THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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Abstract

Globalization and technological breakthroughs have determined the emergence of new jobs and, thus, professional terminologies have enriched with new terms related to work tasks. The development of professional terminologies requires terminology updates, therefore the teaching methodology of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has to be constantly improved, according to the realities in a profession or industry. The aim of this paper is to highlight the role of ChatGPT in the ESP teacher's methodology. I analyzed this AI language model, taking account of the linguistic features of our digital discourse. The findings suggest that ChatGPT can be a useful tool in planning lessons and assessing students' linguistic competence.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, language model, testing, digital discourse, ESP, methodology

JEL Classification: Z13

1. Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) focuses on building teaching strategies for the acquisition of professional terminologies. Thus, students get familiar with the specialized vocabulary and language used within the economic field and IT industry. This vocabulary includes the jargon, acronyms and expressions that are used by professionals in this field and industry. When students acquire a standardized set of terms, their communication displays the following characteristics:

- It is precise and clear ensuring effective collaboration between them and other professionals;

- It is efficient and concise because the students express complex ideas and concepts through abbreviations, acronyms and single words that are understood within the respective professional community;

- It highlights their expertise and shapes their professional identity; some students have been working since the first year of study so they master the language used in

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their workplace as they communicate with their peers, build trust with collaborators and follow the professional standards;

- It accelerates knowledge transfer within their chosen profession. When the knowledge transfer occurs, the collaboration among people at work strengthens leading to increased productivity;

- It decreases the stress levels when students have to make presentations in front of an audience or a committee, for example, when they present a project or defend their bachelor thesis.

It is very important in communication, however, that when we address the non-specialized or heterogeneous public, we must explain the specialized terms and reiterate some aspects related to the context to make ourselves understood.The enrichment of the English language with new terms and expressions during the Covid-19 pandemic and the migration of specialized terms to the common language has shown us that the relationship between the specialized lexicon and the common one intensifies not only when technology plays an increasingly important role in the life of each individual but also when humanity faces uncertainty and difficulties at the social, economic, educational, etc. level. For example, many terms from various professions migrated to the common language, due to their frequent use in the media, the political discourse, the leadership discourse, etc. (e.g. state of alert, ordinance, asymptomatic, remote students, remote work, distancing, quarantine, etc.)

From the perspective of external terminology, the specialized terms are frequent in widely circulated texts and in mass media texts which can have a medium degree of specialization or a lower degree of specialization [1]. According to the linguistic research, the variation of the conceptual and semantic content depends on the contexts in which the specialized term appears. This is important for identifying the values correctly and for establishing the degree of decontextualization/contextualization as well as for indicating the semantic deviations made contextually in widely circulated texts [2].

ESP research has been conducted to advance the understanding of ESP as a discipline hence many empirical studies and practical investigations have been published. We consider that Anne Burns is a major contributor to ESP research, especially in the area of language teaching and learning.

Some educators and researchers [3] have voiced the differences between the generations of students who have acquired the foreign language, depending on technological innovations, university curricula and the ability of teachers to introduce digital tools in its teaching. My opinion is that we cannot say about one generation that it is better than the other because it is absolutely normal to see differences among generations, to accept different views of the

members of a generation, preferences and perspectives of technology usage. Indeed, the young people are called "digital natives" but we must identify their needs then we must strive to meet their needs by diversifying the teaching methods and by using as many digital tools as possible to capture their attention and to motivate them to achieve the tasks within the classes. We have also noticed the fact they value autonomy granted by the digital tools they use, which is reflected in their way of handling the tasks in classes.

Furthermore, many studies [4], have contributed to our understanding of the learning style and characteristics of digital natives. Although there are different perspectives on the learning style of digital natives, we believe that young people have diverse learning styles and preferences, therefore the impact of technology should be analyzed in accordance with the major corresponding to the chosen educational program or school. For instance, sometimes a Law School student does not have the same multitasking abilities or information processing speed as a Computer Science student. We constantly see that digital natives are able to skim through content to find relevant information. However, sometimes what is relevant to them while skimming does not comply with the requirements of a subject. Thus, our major concern is their lack of responsibility because sometimes they take the information as is without checking other sources that are scientifically valid.

If we consider such individual differences and various contextual factors we can conduct better and better analysis on students' digital literary, collaboration and attention span & concentration in ESP settings.

2. Testing AI Language Models

ChatGPT is an advanced language model developed by Open AI. It acts like a chatbot relying on natural language processing (NLP) to analyze and generate human-like text in response to text-based inputs or questions. This process entails a combination of computational algorithms, statistical models, and linguistic rules to understand and generate language. Its responses are based on a vast amount of language data that have been inputted into its training. Moreover, the responses indicate various forms of digital discourse, such as conversation, information, persuasion, or description, depending on the context and purpose of the communication. The similarities and differences between ChatGPT and other chatbots are presented below:

| *Similarities*	*Differences*
They use artificial intelligence and natural language processing to converse with users.	ChatGPT boasts flexibility and extended functionality while chatbots may have more limited functionality and flexibility.

They provide immediate feedback or support as they reply to user questions in real-time.	ChatGPT was created to be a language model that can achieve a wide range of tasks and approach various topics. By contrast, chatbots were designed to achieve specific tasks related to the areas of sales and customer service.
They are programmed to achieve a variety of tasks, such as responding, providing assistance, or achieve tasks on behalf of the user.	ChatGPT relies on machine learning to generate responses similar to texts/answers provided by humans while chatbots often use pre-defined rules or scripts to follow their conversations.

As technology develops, the interest in learning foreign languages grows if the tools used meet the needs of the users. Unlike ChatGPT, Google Bard is a popular tool that uses artificial intelligence to help users learn foreign languages. It is user-friendly as it facilitates the creation of personalized lessons, according to the current language level and individual interests, pronunciation improvement, guiding and feedback from a virtual tutor.

ChatGPT was tested by many experts in various fields. Rodica Zafiu [5], a renowned linguist, contends that "It was not so much the information that impressed me, but the level of the language, the level of grammatical and semantic correctness, the level of discursive coherence. In what I tested, not only was the answer given in sentences that made sense, but there was a coherence of the text, it was seen that a structure was being followed, a general introduction, a conclusion at the end of the answer, an articulation that shows the progress that has been made in this direction."

The first time I tested ChatGPT, I noticed that its answers were more coherent than the answers of my students. In an educational context, our purpose was to ask ChatGPT open ended and probing questions related to the meaning of specialized vocabulary and grammar rules. I also asked it to provide class material such as exercises and tests that could enhance ESP teaching and learning. Therefore, our discourse involved several linguistic features highlighted below:

- complete sentences with clear subjects and predicates, therefore following the rules of sentence structure to convey meaning properly;

- general language that is appropriate to the context and a range of specialized vocabulary, including technical terms and idiomatic expressions;
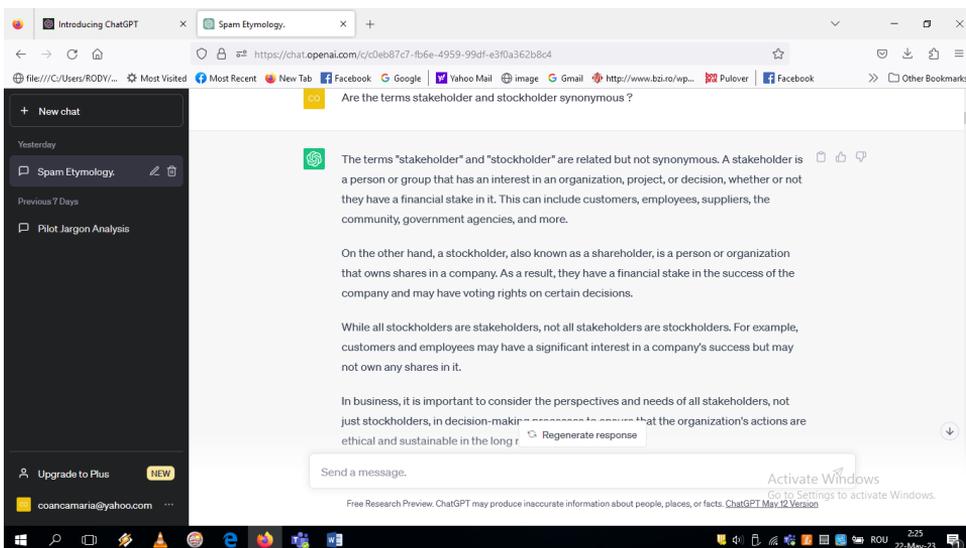
- formal and professional register, as it is expected in many business or academic contexts;
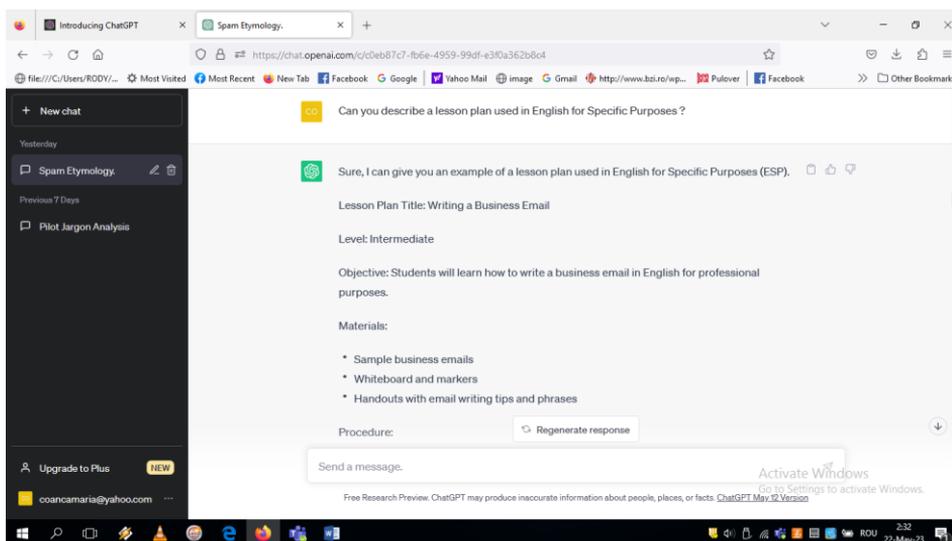

- the rules of syntax were followed, including the use of noun phrases, verb phrases, and other structures, which allow for clear communication;
- cohesiveness as each statement builds on the previous one, and there is a clear connection between ideas;

By examining again the structure of the sentences, the choice of words and phrases, and the overall coherence and clarity of responses, we notice that ChatGPT writes in a logical sequence that is easy to follow, leans on the formal style and uses connectors and linking words adequately.
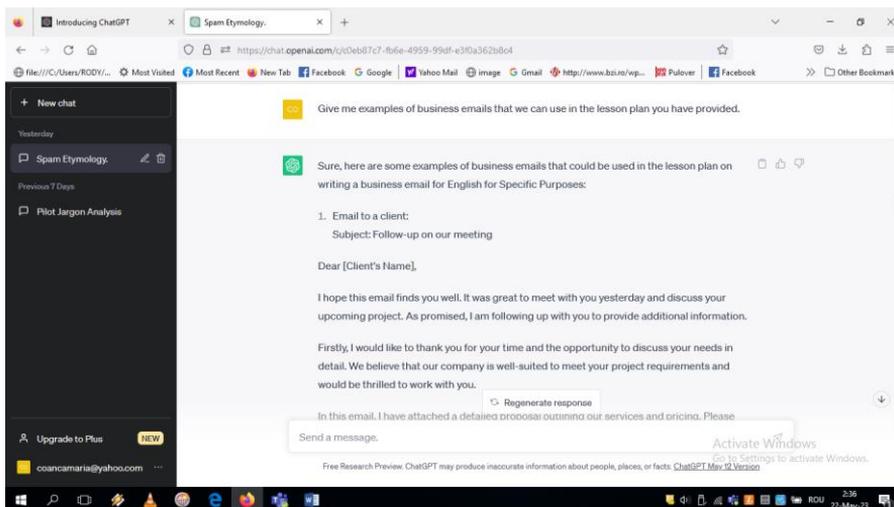

- pragmatic considerations, such as politeness, intention, and ESP context, to ensure that the conversation is appropriate and effective.

I also asked it explicitly to provide class material such as exercises and specific tests that could enhance constant assessment of the notions presented in class.
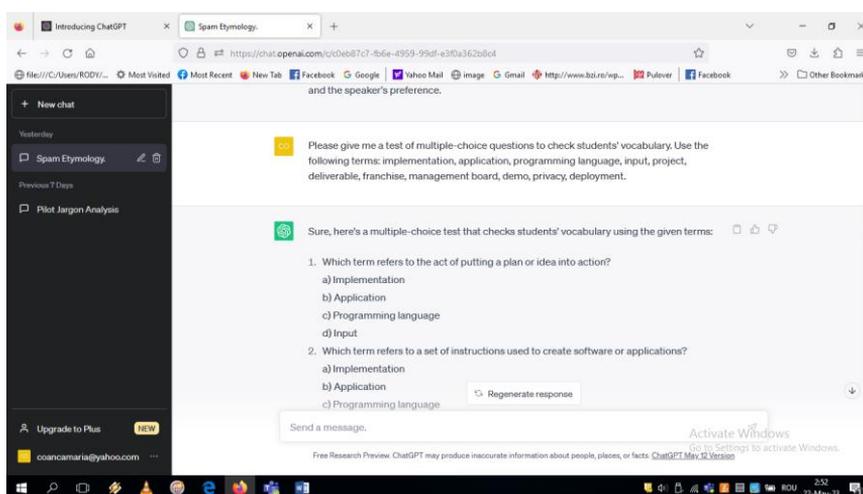
3. Future Approaches - ChatGPT as a Supplementary Tool in the ESP Methodology

The methodology for teaching Business English incorporates the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a supplementary tool. This methodology can encompass various approaches as it aims to create an engaging and adaptive learning environment, tailored, as shown in the examples above, to the specific needs of learners. For instance, building a strategy to implement a blended learning approach which combines traditional instruction with digital tools. Resorting to ChatGPT or other language learning apps will give learners additional language practice and feedback through increased interactivity. Given the dynamics of the economic language, we always use authentic business materials such as expert articles, case studies and reports. However, AI can be a reliable partner in this regard as its algorithms can help us select relevant economics-related topics, create content that reflects the etiquette of digital correspondence (see the print screen below), and other material based on students' awareness and preferences, and their language mastery.
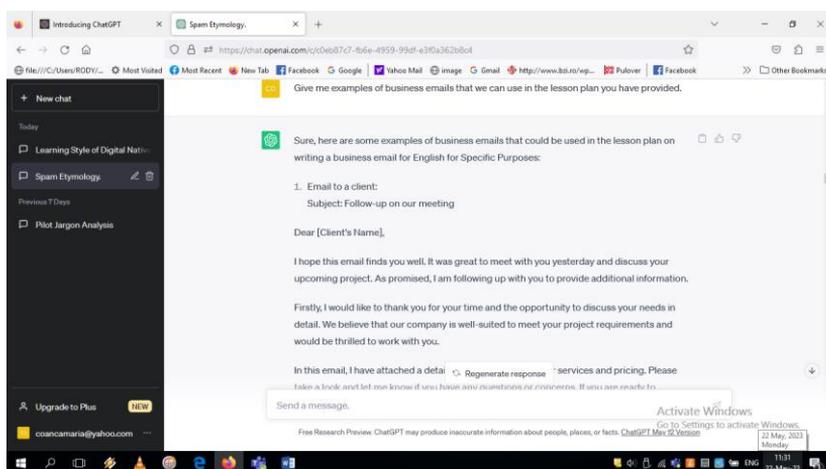
Moreover, business communication activities that focus on real-world business scenarios can be empowered by ChatGPT as students will benefit from a safe environment where they can engage in role-plays and simulations related to work procedures.

As for the tutoring and assessment components that we need to include in our methodology, we can implement Intelligent Tutoring Systems, on the one hand, which can check students' performance, identify their strengths and weaknesses and provide guidance for improvement or we can use AI algorithms to assess students' performance in a specific skill of the proficiency spectrum and generate progress reports at individual level or group level, on the other hand. These reports can be used in further research to make comparative analysis to disseminate the findings at international symposia where researchers tackle AI-based teaching methodologies.

Last but not least, we need to evaluate our activity by asking students for constant feedback. This helps us monitor our activity and take measures to make adjustments in the lesson

planning to meet learners' needs or to test other AI-powered tools recommended by our students.

4. Conclusions

Artificial intelligence has already been used not only for teaching foreign languages in general but also for creating differentiated educational content to teach and learn business English. As seen in this study, ChatGPT can be a supplement in the class, and can generate materials that arouse the curiosity of the learners regarding the correct use of specialized terminology.

Moreover, the use of ChatGPT by students to do their homework or various tasks in a few minutes does not stimulate creativity and, at a certain moment, may bring into question ethical considerations. To avoid such situations, teachers must design student tasks that require individual or group intellectual effort.

Our approach emphasizes certain professional situations of using ChatGPT in teaching and learning business English. We also offer concrete examples that reflect the positive role of ChatGBT in creating ESP relevant content given that teacher's requirements are clear, thorough and professional. In conclusion, we would like to pinpoint that ChatGPT is not meant to be a substitute for traditional English learning. It cannot replace human teachers, who through their explanations, guidance and feedback during foreign language courses offer students the opportunity to practice and find out their level of knowledge of the English language.

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