

## PEER COLLABORATION AND MEDIATION IN ESP CLASSES

**Feshchuk Alla**

*ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3683-099X*

teacher at the Department of English for Engineering #2

*National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Ukraine*

**Halatsyn Kateryna**

*ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3297-8284*

PhD, associate professor at the Department of English for Engineering #2

*National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Ukraine*

Technical university students often work in highly collaborative environments that demand not only technical expertise but also strong communication skills. In an increasingly globalized academic environment, effective communication and collaborative skills are essential, particularly for engineering students whose future careers may involve interdisciplinary and international teamwork. English, particularly for specific purposes (ESP), offer an opportunity to foster these skills. One underexplored yet impactful pedagogical approach within ESP is mediation. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), mediation involves the ability to relay information, clarify meaning, and facilitate communication between people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Mediation techniques can be employed in project work at English classes to enhance peer collaboration among technical students. The central argument is that mediation fosters mutual understanding, helps resolve conflicts, and encourages more equitable participation in group tasks.

Mediation is defined in the CEFR as the process of "facilitating understanding and communication among students". It includes activities such as paraphrasing, summarizing, simplifying complex information, and negotiating meaning. Research by Piccardo (2014) and North & Piccardo (2016) emphasizes the importance of mediation as a means of integrating cognitive and social dimensions of language use.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) in ESP is a pedagogical approach that emphasises active learning through real-world tasks. In ESP teaching, PBL allows students to engage with subject-specific content while practicing

language skills. Thomas (2000) and Stoller (2006) advocate for PBL as a means to develop both linguistic and ESP competence.

Peer collaboration at technical universities often emphasises collaborative problem-solving. However, language barriers and varied communication styles can hinder effective collaboration. Mediation in language classes can serve as a training ground for the interpersonal dynamics needed in team-based technical work.

Students employ various mediation strategies during project work, including:

- paraphrasing complex instructions;
- summarizing group discussions;
- clarifying misunderstandings;
- translating technical terms into simple English;
- managing turn-taking in discussions.

Mediation practices had a notable impact on group dynamics:

- improved communication – communication is more efficient;
- increased participation – quieter students contribute more when mediation creates space for their input;
- reduced conflicts – teams use language as a tool for negotiation and consensus-building;
- better time management – mediation helps teams stay on task and meet deadlines.

Students report that mediation helps them feel more confident in expressing ideas and resolving disagreements. It prepares them for real-world teamwork, where explaining technical content to non-specialists is often required.

It was noticed that groups with stronger mediation skills demonstrate better cohesion and produce higher-quality project outcomes. The use of mediation tasks also increases students engagement with language learning.

The findings support the integration of mediation tasks into the ESP curriculum. Activities such as role-playing, peer teaching, and collaborative writing can explicitly target mediation skills.

Embedding mediation into English aligns well with the collaborative demands of technical fields. It also supports the development of transferable skills such as critical thinking, adaptability, and cultural awareness.

Mediation is a powerful tool for enhancing peer collaboration in English project work, particularly for students at technical universities. By

incorporating mediation strategies into ESP instruction, educators can foster both linguistic and interpersonal competencies. Future research should explore scalable models for implementing mediation across different technical disciplines and educational contexts.

### **References:**

1. North, B., & Piccardo, E. (2016). Developing illustrative descriptors of aspects of mediation for the CEFR. Council of Europe.
2. Piccardo, E. (2014). From communicative to action-oriented: A research path to the CEFR Companion Volume. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*.
3. Stoller, F. L. (2006). A theoretical foundation for project-based learning in second and foreign language contexts. In G. H. Beckett & P. C. Miller (Eds.), *Project-Based Second and Foreign Language Education*.
4. Thomas, J. W. (2000). A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning.