

Devising subject-specific materials for ESP courses
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Разработка тематических материалов для АСЦ курсов
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Abstract: *the research work outlines the increasing claim for ESP courses tailored to meet the peculiar requests of each occupation. A great number of professions demand proficiency in handling technical vocabulary and documentation, specialized texts and narrow field-based interaction. Therefore, rather tailor-made specifically selected teaching materials are implemented in ESP teaching process than course-book ones having limited usage frames. Here it is proven that the teacher-designed texts and activities enhance the foreign language acquisition, increase learners' engagement and motivation as they lead to the development of real-life skills.*

Аннотация: *в научно-исследовательской работе описывается растущее требование к АСЦ курсам, которые специально разработаны для удовлетворения специфических запросов каждой профессии. Большое количество профессий требуют знания технических терминов и документации, разбора специализированных текстов и общения в узких научных отраслях. Поэтому более удачно реализуются специально адаптированные учебные материалы в учебном процессе АСЦ, нежели чем книжные материалы, имеющие ограниченные рамки использования. В статье доказано, что тексты и задания разработанные учителем, упрощают изучение иностранного языка, повышают вовлеченность и мотивацию учащихся, поскольку они ведут к развитию реальных жизненных навыков.*

Keywords: *ESP, tailor-made, vocation, subject-specific, target audience, specialism, stimulate.*

Ключевые слова: *АСЦ, специально разработанный, профессия, тематический, целевая аудитория, специализация, стимулировать.*

Not in the far past, nearly two decades ago in higher schools learners were taught mainly General English which was not quite sufficient when applied in diverse areas of specializations, as science, technology, tourism, medicine, engineering and so on. This lack of useful language skills and specific vocation competence led to the development of current instructional techniques focused mostly on meeting the individuals' needs. It was realized together with a growing demand for English courses tailored to students' specific requests, thus giving rise to the emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the late 20th century. This area of language teaching proved to be fertile ground, subsequently ESP has undergone rapid development recently.

According to Hutchinson and Waters [1, 16], ESP can be further subdivided into "two main types of ESP differentiated according to whether the learner requires English for academic study (EAP: English for Academic Purposes) or for work (EOP/EVP/VESL: English for Occupational Purposes/English for Vocational Purposes/Vocational English as a Second Language)". It should be emphasized that this distinction is ambiguous because very often the language learnt for direct use in a study environment will be used later when the graduate gets a job. Accordingly, English in Management could be categorized as both EAP and EOP because students use it in the learning process, as well as in their jobs.

The increasing need for ESP courses was dictated by an enormous number of professions sharing some common characteristics, specific language skills, such as handling technical specialized vocabulary and documentation, comprehending specialized texts and interacting effectively in a particular working environment. To accommodate learners with these subject-specific needs in English, ESP predominantly focuses on language competences, structures, functions and word stock that will be essential for the members of a chosen target group in their professional and vocational environment. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that, as Hutchinson and Waters emphasize, "ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology" but "an approach to language learning, which is based on learners' needs" [1, 19].

For this reason, selection of materials, adaptation, or even creation is a decisive area in ESP teaching, representing a practical result of effective course development to provide students with resources that will equip them with the knowledge being necessary and useful in their future career. One of the most important issues regarding selection or writing of ESP materials is whether they should be exclusively or primarily subject-specific and whether the educators should preserve appropriate ratio of general materials to subject-specific materials. Indeed, general materials develop general language abilities to communicate effectively in any real-life situation, whilst subject-specific materials focus on a particular job or industry. Scrupulous selection of both general and subject-specific materials will equip the students with essential skills and knowledge, yet subject-specific resources far better cater for ESP learners' specific needs [2, 162]. Here, it is worth mentioning that the

mixed use of both general and subject-specific materials is appropriate for learners at A1-B1 level, whereas for higher levels (B2-C2) it is purposeful to focus only on subject-related ones. And this method of combining General English and Vocational English is successfully implemented in the 1st grade of Bachelor Degree, PRUE (Language Leader / Total English vs. Guide to Economics).

Hence, the selection of ESP materials is above all dependable on the needs of the learners in relation to their future or present jobs, as they will very often feel more comfortable covering materials that they find relevant to their specialism and this emotional touch will enhance the level of commitment and lesson engagement. That is, materials should focus on the relevant topics and include motivating tasks and activities to practise the target skills and boost language acquisition. Another important criterion that should be taken into account when selecting materials is the language level students already master and the target level they will need to communicate successfully in their pursued career.

As ESP courses are predominantly student-centred, so students' considerations should be at the top of the list of selection criteria. Accordingly, students' considerations include the following aspects: usefulness of the chosen materials, uniqueness to stimulate better learning, topic relevance, inspiring activities and tasks being worthwhile to implement in future jobs. Thus, first learners' needs should be analyzed, secondly objectives are to be set for the course, and finally, the ESP educators have to select materials that will help both the teacher and students achieve the course objectives. These materials should also relate closely to the learners' specific skills and content needs, which is an important precondition for full exploitation of the materials, as well as improve the learners' motivation.

Coming to the decision on whether to use readily available textbooks or tailor-made materials is primarily based on the learners' subject area. If their subject area is more general, the feasibility of finding suitable published materials is much higher. Therefore, ESP teachers will most often select suitable materials from existing printed supplies. In the case of more specific subject areas, the most commonly accepted practice is that ESP teachers select from existing printed materials, as well generate tailored ones to realize all the particular requests of that field of study and occupation.

Our institution (PRUE) encourages teachers to develop tailor-made materials of English for specific purposes, so we are more likely to provide our students with tailor-made materials. It is vital also to point out that the number of tailor-made materials for ESP in Russian higher education institutions is relatively high, due mainly to the fact that teachers here make every effort to cater for the specific needs of the professional language they teach. To meet this end, they either adapt commercial textbooks to the specific needs of the particular subject area and to the level of students' language awareness or prepare in-house materials if no suitable printed materials are available in the market.

On the one hand, if teachers opt for using an available textbook, to a large extent the selection of skills, word stock, structures, functions, and so on is conditioned by the textbook and can be extended into other areas teachers find relevant to their students. Tailor-made materials, on the other hand, provide the teacher with the opportunity to decide on combinations of vocabulary, functions and structures and to develop materials that will introduce most relevant vocabulary and related skills.

A final but significant factor is that psychologically a textbook represents something concrete and provides a measure of progress and achievement throughout the course. Consequently, when designing materials teachers should bear this in mind and prepare materials that present a logical whole and in which the sequence of units is logical and enables the students to see and evaluate their progress.

Based on my own teaching experience, together with my colleagues, we revealed the fact that there is a lack of subject-specific textbooks for Master's students specializing in Management. Therefore, we have prepared a tailor-made course-book for Master's program in Management. The selection of topics is dictated specifically by student needs - relevant to the key areas of Management Theory (e.g. E-commerce, Building Brands, Innovation, Employee Relations, etc.) Another benefit of this tailor-made course-book is the topic authenticity, as all materials are taken from authentic up-to-date business magazines, newspapers and company websites, for example *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *CFO Magazine*, www.mckinsey.com, www.businesscasestudies.co.uk, etc. Moreover, we can note that the level of meeting student's expectation from the course is much higher in using tailor-made materials, rather than existing textbooks. First of all, the choice of materials is based on the demands of employment market, secondly on the country's business environment and its specifications, and finally, on the student needs and knowledge base.

Following the same framework, each unit comprises **Preparation**, which consists of pre-reading topic-related questions to help the student to exchange some ideas, views referring to that theme; **Language notes**, which give explanation or definition of some words, phrases that are either newly coined or have specific meaning in that given context; **Comprehension** section checks the understanding of the reading part, focusing learners attention on key points and encouraging to speak out; **Vocabulary**, with the help of which learners revise the basic terms of that definite topic, enhance their word-building knowledge and improve business vocabulary; **Language Practice** checks how cohesive and coherent students are in their written discourse, **Oral Work** with a range of

business cases improves their intercommunicating, brainstorming and decision-making skills, and the last section - **Writing Tasks**, provides them an opportunity to develop their business writing.

Tailor-made materials provide students with activities that suit the specific needs of their future or current jobs, and as it proves: "In-house produced material is extremely valuable as it is inevitably more precisely geared to the needs of students than published material" [3, 99]. When determining what tasks to include in ESP materials, teachers should above all try to select or design tasks that will reproduce the learner's real-life business situations as closely as possible. No matter how good these materials are, they should leave some room for flexibility and creativity giving the teacher the opportunity to respond to the needs of individual learners. At the same time they should encourage students to share their thoughts and experience because both less experienced starters and certainly job experienced students are highly motivated to do so, the latter group we meet mostly doing Master's Degree.

To conclude, once designing tailor-made materials, educators should rely on some general considerations and seek for imperative competences, even when choosing the appropriate textbook. According to some linguists, some of the most important considerations are as follows: the course length, target audience, active vocabulary in current use, visualized and well-presented materials [4, 7].

Indisputably learners can acquire most of core language skills and proficiency, as well universal terminology from general business textbooks (Business Advantage, Market leader, The Business etc). But they will definitely benefit even more when covering tailor-made materials during their studies or a combination of business coursebook and tailor-made resources as these two alternatives are more likely to provide them with really applicable knowledge of a foreign language in a narrow specialized area.

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