Fig. 2).

Key answers:

1-E, 2-C, 3-D, 4-A, 5-B.

A) live      B) gloom      C) smile      D) songs      E) tears

Nay, through all my 1) \_\_\_\_\_ still will 2) \_\_\_\_\_

Sing my 3) \_\_\_\_\_ though troubles round me loom

Hopeless, still hope on against all odds,

I will 4) \_\_\_\_\_ ! Away, ye thoughts of 5) \_\_\_\_\_ !

Fig. 2. Answer sheet of exercise 4

By doing the quiz, students practice English speaking skills as well as solidify their knowledge in Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature, History, Geography etc.

Very often the multi-disciplinary links between English and other disciplines and courses are established

during the study of lexical topics, but mastering grammar can also be a good basis for such relationships.

The activities of the lesson were organized by the topic and included the interactive exercises to put students' grammar knowledge into practice and help them to improve the usage of the Passive Voice.

**Exercise 5.**

*The last part of the lesson was to practice listening skills.*

Listening helps students to improve their understanding of the language and their pronunciation. Recordings of different situations practice the listening skills that students need to do well in their studies, to get ahead at work and to communicate in English in their free time.

During the lesson the students were offered to watch an interview with Yulia Sinkevych, film producer and general producer of the Odessa International Film Festival, about a biographical film called "Lesia Ukrainka. Uzlissya" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd0wVGcNGoU>).

The task was to put the verbs in brackets into the correct passive form.

1. The last fixture movie about Lesia Ukrainka \_\_\_\_\_ in Kyiv at Dovzhenko film studio in 1971.  
(film)
2. The first teaser of the film "Lesia Ukrainka. Uzlissya" \_\_\_\_\_.  
(already/release)
3. Love and tragedy of Lesia Ukrainka \_\_\_\_\_ in the teaser.  
(depict)
4. The most challenging of making the film is how the story should \_\_\_\_\_.  
(tell)
5. The poem "Oderzhyma" (A Woman Possessed) \_\_\_\_\_ by Lesia Ukrainka within one  
night after Serhii Merzhynsky's death.  
(write)

Fig. 3. Answer sheet of exercise 5

#### **IV Обговорення**

The given tasks and activities can be obvious examples of effective use of English interaction with many other disciplines; they prove that multi-disciplinary links have unlimited resources and opportunities to develop high-quality learning content and improve students' English language level and professional communication skills.

#### **V Висновки**

To sum up, it should be said that multi-disciplinary teaching may be challenging but the use of multi-disciplinary links in teaching a foreign language helps the teacher to create a learning environment, which leads students to achieve success and enjoy learning process.

While learning English and improving their language level, students can benefit a lot from learning materials, developed with consideration to multi-disciplinary links. Understanding teaching and learning English as a multi-disciplinary activity encourages both students and teachers.

Multidisciplinary approach stimulates students' motivation to study harder, learn the material better and prepare for lessons more thoroughly; this approach contributes to the development of their professional competence.

The development of communication skills aims at active expansion of students' proficiency in a foreign language, English in this case. In its turn a high level of English language proficiency increases the professional competence of a future specialist in any field.

Therefore, teachers have to up-date learning content, search for relevant interdisciplinary topics and create new communicative situations. The development of the interactive English lesson-quiz, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of a prominent Ukrainian writer and poetess Lesia Ukrainka, made it possible to demonstrate this.

Prospects of further research are a more detailed study of multi-disciplinary teaching, the use of multi-disciplinary approach in teaching a foreign language, explore foreign experience of the issue and cooperative work with subject teachers in developing learning content, especially if it deals with teaching English for specific purposes (ESP).

Teaching English at a higher school makes use of the information of specific professional areas, so teaching ESP must be not only the development of language and communication skills but the acquisition of specific information and increase of students' professional competence.

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