

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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For too many years the foreign language teaching in general and the English language in particular has been devoted to reading, writing and/or listening comprehension without paying attention to other necessary and important issue such as specific purposes one may pursue in his/her professional career path. It is high time to teach the professionals of tomorrow.

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The very name, English for Specific Purposes (or ESP), is devoted to the sphere of teaching the English language including Business English, Technical English, Scientific English, English for medical professionals, English for waiters and many others. ESP has some characteristics [1]

which can be named absolute: ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners, it makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves. It is also centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre. On the other hands there are variable characteristics which include relation to or designation for specific disciplines, usage in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English. ESP is likely to be designed for mostly adult learners.

What a teacher (educator) should not forget is: to understand your students' need in ESP you have to know their targets (the writing and speech that learners are required to produce and understand in specific contexts) or the gap between what the learners are able to do at a particular stage of their studies and what will eventually be required of them. We first need some professional information about our students: the tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for - target situation analysis and objective needs. This has been (until recently) the crucial point that Peoples' Friendship University of Russia in general and the Foreign Languages Department at Law Faculty (in particular) took into consideration when selecting students or appointing them to certain groups. This still remains the main factor even after the elimination of the Preparatory courses at PFUR.

Personal information about the learners is another important point. We want to warn that personal information will never include personal data. What we include is: factors which may affect the way they learn, such as previous learning experiences, cultural information, reasons for attending the course and expectations of it, their attitude to English. Generally speaking, we need to know the subjective needs of the students.

As soon as we find some information about the needs and objectives of the students, we can move to the English language information about the learners: what their current skills and language use are. Now when we have learnt their targets and current skills, we can turn to the problems the learners may have – i.e. the gap between these points. Now it is time to turn to learning needs to find the most effective ways of obtaining the skills and language. For the language teaching to be effective one needs to have the knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situation. The latter will mean linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis.

As for the teacher, he/she should know what is wanted from the course. Then he/she needs some information about the environment in which the course will run. In our case that is law, which may acquire a large variety of fields (courtroom, advocacy, human rights, contracts, arbitration and many others).

Depending on the group level and objectives the department chooses the pace they learn General English as well as ESP. At this point it is needless to mention that those of advanced groups may have requirements other than the rest of the students. As soon as their objectives and needs are clarified, they can be involved in project doing, taking part in presentations, conferences, Olympiads and competitions where public speaking is a must. They also write a lot of assignments and tests. The latter are in writing and/or on-line (web-tests and Mentor tests). For advanced groups test writing becomes a mandatory thing and they do it at least once in two weeks. We usually use Cambridge and Oxford universities assessment tests. They are done online and after submitting the answers the teacher gets the result of a student immediately so that he/she knows how to improve the student's awareness.

Assessment and evaluation are also two important issues that should be included in the course design process. Assessment is a process of measuring what learners know and what they can do, whereas evaluation reveals how well the ESP course works with emphasis not only on successful factors but also on modifying less successful aspects [1]. The Foreign Languages department carries out some specified tests to find out those brilliant students who can start learning ESP from the first university year, while others start doing that later, on the second year.

Then, along with General English (GE) some ESP in Law will nevertheless be taught. The GE serves as a bridge to ESP.

The aim that we have in front of us is to fully prepare the senior students for their future career because after the graduation they are likely to seek employment in international companies. In their future career they may find themselves working in a company where English is widely spoken, or using English as a medium of communication with other people from all over the world. Now when English is more and more being considered not as a foreign language but as a means of international communication, one should be able to think English, not to say anything to speak it. By the end of the course, learners should be able to familiarize themselves with legal terminology and write competently in English. For example, they should be capable of writing appropriate memos, e-mails as well as be able to prepare a lawsuit and many others. They must have the ability of understanding intermediate legal articles and cases, understanding and conducting general specific conversation as well as maintaining relationships with the target community.

The objectives for each skill are as follows:

Listening: to understand relevant conversations, news reports

Speaking: to communicate effectively with native speakers in job interviews as well as legal matters settings, having initial interviews with clients.

Reading: to understand a variety of texts, such as forensic literature, documents and newspaper articles.

Writing: to write memos, be able to persuasive writings, resumes and e-mails, client oriented correspondence.

Goals and objectives of the course can be determined based on learners' needs and their future language use, a process which involves consideration of specific grammatical functions, terminology comprehension, and the abilities required for future workplace communication. Assessment and evaluation should be integrated into the design process to ensure that these goals and objectives are achieved. To be able to assess your work, you need to have some feedback from your students. To do this either you need to carry a questionnaire or have some private or confidential talk with your students which is unfortunately no always possible.

After we have found out the students' needs, the teachers should not teach only what their students want. There are curriculum, institutional guidelines and standards that cannot and may not be ignored. However, in developing a new course, students' analysis will help teachers bring together the required and desired in formulating goals and objectives, selecting teaching materials and course assessment.

To be able to assess his/her students correctly one needs a clear understanding of goals and objectives. This can help teachers selecting materials to teach, and the way to teach. D. Nunan [2] gives a clear description of how one should state objectives. Depending on what is desired, objectives may sound like the following:

- Students will learn that ...
- Students will be aware of ...
- Students will develop ...

It is also important to state realistic and achievable goals and objectives. As far as students' needs may differ from site to site and from year to year we need some changes in the L2 pedagogy. This shift should serve the learners' interests and needs. Teachers need to determine which aspects of ESP learning will be included, emphasized, integrated, and used as a core of the course to address students' needs and expectations.

Now when a lot of teaching materials are available there cannot be any explanations why the same material is used with different students. In student-centered instruction, the appropriateness of materials includes student comfort and familiarity with the material, language level, interest, and relevance. However, in some situations teachers can use the same material over and

over. If the article, news report or tapescript corresponds with what you are teaching, why not to use some old materials? Teaching materials are "tools that can be figuratively cut up into component pieces and then rearranged to suit the needs, abilities, and interests of the students in the course [3, p. 27].

Teachers should evaluate their courses to improve and promote their effectiveness. This can be done in two different ways: implicitly and explicitly. Implicit evaluation takes place during the semester, when learners, by their grades, participation, and motivation, give clues to the teacher on how their learning is going on. Explicit evaluation may take place at the end of the course or after students have experienced it. Using questionnaires, surveys, talks, etc. teachers ask the students to express their attitude towards the subject matter, instructional methods, activities, and teacher's role and so on. Evaluation of the course is a brave step for the teacher. He should be open-minded in hearing and implementing learners' comments. [3]

CONCLUSIONS

There are three abilities necessary for successful communication in a professional target setting.

The first ability required in order to successfully communicate in an occupational setting is the ability to use the particular jargon characteristic of that specific occupational context. The second is the ability to use a more generalized set of academic skills. The third is the ability to use the language of everyday informal talk to communicate effectively, regardless of occupational context. The task for the ESP developer is to ensure that all three of these abilities are integrated into and integrated in the curriculum. This is a difficult task due to the incredible amount of research required.

REFERENCES

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В течение многих лет преподавание иностранного языка в целом и английского языка в частности было посвящено чтению, письму и / или аудированию. Однако новые реалии выдвигают особые требования к языку, его использованию в профессиональном контексте. Сегодня для успешной карьеры недостаточно знания общего английского языка (General English). Настало время обучать профессии специалисту завтрашнего дня.

Ключевые слова: АСИ, специфический, современное общество, навыки, культурная информация.