ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES: PRESENTATION INNOVATIONS

PHILLIP M. CLARK

Faculty of Medicine, Kindai University, Japan
Email: phillip.clark@kindai.ac.jp

Abstract - Second and foreign language instruction (SLA/FLA) encompasses a wide range of curricular approaches designed to address the needs of learners in specific academic, professional, and cultural contexts. English for Medical Purposes (EMP) represents a specialized subfield within SLA that focuses on the linguistic and communicative demands faced by nurses, physicians, and other professionals working in medical settings. Within EMP, instruction may overlap with English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) when addressing the needs of practicing clinicians, or with English for Educational Purposes (EEP) when targeting students who are still in the early stages of their medical training.This presentation concentrates on the latter context: novice medical students in a second-language environment, particularly those within their first four years of medical school. The presentation explores how commonly available presentation software can be used strategically to achieve three pedagogical objectives simultaneously. First, it can be employed to introduce and reinforce English vocabulary, ranging from high-frequency general terms to more specialized and complex medical terminology. Second, it allows instructors to present medical concepts through a combination of visual imagery and verbal explanation, thereby supporting comprehension and long-term retention. Third, it serves as a practical model for students, demonstrating how they themselves can deliver clear, engaging, and dynamic presentations on medical topics in English.In addition to explaining and modeling this presentation-based instructional approach, the session will provide participants with a practical template that they can adapt for creating more effective and visually engaging presentations in their own teaching contexts.

Keywords - English for Specific Purposes, Medical English, ESL, Second Language Acquisition

I. INTRODUCTION

English for Medical Purposes (EMP) instruction for novice medical students requires pedagogical approaches that integrate language development, conceptual understanding of both medical vocabulary and relevant pathologies, and professional communication skills. Within English for Specific Purposes (ESP), such learners are typically situated in educational rather than occupational contexts, where English functions as a medium for acquiring disciplinary knowledge as well as a target of instruction. In this setting, presentation software, in particular the Mac-based software Keynote, can be leveraged as an active instructional resource rather than a passive display medium.

When used deliberately, Keynote supports several core EMP objectives. First, it facilitates systematic vocabulary development by allowing instructors to introduce medical terminology alongside visual representations, definitions, and contextualized usage. Research in ESP emphasizes that vocabulary learning is most effective when terms are encountered repeatedly in meaningful, discipline-specific contexts rather than in isolation (Coxhead, 2000). Presentation slides designed in Keynote can structure this exposure through progressive layering of terminology and concepts across lessons, most notably by the manipulation of the Keynote functionality in creating animations and transitions.

Second, Keynote aligns well with evidence from multimedia learning research. Empirical studies demonstrate that combining spoken explanation with relevant visuals improves comprehension and retention, provided that extraneous information is minimized and visual elements are tightly aligned with instructional goals (Mayer, 2014). Similarly, cognitive load research indicates that clear visual organization and signaling reduce unnecessary processing demands, which is particularly important for second-language learners dealing simultaneously with linguistic and conceptual complexity (Sweller, 2010). Keynote's emphasis on clean layouts, controlled animation, and visual hierarchy makes it well suited to these principles when used with restraint.

Finally, instructor-created Keynote presentations serve a modeling function in EMP classrooms. By demonstrating how medical information can be structured, visualized, and explained clearly in English, instructors provide students with implicit guidance on professional presentation practices. This modeling aspect has been identified as an important component of ESP pedagogy, particularly in academic and pre-professional settings where learners are expected to produce discipline-appropriate discourse (Hyland, 2002).

In sum, the pedagogical value of Keynote in EMP lies not in its technical features alone, but in its strategic use to support vocabulary acquisition, conceptual learning, and professional communication within a second-language medical education context.

REFERENCES

[1] Coxhead, A. (2000).A new academic word list. TESOL Quarterly, 34(2), 213–238.
[2] DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/3587951
[3] Hyland, K. (2006). English for Academic Purposes: An Advanced Resource Book. Routledge.
[4] Mayer, R. E. (2021). Multimedia Learning (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
[5] Sweller, J. (2010).Cognitive load theory: Recent theoretical advances. Educational Psychology Review, 22(2), 123–133.
[6] DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-010-9133-8

★★★