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TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH

Анотація. Автор підкреслює важливість ролі ділової англійської мови в аудиторії, бо ділова англійська мова викликає все більшу зацікавленість. Ділову англійську мову треба розглядати у загальному контексті англійської мови для конкретної мети, бо вона поділяє важливі елементи аналізу потреб, змісту курсу викладання, вибір навчального матеріалу і розробок, які є загальними для використання у всіх напрямках англійської мови для конкретної мети. Можна сказати, що ділова англійська мова є особливою і базується на окремих типах спілкування у специфічних контекстах. Викладачі мають, в основному, зосереджуватися на програмі курсу, готуючи студентів до засвоєння необхідних мовних навичок у різних сферах. Автор прикладає багато зусиль до створення можливих шляхів комунікативного середовища в аудиторії. Визначено багато ідей що до створення необхідного зворотного зв'язку, який допомагає студентам зрозуміти важливість їхніх зусиль на шляху до життєвих ситуацій.

Ключові слова: ділова англійська мова, англійська мова для конкретної мети, програма курсу, навички, спілкування, ритуали, встановлені правила, підручник, взаємодія.

Abstract. The author underlines the importance of the role of the Business English in the classroom as Business English has attracted increasing interest. Business English must be seen in the overall context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as it shares important elements of needs analysis, course design, materials selection and development which are common to all fields of work in ESP. It's possible to state, that Business English is a specific language corpus and emphasis on particular kinds of communication in a specific context.

The teachers should mostly concentrate on the course syllabus, preparing their students to acquire the necessary language skills in different areas. The author dedicates much effort to creating possible ways of developing communicative environment in the classroom. Many ideas on creating the necessary feedback helping the students to understand the importance of their efforts on the way to real life situations have been outlined.

Key words: Business English, ESP (English for Specific Purposes), course syllabus, skills, communication, rituals, routines, course book, interaction.

In the last decades, Business English has attracted increasing interest. Business English courses are offered by many language schools worldwide. Business English must be seen in the overall context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as it shares important elements of needs analysis, course design, materials selection and development which are common to all fields of work in ESP [1]. It's possible to state, that Business English is a specific language corpus and emphasis on particular kinds of communication in a specific context.

However, Business English differs from other varieties of ESP in that it is often a mix of specific content (relating to a particular job or industry areas) and general one (relating to general ability to communicate more effectively).

Today there are many varieties of Business English. Students of colleges or universities adsorb their knowledge of business largely from books and, as a result, such knowledge is sometimes incomplete and rather theoretical. Many students are less aware of their language needs in terms of communicating in real-life business situations.

Students will have two kinds of needs: their position may require them to read texts and books in English in order to gain the qualifications they are seeking. So, a major component of their English training may be the development of reading and listening skills, with a strong emphasis on the vocabulary of the subject. They have to attend seminars and write papers in English. They have to think and prepare for their future working life in business. So, we, the teachers of Business English, should include in their language course such skills as commercial correspondence, ways of presenting information and participation in business meetings and social interactions.

As it was mentioned before, Business English has become more important only recently. It was mostly focused on correspondence, annual reports, and articles in business journals [2]. Some kinds of analysis have been carried out with more attention to the language of business meetings and discussions, but many authors of textbooks have not too much experience gained in business.

Users of Business English need to speak English primarily so that they can achieve more in their job career. Business is a very competitive field: competition exists between companies and within them, between employees as they continuously try to better their careers. If, during future negotiations, the employee is able of being misunderstood or making mistakes himself or herself that can lead to very gross consequences as mistakes and misunderstandings could cost the company very much.

If to look more attentively at social aspects, businesspeople have a need to make contacts with others whom they have never met before, or know them very slightly. Meetings in business circles are often very short as businesspeople are always pressed for time. So, there is a strong need for a universally accepted ways of doing things so that people from different cultures, with different mother tongues, can quickly feel more comfortable with one another.

Social contacts are highly ritualized. In greetings and introductions we use very formulaic language. The style is polite but also short and direct. But, some situations, for example, keeping a conversation over lunch, may help the parties to build a good relationship and, at the same time, may help to avoid over-familiarity.

Another very important question is: information has to be conveyed with minimum risk of misunderstanding. Therefore, there is a need for clear, logical, but emphasized by the words like: «as a result», «for this reason», «in order to» as they help to indicate the logic [3]. Communicating by fax or telephone, businesspeople always need to be concise, and certain familiar concepts may be expressed in word clusters, e.g. «cash with order», «just in time delivery» [4]. Certain terms have evolved to save time in referring to concepts which business people are familiar with, e.g. «primary industry», «parent company». Many of these are acronyms: «CIF, FOB, etc.».

People around the world conduct business meetings in English even though English may be a foreign language to all those present. The language they use is sometimes not so rich in vocabulary and expression, not as used by native speakers, but it should be based on a core of the most useful and basic structures and vocabulary. Businesspeople do not always need to know the full complexities of English grammar and idiom. On the other hand, in a Business English course some structural areas may

require more attention than in a conventional course: conditionals in negotiating, modality for expressing possibility or politeness.

The Business English syllabus is likely to be defined primarily in relation to business performance skills such as meetings, presentations, socializing or report-writing [5]. Within these skills areas, certain concepts are usually discussed and expressed: describing changes and trends, quality, product, process and procedures, strategy. These concepts can be broken down into more linguistically functional areas such as comparing and contrasting, cause and effect, recommending, agreeing. The language may include grammatical and lexical items elements of spoken or written discourse.

If we follow a course book, then much of the work of course planning has already been done for us. However, we still need to think about supplementary materials, and when to bring and use. The teachers of Business English should be rather flexible and always remember of the students' requirements. The students also need to have a variety of different kinds of activities, as it helps to maintain their interest. The teachers also need varying the pace, as well as, focus of training and the method of practicing.

Analyzing the needs of the students studying Business English we should focus a lot on the concept of co-operating as it is a major factor in international meetings where English is being used by non-native speakers. The principles of co-operation help to reduce extreme forms of language and to establish a neutral ground where people from different backgrounds can communicate.

The language of clarifying is an important aspect of co-operating. When the speaker notices that others have not understood and he may stop to rephrase or restate a point or even to check with the words «Did you understand?» Listeners can show understanding by giving various forms of feedback such as nodding the head, or interjecting with «Hmm» or «Right», or by repeating parts of what they heard. British and American participants use such devices all the time and expect others to do the same. However, in some cultures it is not appropriate to make noises while others are speaking; or it may be seen as a criticism of the speaker to say that you have not understood. So, the students should be aware of this fact and be ready to change their behavior in the context of an international meeting in order that the meeting can progress successfully.

We also should define some terms that are necessary in successful cooperation.

Rituals are important for future business people working internationally because they will meet a wide variety of different people, in situations where time is often a constraint [6]. Rituals provide clear ground rules for meetings helping to feel comfortable with one another in a short space of time. Rituals include: welcoming, introducing, small talk before a meeting, formal thanks, and saying goodbye. The language used in these rituals is often highly formalized. Rituals are often affected by cultural parameters. In Latin American countries, for example, more time may be devoted to developing a friendly relationship than in Scandinavia, for example. Even within Europe there can be noticeable differences. In Sweden it is common for a guest to publicly thank, or propose a toast to a host or hostess at a dinner table. In Britain, this public thanking is not seen as necessary, although it may occur. It should be mentioned

that such ritualistic behavior greatly enhances business exchanges, while the non-observance of rituals, such as the unwelcome introduction of business topics during a social dinner with Japanese people, can sometimes be destructive to a business relationship.

Small talk between people who do not know each other well is also a ritual and usually comprises very predictable topics and language. Students can be taught certain language routines involving typical question and answer patterns. Topic routines include:

- the weather
- travel to the place of meeting
- accommodation
- previous visits to a country or town
- topics relating to the visitor's own country or town

Personal topics are usually avoided at first meetings or are avoided altogether in some cultures. However, in other cultures it may be common to ask about the family or even about health. Questions and answers about these topics are highly ritualistic.

Routines are commonly accepted procedures for doing things which are highly predictable [7]. An example is the classic five-point routine for starting a meeting:

- calling attention
- signaling the start
- giving background information
- starting purpose
- inviting the first speaker

Other routines may be used for taking turns to speak, closing meetings, dealing with questions, or interrupting. An important feature of routines is time limit. A routine should only take a certain amount of time, and the participants in a meeting will have certain expectations of the time a routine should take. However, there may be cultural differences in expectations of the time needed for certain routines. For example, greetings in the Middle East go on longer than generally in the USA and the UK.

Language functions relating to co-operating in meetings are:

- following rituals
- following routines
- clarifying
- checking
- rephrasing or restating a to make a point clear
- asking for explanations
- concluding
- showing understanding
- confirming
- referring to time boundaries
- dealing with lack of cooperation.

Key parameters in the choice of language to these functions are: formal versus informal; polite versus impolite; neutral forms versus deviant forms. In case, when some participants have not very high level of the language, the pace should be low and

the participants with a good command of English shouldn't use complex structure. It will be important to avoid specialist jargon unless it is familiar to everyone present; similarly, company specific terms, idioms, or language that is highly culture-bound, may create divisions rather than cooperation between the different parties.

Key structures are question forms, especially tag questions, check questions and statement questions. For example: «You need more time, is that right?», «I see, so what you mean is ...?» The vocabulary should include «consist of», «divided into», «whole», «parts», in describing structure; «is used to», «is used for -ing» in describing function; describing process we analyze and use present tenses, active passive, sequence markers; expressing time we use verb tenses, adverbials, time prepositions; expressing condition we use conditionals; describing location, movement and direction we use prepositions, adverbials; describing change or trends we use verb tenses and the words «increase», «decrease»; giving reasons, expressing cause and effect we use such connectors as «because», «as a result of», «therefore»; expressing similarity and difference we use «the same as», «similar to», «like or unlike»; in comparing and contrasting we use -er and -est forms and «more», «most», «least»; expressing possibility, probability and certainty we use modal verbs sentence construction with «could», «may», «might», «it is likely that», «we are likely to»; expressing intentions we use «will, going to» [8].

Giving Information

This performance area relates to several different kinds of communication:

- short items of information given during meetings with one or several other people
- information given over the telephone
- longer, more structured communications in the form of presentations, talks or speeches
- written communications such as faxes, letters, memos and reports.

There are two aspects of giving information: the content itself and the way in which the message is communicated.

The content of the message

Messages may relate to a variety of different topic areas. For example, «describing structure» is relevant to talking about the structure of a company (its departments, divisions, etc) or the structure of a product. «Expressing similarity and difference» may be important in talking about product development, differences between the company's products and competitors or differences between one job function and another.

How the messages are communicated

The key features of communicating messages are:

- organizing the message
- signaling intention
- emphasizing important points

Organizing the message

This involves both linguistic and non-linguistic skills. The non-linguistic skills relate to how information is selected according to the needs of the audience and to how information is ordered.

Signaling intention

This is an important device which a speaker or writer can use to communicate more effectively. It is a common device in presentations where a speaker introduces a topic «I'm going to talk to you about...» or explains the structure of the presentation «First I will give you some background about ... and then I will...»; and also in meetings «I'd like to make a suggestion»; «I have a question about pricing»;

Signaling intention is also a useful strategy for breaking down the details of a complex message into manageable components — grammatically simpler as well as easier to understand.

And again, it is necessary to stress the need for using authentic materials in the process of teaching Business English. There are several reasons why teachers should use authentic materials

First, authentic texts (audio and written) will have a number of features that are often lacking in texts and dialogues created for learning English.

Second, the material may provide information about real-life situations or events.

Authentic materials can be found in newspapers, magazines, and specialist journals. Radio and television are important sources of such materials. Company-specific materials, including annual reports, product information, newsletters and other PR materials, company videos should be used in teaching Business English, as they provide a realistic context for a role-play, letter or report; stimulate debate; provide information for presentations, or practice the skills of describing, explaining, instructing and exchanging information.

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