

**KASATKINA-KUBYSHKINA Olena**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1265-0495>  
ResearcherID PRR-4638-2026

Ph.D. in Psychology, Associate Professor  
at the Department of Theory and Practice of Foreign Languages  
and Teaching Methodology,  
Rivne State University of the Humanities  
(Rivne, Ukraine) E-mail: elenkasatkina 08@gmail.com

**FRIDRIKH Alla**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9072-1845>  
ResearcherID AHI-5153-2022

Ph.D. in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Head of  
the Department of Theory and Practice of Foreign Languages  
and Teaching Methodology,  
Rivne State University of the Humanities  
(Rivne, Ukraine) E-mail: allafridrikh@gmail.com

**ANTONENKO Nataliia**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6313-5397>  
ResearcherID PRR-4301-2026

Senior Lecturer at the Department of Theory and Practice  
of Foreign Languages and Teaching Methodology,  
Rivne State University of the Humanities  
(Rivne, Ukraine) E-mail: antnatasha73@gmail.com

**KURIATA Yuliia**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0059-7586>  
ResearcherID AAB-3128-2022

Ph.D. in Psychology, Associate Professor at the Department of  
Theory and Practice of Foreign Languages  
and Teaching Methodology,  
Rivne State University of the Humanities  
(Rivne, Ukraine) E-mail: viktorivnayuliia@gmail.com

## INTEGRATING MEDIA LITERACY IN ESP VIA DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

*This article examines strategies for integrating media literacy across entire curricula, with a focus on the various branches of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Special Educational Needs (SEN). The proposed approach addresses the needs of diverse learner profiles and promotes accessibility. It aims to equip students with essential skills to decode complex media messages, assess credibility, and engage in critical inquiry alongside targeted language development. By mainstreaming media culture and literacy into all classroom interactions, educators cultivate the competence and critical thinking necessary to build resilience against disinformation and narrative manipulation. The study also highlights the importance of fostering agency among educators and students, which empowers both educators and students to actively navigate and shape their own development within a rapidly shifting informational landscape. Practical examples illustrate how media literacy can be integrated into Business English curricula while accommodating the specific requirements of SEN learners.*

*The article **aims** to offer a comprehensive pedagogical and methodological framework for advancing media literacy through the spectrum of ESP and SEN curricula, infusing differentiated instruction and the SAEN (Social, Academic, and Educational Needs) approach to ensure a holistic learning experience.*

**Methodology:** *The study is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of academic literature, systematic data comparison, focused pedagogical observation, and a synthesis of hands-on teaching expertise.*

**Scientific novelty.** *This work establishes a theoretical foundation for merging media literacy with ESP by simultaneously applying differentiated instruction and the SAEN model. By positioning media literacy as a fundamental component of professional communicative competence rather than an elective one, this integration benefits all participants of the educational ecosystem and ensures that learning is tailored to individual student profiles.*

**Conclusions:** *Integrating media literacy into pedagogical frameworks is vital for student agency. It shifts learners from passive consumers to autonomous, critical participants. By deconstructing narratives and identifying logical fallacies, this method helps students base decisions on objective reality, not algorithmic influence. This approach is a versatile model for fostering the cognitive independence necessary for modern civic engagement.*

**Keywords:** *media literacy, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Social, Academic, and Educational Needs (SAEN), differentiated instruction, critical thinking.*

**Problem statement in general terms and its relation to important scientific and practical tasks.** Today, there is a pressing need to establish conditions for the development of media literacy and the assurance of information security among youth, which gives rise to a critical problem that the modern education system must address. Pokulyta I. and Sotska O. argue that it must equip young individuals, active participants in information and communication systems, with media literacy [9, 427]. Without it, media ignorance provides an ideal environment for hybrid threats and cognitive manipulation, leaving people susceptible to external suggestion and addictive behaviors.

**Analysis of key research and publications on the issue.** Studies focused on media literacy, its integration into educational curricula, and conceptual framework for implementing media education at a national level, have been extensively explored by a diverse range of Ukrainian and international scholars. In particular, D. Buckingham, M. Bulger, N. Goshylyk, V. Goshylyk, R. Hobbs, Y. Lushchyk, I. Pokulyta, W. Potter, O. Sotska, O. Torubara focused on media education, integration of media literacy into English language teaching and digital education; the issues of evaluating source credibility and logical reasoning, as well as the interconnection between media literacy and critical thinking, are reflected in the works of B. De Abreu, A. Dissen, K. Douglas, C. Erdem, D. Kovtun, J. Share, S. Wineburg, D. Walton. National standards and the social role of media education in Ukraine were explored by V. Ivanov, T. Ivanova, G. Golovchenko, H. Onkovych; M. Bezkorovayna, K. Blazhevskaya, O. Chidozie, K. Molek-Kozakowska, A. Lebid, M. Nazarov, N. Pipchenko, N. Shevchenko, K. Vashyst, A. Yurii, O. Zorych have focused on resilience against propaganda and information warfare.

**The purpose of the article.** The aim of the article is to provide a comprehensive pedagogical and methodological paradigm for developing media literacy through English for Specific Purposes (ESP) disciplines via the implementation of differentiated instruction and the SAEN (Social, Academic, and Educational Needs) approach.

**Description of the theoretical-methodological and/or experimental research procedure, specifying the research methods.** The research methodology is based on the analysis of academic literature, the systematization and comparison of data, pedagogical observation, and a synthesis of practical teaching experience.

The work lays a foundation for developing media literacy within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by simultaneously applying differentiated instruction and the SAEN approach. This integration ensures that learning addresses students' learning profiles. Furthermore, incorporating media literacy as a basic element of professional communicative competence within the curriculum, rather than as an elective, benefits all educational participants.

**Presentation of the main research findings.** Contemporary pedagogical approaches to teaching English, including English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curricula, particularly within inclusive settings addressing Special Educational Needs (SEN), offer a strategic platform for the integration of media literacy. Such integration ensures that students are prepared not only linguistically but also possess media mindfulness.

In many developed countries, media education functions as a system that has become an integral part of the overall comprehensive preparation of young people and various informational processes [8]. It has been integrated into globalization processes and serves as a component for ensuring economic competitiveness, promotes the development of democracy within an information society, and furthermore, it promotes the development of critical thinking among youth, establishing clear frameworks for understanding external realities and discerning between fact and falsehood [6]. Media education is «... a part of the educational process aimed at fostering media culture within

society and preparing individuals for safe and effective interaction with the modern mass media system. This includes both traditional media (print publications, radio, cinema, television) and new media (computer-mediated communication, the Internet, mobile telephony), while taking into account the continuous advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT)» [1, 7].

The fundamental goals of media education is develop media literacy and media culture of an individual within the context of their primary social circles, such as small groups, families, academic and workplace teams, and local neighborhoods [8]. Wilson et al., in the UNESCO publication *Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers*, provide the following comprehensive definition of media literacy: «...a set of knowledge, attitudes, and a sum of the skills that are useful to know when and what information is needed; where and how to obtain that information; how to evaluate it critically and organize it once it is found; and how to use it in an ethical way. In general, media literacy is essential to reflect on society and its environment, understanding political, social, scientific, and cultural phenomena, etc. that occur in society» [13]. Building on UNESCO's definition, Wilson et al. further interpret media literacy as not only understanding the roles and functions of media, but also the conditions for their use, critical analysis of media, and readiness for participation and communication. Skills include user content production and learning ICT and other media apps [13].

According to Conceptual Framework for the Development of Media Education in Ukraine, *media culture* is «... the culture of perception and production by social groups and society as a whole of the totality of information and communication tools functioning within society, including sign systems, communication technologies, and the processes of searching, collecting, producing, and transmitting information. At the individual level, media culture signifies a person's ability to interact effectively with mass media, to behave adequately within the information environment, and to exercise value-based, volitional, and reflexive regulation of their information behavior» [1, 8]. The National Association for Media Literacy Education states that, in its broad meaning, *media literacy* builds upon traditional literacy and offers new forms of reading and writing. Media literacy empowers people to be critical thinkers and makers, effective communicators, and active citizens. Thus, it is the ability to encode and decode the symbols transmitted via media and synthesize, analyze and produce mediated messages [7]. Samko A. states that while in academic discourse, the terms media literacy and media competence are often used interchangeably, there is need to distinguish them. While media literacy acts as a foundational component that ensures a basic level of critical interaction with media, media competence encompasses a broader, comprehensive framework of knowledge and skills. A vital component of *media competence* is the capacity for self-diagnosis, which enables a person to understand how effectively they analyze media messages and exactly how information influences their emotions and logical perception [2].

Integrating media literacy into curriculum subjects, such as Practice of Oral and Written English, Inclusive Education, Business English, and other English for Specific Purposes (ESP) disciplines, represents a strategic approach to fostering essential knowledge and skills. Incorporating these competencies into language learning enables educators to develop students who are resilient and analytical. This integration builds the following urgent knowledge and skills:

*Decoding Media Messages and Analysis:* Identifying linguistic styles (e.g., the persuasive language of advertising vs. the objective tone of news reports), identification and analysis of creative techniques (camera angles, lighting, sound, or word choice/connotation) used to influence audiences.

*Evaluation of Credibility:* Differentiating between objective reporting and subjective commentary, distinguishing fact from opinion, and detecting bias through omission, placement, or «spin» via cross-referencing English-language sources and thus, identifying the motives behind the message.

*Critical Inquiry (The 5 Core Questions):* Habitual analysis of authorship, format, audience perception, content values/omissions, and the sender's underlying purpose.

*Responsible Production:* Transitioning from passive consumption to active content creation (blogs, posts, videos, or articles) with a focus on global impact, understanding the consequences of sharing information, and the ethics of digital citizenship.

*Targeted Language Development:* Expanding specialized vocabulary (learning field-related terms, e.g., factoid, disinformation, echo chamber, clickbait) and applying grammar (using modal verbs to express degrees of certainty, or using the passive voice to understand how news headlines can hide the «protagonist» and deconstruct information framing).

Achieving medialiteracy competence needs the development of critical thinking – the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action [12]. In essence, critical thinking is the ability to think rationally, evaluate evidence, and form reasoned judgments. Far beyond memorization or rote learning, it involves looking at a situation from all sides, weighing the

proof, and deciding for yourself what makes the most sense. Attributes such as curiosity and flexibility and a questioning attitude are closely related to critical thinking, which is increasingly referred to as a key competence/competency and 21st century skill [13].

Achieving media literacy competence requires the systematic development of critical thinking – an intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, analyzing, and evaluating information. In the context of Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy, this represents the vital transformation from Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), such as rote memorization and simple comprehension, to High-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), which include analysis, evaluation, and creation [10].

Torubara O. asserts that the philosophy of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is based on generative principles, specific language materials, and tailored activities. These focus on particular language needs, attitudes, and societal demands. She emphasizes: «During war, teaching English as a foreign language in general and English for Specific Purposes in particular becomes socially responsible and goes far beyond correct grammar or perfect pronunciation» [11, 238]. Overall, all subjects related to English language learning provide a fertile ground for this transformation. The language classroom is inherently a space for inquiry and communication, making it the perfect environment to bridge the gap between basic comprehension and the reasoned judgements required for true media competence. This academic foundation naturally extends beyond the walls of an academic institution; once these critical analytical habits are internalized, they become a permanent lens through which students view the world. For students, this skill is no longer just for the classroom, it is an essential tool for everyday life in a media-saturated society: whether they scroll through news or decide which source to trust, applying critical thinking acts as a «filter», ensuring they can separate fact from fake, become thoughtful news consumers who can recognize manipulation and protect their cognitive well-being. Integrating elements of media literacy into broad-cycle disciplines is important for several reasons:

- In the face of modern information warfare, students must go beyond linguistic fluency to identify manipulation and bias in international sources, which leads to critical information consumption;

- Media literacy helps learners judge credible professional content in their field. It also builds analytical competence.

- By moving past purely technical language skills, educators fulfill the social responsibility, preparing students to navigate a complex global information landscape safely and ethically, which, in turn, can be of benefit in their potential professional environment.

By incorporating media literacy, educators can implement differentiated instruction within English for Specific Purposes (ESP), thereby creating a more accessible learning environment for a diverse range of learners. This approach shifts the emphasis from linguistic barriers to functional empowerment and learner autonomy. Traditional ESP instruction often relies on technical texts, which can be particularly challenging for students with special educational needs (SEN), such as those with dyslexia or ADHD. Media literacy, by contrast, may shift the focus on the interpretation of images, videos, and infographics. Analyzing professional videos or infographics, rather than lengthy texts, allows SEN learners to engage in advanced critical thinking and conscious consumption without being hindered by decoding difficulties. Additionally, media literacy offers a structured space for analyzing communicative intent. In the context of Business English, this approach moves beyond rote vocabulary memorization and fosters mastery of strategic communication, including the identification of bias and the use of persuasive or implied tone. As a result, the abstract social conventions of professional English become more tangible and accessible.

For instance, Business English lessons may have great potential for students, as they provide an opportunity to learn the language not only as a static set of rules to be followed, but also as a dynamic tool of social influence or manipulation. Business correspondence serves as a perfect background for critical analysis, and media literacy skills are brushed up when students try not only to decode lexical meanings, but also to critically analyze the visual architecture of the text (the use of emphasis, fonts, and formatting that may serve as a facade for manipulative influence). By analyzing business letters, students learn to discern the pragmatic difference between transparent explanations, where the responsible party is clearly identified, and vague excuses built on passive constructions and nominalization intended to evade accountability

For example, students can be provided with 2 case studies of a letter regarding the same issue, but structured differently:

*Formal Notification Regarding the Scheduled Delivery of the Translation Project*

**Case 1** (an example of manipulative formality: language is used to distance oneself from responsibility)

Dear Mr./Ms. ...,

We are writing to formally notify you that a *temporary suspension* of the translation process has been necessitated due to *unforeseen technical inconsistencies* within the software environment. Consequently, the *completion of the project* has been hindered, and it is anticipated that *delivery will be commenced* as soon as *operational parameters permit*.

It is *imperative* that *allowances be made* for these *procedural variances* until such time as *closure is established*.

Sincerely,

[...]

**Case 2** (an example of accountable formality: high register combined with transparency and honesty):

Dear Mr./Ms....,

Please accept our formal apologies regarding the delay in delivering your translation project. Our team encountered an unexpected technical error during the final formatting stage, which has impacted our internal schedule. We have resolved the issue, and we will provide the completed files to you by 10:00 AM tomorrow.

We appreciate your patience and remain committed to ensuring the high quality of your materials.

Sincerely,

[...]

**Students then may practice «Responsibility Mapping», doing the following tasks:**

1. Highlight all verbs in both letters.

- Case 1: Observe the Passive Voice (e.g., «has been necessitated»). Actions seem to happen «by themselves».

- Case 2: Observe the Active Voice (e.g., «we encountered»). There is a clear «actor» taking charge.

2. Analyze the «Ghost» vs. the «Actor».

- Letter 1 creates a «Linguistic Mask»: errors exist, but no one is responsible.

- Letter 2 demonstrates «Accountable Formality»: the subject is visible and takes ownership.

3. Discussion Question: Which letter better protects a company's reputation in the long run: the one that hides the mistake or the one that owns it?

Instead of asking students with dyslexia to read the full letters repeatedly, providing a colour-coded «Cheat Sheet» that breaks down the linguistic patterns can become an efficient approach to cope with the task and then check understanding as it reduces the «visual noise» and allows the student to focus on the weight of specific words rather than decoding long sentences. The colour-coded «Cheat Sheet» with simplified vocabulary includes the letters with specific phrases which are pre-highlighted, e.g., light blue may mean *passive/ vague language* (e.g., *necessitated –needed, ...the completion of the project has been hindered... – ...the project was stopped...*, etc.), while green – *active and specific language* (e.g., *we have resolved, by 10:00 a.m., our team encountered, etc.*). It is also optional to color-code for syllables: if the goal is to make students learn the higher-level vocabulary eventually, syllable-breaking to make the words less intimidating can be used. As dyslexic learners often struggle with long words, breaking them down and highlighting each syllable in a different shade will stop the guessing: *nec-es-si-tat-ed*.

For learners with cognitive difficulties, a simple comparison table, «Graphic Organizer» with «Yes/No» checkboxes to help structure their analysis, can be utilized.

**Comparison table**

| Feature                           | Case 1 | Case 2 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Does it say who caused the delay? | No     | Yes    |
| Does it give a specific time?     | ...    | ...    |
| Does it use «I» or «We»?          | ...    | ...    |
| Does it sound like a robot?       | Yes    | No     |

To check for understanding, some «low-stakes, high-insight» methods can be used, for instance, «The Trust Meter», which requires drawing a scale from 1 to 10 on the board or a worksheet. The question to answer is: «If you were the client, how much do you trust the writer of Case 1 vs. Case 2»? Students must point to a specific sentence in the text that moved their «Trust Meter» up or down.

One more interactive task, «The Redact and Reveal», can be used: the students are given Cases 1 and 2, and a black marker. Their task is to black out every word that does not actually provide information. As a result, they will see that Case 1 becomes almost entirely black, while Case 2 remains largely intact. This provides a powerful visual representation of «empty» vs. «meaningful» language.

Integrating technology into the classroom may also serve not just a «bonus» for learners with SEN – it is often the bridge that levels the playing field. For both regular and SEN learners, the

smartphone acts as a personalized Assistive Technology (AT) hub that reduces the cognitive load of traditional tasks. As mobile technology has become relatively affordable, accessible, and feature-laden, it is reshaping the educational world, with a major impact on how ESL is taught today. Antonenko N., Kasatkina-Kubyshkina O., and Kuriata Yu. emphasise: «Quizzes, assessments, and interactive exercises built into mobile platforms provide immediate feedback, allowing learners to track their progress in real time. This valuable insight helps them identify areas for improvement and adjust their learning strategies, fueling continuous growth in their ESL journey» [3, 6].

Therefore, this approach turns Business English into a toolkit for media literacy skills development and helps to explore communicative ethics, empowering students to identify manipulation and uphold social responsibility in today's media landscape.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** Media literacy is the ultimate tool for agency, which enables individuals to «... play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times» [4, 2]. It encompasses is the capacity to make informed choices grounded in personal values. The ability to identify logical fallacies, emotional triggers, or provocative materials restores autonomy over emotional responses, rather than delegating authority to algorithmic influences. In an era characterized by an overwhelming volume of information, media literacy transcends the classroom and functions as the foundation for modern autonomy. Understanding how a narrative is constructed allows to step outside of it. Without media literacy, students risk becoming not just consumers of content but also products shaped by it. Thus, media literacy acts as a filter, ensuring that civic actions are based on reality rather than manufactured consensus.

As Fridrikh et al. assert, individuals are «...active agents who negotiate their identities within the constraints and possibilities of their social environments. Teachers, therefore, have to navigate institutional expectations, the needs of their students, and the broader societal disruptions caused by the war» [5]. Future research should investigate how digital media literacy, teacher agency, and English language teachers' identity (trans)formation intersect. In particular, studies could examine how educators maintain pedagogical autonomy while navigating algorithmic influences and emotionally charged information environments within hybrid learning contexts during challenging times.

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КАСАТКІНА-КУБИШКІНА Олена

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1265-0495>  
ResearcherID PRR-4638-2026

Кандидат психологічних наук, доцент кафедри теорії і практики іноземних мов та методики викладання, Рівненський державний гуманітарний університет (Рівне, Україна) E-mail: [elenkasatkina08@gmail.com](mailto:elenkasatkina08@gmail.com)

ФРІДРІХ Алла

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9072-1845>  
ResearcherID AHI-5153-2022

Кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент, завідувач кафедри теорії і практики іноземних мов та методики викладання, Рівненський державний гуманітарний університет (Рівне, Україна) E-mail: allafridrikh@gmail.com

АНТОНЕНКО Наталія

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6313-5397>  
ResearcherID PRR-4301-2026

Старший викладач кафедри теорії і практики іноземних мов та методики викладання, Рівненський державний гуманітарний університет (Рівне, Україна) E-mail: antnatasha73@gmail.com

КУРЯТА Юлія

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0059-7586>  
ResearcherID AAB-3128-2022

кандидат психологічних наук, доцент кафедри теорії і практики іноземних мов та методики викладання, Рівненський державний гуманітарний університет (Рівне, Україна) E-mail: viktorivnauyulija@gmail.com

#### ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ МЕДІАГРАМОТНОСТІ В КУРС АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО СПРЯМУВАННЯ ЗАСОБАМИ ДИФЕРЕНЦІЙОВАНОГО НАВЧАННЯ

**Мета статті** полягає в дослідженні особливостей стратегії інтеграції медіаграмотності в навчальні програми з особливим акцентом на галузі англійської мови професійного спрямування (ESP) та інклюзивну роботу зі студентами з особливими освітніми потребами (ООП). Запропонований підхід враховує різноманітність індивідуальних освітніх траєкторій здобувачів освіти та сприяє забезпеченню універсального дизайну в навчанні. Метою роботи є озброєння здобувачів освіти інструментарієм для декодування складних медіаповідомлень, верифікації їхньої достовірності та залучення до критичного аналізу паралельно з інтенсивним розвитком іноземної комунікативної компетентності.

Інтегруючи медіакультуру в усі види аудиторної взаємодії, освітяни формують когнітивну стійкість до дезінформації та маніпулятивних наративів. Автори підкреслюють важливість розвитку суб'єктності та проактивності учасників освітнього процесу, що дає їм змогу проактивно орієнтуватися в інформаційному ландшафті та самостійно моделювати вектор власного розвитку. Практичні кейси ілюструють інтеграцію медіаграмотності в курси ділової англійської мови з адаптацією під специфічні потреби студентів з ООП.

**Методологія.** Дослідження ґрунтується на компаративному аналізі академічної літератури, систематизації емпіричних даних, педагогічному моніторингу та синтезі практичного викладацького досвіду.

**Наукова новизна.** Робота закладає теоретичний фундамент для конвергенції медіаграмотності та ESP на засадах диференціації та моделі SAEN. Позиціонує медіаграмотність як фундаментальний компонент професійної комунікативної компетентності, а не як факультативний елемент, така інтеграція приносить користь усім учасникам освітньої екосистеми та забезпечує персоналізацію навчання відповідно до когнітивного профілю кожного студента.

**Висновки.** Інтеграція медіаграмотності в нормативну та варіативну складові освітніх програм є критично важливою задля формування суб'єктності та когнітивної незалежності здобувача освіти. Це трансформує студентів із пасивних реципієнтів на автономних, критично мислячих учасників суспільного дискурсу. Через деконструкцію медіанаративів, виявлення інформаційних пасток та розпізнавання дезінформації, запропонований підхід дозволяє базувати рішення на об'єктивних фактах, а не на алгоритмічних сценаріях, що є запорукою когнітивної незалежності в умовах сучасних викликів.

**Ключові слова:** медіаграмотність, англійська мова професійного спрямування (ESP), соціальні, академічні та освітні потреби (SAEN), диференційоване навчання, критичне мислення.

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Рецензент – доктор педагогічних наук, доцент **Н.В. Грона**