Developing an effective ESP course for business English learners based on a comprehensive approach

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ABSTRACT

The article explores how to design an effective ESP course for business English learners in Uzbekistan. Several types of needs analysis are also utilized for determining necessary factors of learners. In this article, two kinds of approaches are mentioned for designing EBP courses that were taken from Woodrow's book. Course objectives and various assessment types are also considered in it. It provides course materials that can be used during the course and what kind of course models can be taken into account in designing the course.

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Keng qamrovli yondashuvlar asosida ingliz tili o'rganuvchilari uchun biznesga oid samarali ESP kursini rivojlantirish

Kalit so'zlar:
EBP (Biznes Ingliz Tili),
ESP (Maxsus Maqsadlar uchun Ingliz Tili),
BE (Biznes Ingliz Tili),
Janrga asoslangan yondashuv,
Diskurs tahlili,
ehtiyojlarni tahlil qilish,
diagnostik test,
shakllantiruvchi baholash,
yakuniy baholash,
biznes terminologiyalari,
madaniy aloqa,
mijozlarga xizmat ko'rsatish vakillari,
biznes maslahatchilar,
gapirish ko'nikmalari,
tinglash ko'nikmalari,
yozma ko'nikmalar.

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada, O'zbekistonda biznes ingliz tili o'rganuvchilari uchun samarali ESP (Ingliz tili maxsus maqsadlar uchun) kursini qanday loyihalashtirish mumkinligi muhokama qilinadi. O'quvchilarning ehtiyojlarini aniqlash uchun bir nechta ehtiyojlarni tahlil qilish usullari ham ishlatilgan. Maqolada, Woodrow ning kitobidan olingan EBP (Biznes Ingliz Tili) kurslarini loyihalash uchun ikki xil yondashuv taqdim etiladi. Kursning maqsadlari va turli baholash turlari ham hisobga olinadi. Kurs davomida foydalanish mumkin bo'lgan kurs materiallari va kursni loyihalashda hisobga olinishi kerak bo'lgan kurs modellari keltirilgan.

Разработка эффективного курса ESP для изучающих деловой английский на основе комплексного подхода

Ключевые слова:
EBP (английский для бизнеса),
ESP (английский для специфических целей),
BE (бизнес-английский);
подход, основанный на жанре;
дискурсивный анализ,
анализ потребностей,
диагностический тест,
формирующее оценивание,
суммарное оценивание,
бизнес-термины,
культурная коммуникация,
представители обслуживания клиентов,
бизнес-консультанты,
навыки говорения,
навыки аудирования,
письменная компетенция.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются способы разработки эффективного курса ESP (английский для специфических целей) для обучающихся бизнес-английскому в Узбекистане. Для определения потребностей студентов используются различные методы анализа. Также упоминаются два подхода к разработке курсов EBP (английский для бизнеса), заимствованные из книги Вудроу. Внимание уделяется целям курса и различным видам оценивания. Представлены материалы, которые могут быть использованы в учебном процессе, а также модели курсов, которые следует учитывать при проектировании программы.

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INTRODUCTION

The present article focuses on the ESP context, with a particular emphasis on business English (BE). Business constitutes a prominent field in Uzbekistan, with many individuals leaving their jobs to pursue business opportunities. In their pursuit of internationalization, some companies hire employees proficient in English or arrange for English lessons for their workers. The EBP course, spanning seven weeks, is comprised of two lessons per week. The development of the EBP (English for Business Purposes) course involved the selection of model courses from Woodrow's book, including "English for Cross-Cultural Nursing" by Susan Bosher. This course can serve as a model for designing an EBP course that caters to participants from non-native English countries, with a particular focus on cultural issues between the immigrant and international participants in nursing. The course places significant emphasis on enhancing communication and interaction skills between patients and nurses, bearing a striking resemblance to the interactions and communication styles employed by customer service representatives and business consultants when engaging with their clients. A pivotal aspect that substantiates the appropriateness of this course as a framework for my own EBP course pertains to its methodological approach, which employs authentic materials such as nursing textbooks, articles, and scholarly papers on field-related topics for the instruction of learners. This methodological approach is adaptable to the business field, facilitating the enhancement of participants' vocabulary, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

The model course under discussion involves the enhancement of communication skills, which are specific to security guards, ground handlers, catering staff, and bus drivers, and can align with skills for writing reports, communicating with customers, or networking. Consequently, it can serve as a model for designing an effective EBP course that considers the enhancement of communication skills as a key objective.

METHODOLOGY

The participants of this course, who are future customer service representatives and business consultants, come from similar professional backgrounds and have a common desire to be proficient in their field in terms of language. The group consists of 10 participants, comprising eight males and two females, with ages ranging from 19 to 22. The participants are of Islamic faith and possess proficiency in Russian, having attended Russian educational institutions. The presence of Russian-speaking learners in the cohort is advantageous, as it facilitates the comprehension of the course material, particularly as a number of words and terms are analogous in both languages, thereby expediting the learning process.

All learners acquired English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in their respective countries. Their language proficiency level is generally B2 (upper-intermediate) in English. According to the Council of Europe (COE), individuals at B2 level are capable of comprehending the primary concepts of intricate text on both concrete and abstract subjects, encompassing technical discourse within their respective domains of expertise. They can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. They are capable of producing clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explaining a viewpoint on a topical issue, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of various options. However, their proficiency in professional English is not yet sufficiently advanced to enable them to improve their language skills in business-specific terminologies, job-related contexts,

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writing reports or emails, profession-related vocabulary, communicating with clients, and effectively engaging in meetings or discussions. The learners express a desire to acquire the field-related vocabulary and terminologies for communicating with their colleagues and clients and applying them during presentations, discussions, reports, and emails. Additionally, Woodrow emphasized that the purpose of business English language learners is to promote cross-cultural communication among speakers of other languages.

In general, they need to develop their listening skills for comprehending conversations between clients or colleagues, their writing skills for learning to write appropriately structured emails and reports to executives and clients, and their speaking skills for managing conversations between clients and colleagues, as well as their vocabulary, for better comprehension and delivery of documents in their field. In terms of their profession-related skills in English, they are able to understand and read business emails, reports, and conversations, which makes them aware of their basic knowledge of business English. In addition, their motivation and goal to enhance profession-related English are either for further development of their profession or for finding a job in a company where English is the main language. This professional English improvement is also beneficial for their career growth in the future. A needs analysis that is conducted effectively can guarantee that learners will get the knowledge they require. Flowerdew highlights that need analysis is the initial step in ESP course design. For determining the needs of EBP course participants, we conduct, surveys like questionnaires with participants can be a basic and excellent way of knowing them and their field, as they can provide data about learners' needs, preferences, and experiences. In the beginning of the course, the participants are given questionnaires about their language proficiency, educational backgrounds, aims for attending the course, and learning preferences. The gathered information about them helps the course designer develop materials, activities, tasks, and instructions appropriate to them. Another option is analyzing existing business English literature, such as articles, emails, reports, books, etc.; it may offer crucial data. The academic documents on business field topics can help with the participant's all-necessary skill acquisition. The teacher can select business-related jargon and terminologies from articles, literature, and books and, then, develop speaking, writing, and vocabulary activities based on them, like matching exercises, writing emails, or role-plays. The teacher can also analyze the structure of business emails and reports for the learner's learning process. This type of analysis is an excellent way to teach by integrating several skills into one activity or task.

In our opinion, the last method that is the most productive is observation, which can assess the target situation's true language and pragmatic requirements, as well as the learner's existing circumstances. This method can be done by going to the place where the target situation's language happens or by watching videos in which the target situation's language is applied. Both of them can be observed by course designers and participants. The course designer can observe communication between customer service representatives or business consultants and their clients in some companies, or participants themselves can observe it for their own study. The latter can also occur in classrooms during lessons. The teacher can demonstrate videos about business situations where employees and clients had conversations on various topics, and then they can be analyzed by everybody in the class.

To design an ESP course in a business English context for the described learners, we approached it in several ways. Woodrow mentioned in our book approaches like genre-

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based and discourse analysis, which we apply to design my EBP course. In the genre-based approach, course designers can determine the types of texts or genres that target learners use in their communicative situations. By gathering that data, teachers can design appropriate course materials for the target group of learners. This approach also concentrates on contextualized language use in the real world, which learners use in their occupational fields. Furthermore, we integrate this approach with needs analysis to identify the genres that are essential and applicable to learners in their field. For example, by examining typical business reports and communications that the participants may experience, the teacher can personalize the course contents to their individual requirements.

Another way to design an EBP course is through discourse analysis, which involves analyzing the business context in which communication happens. By applying this approach, we can determine the interaction aspect between my participants and their clients in their job, such as how they speak or use politeness strategies with them; it is one of the necessary skills to learn for my learners to apply in their job. Apart from them, it is important to determine business-related language features like jargon, structures, and common phrases that align with their needs

At the end of the course, students will be able to (SWBAT):

1. Acquire business-related terminologies and jargon that they will apply in their communication with their clients, employers and colleagues.

Students will be proficient in the language and jargon they require to succeed in their careers as business consultants and customer service representatives.

2. Enhance their communication and interaction skills with clients and colleagues.

Students will practice their roles as customer service representatives and business consultants in the classroom through role-plays that they will have in their work, which can positively affect their communication skills.

3. Strengthen their writing proficiency by writing emails and reports for their field.

Students will practice and improve writing business reports and emails that their job will require.

4. Improve general English proficiency in their professional settings.

Students will be provided with a thorough method for enhancing students' overall English competence, with an emphasis on applying it in professional contexts.

In the beginning of the course, diagnostic tests are used to determine their current level, strengths, and weaknesses in general English as well as in business English. Woodrow states that diagnostic tests are employed in conjunction with needs analysis, which is used for placement or as a means of tracking students' development, to determine the students' strengths and weaknesses.

At the end of third unit, achievement or progress tests are used to know whether they achieved the aims of the learned unit after teaching it. The achievement and progress tests are used to measure learners' progress and what and how they learned during the ESP course (Woodrow, 2018). It also assists in determining whether participants have effectively dealt with the acquisition of topics or not.

Furthermore, formative and summative assessment is also included in the course, such as role-plays, writing assessments like reports, emails, presentations, and vocabulary-based exercises.

In the speaking-focused lessons, the participants are given role-play scenarios on various business situations that happen between employees and clients, like advising,

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solving issues, or helping in some kind of situation. This activity can also involve vocabulary usage during performances, which involves the integration of speaking skills and vocabulary. Writing assessments are conducted in writing-centered lessons, where the participants write emails or reports on business-specific topics, such as welcoming emails for new clients, addressing issues, replying to frequently asked questions by clients, etc. Another type of assessment is presentation; the participants need to present products or items from their companies. It addresses their needs for communication skills, and they can gain confidence in applying them in their job meetings or discussions. The presentations' objectives are to use business-related vocabulary and enhance communication and speaking skills. The final assessment type is vocabulary-based exercises like matching definitions with words, fill-in-the-blank sentences, and collocation. All of them are powerful for strengthening the participant's knowledge of vocabulary. A specially designed final exam involves all four skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. The reading section has comprehension-checking questions on business reports or articles. The listening section includes a note-taking task for a business meeting. The speaking part requires a presentation task on the given business topic, which should last for five minutes. The participants need to write a business email and a business report on the given scenarios. This final exam addresses the implementation of all skills or knowledge that the participants acquired.

In teaching the participants several aspects of language, a few authentic materials are used.

This channel focuses on various topics in the business English field, like business English skills, answering the phone, explaining a problem, making suggestions, giving directions, etc., which are essential for the participants. The channel videos benefit the participants not only in speaking and listening but also in vocabulary, as they have the application of business vocabulary in demonstrated situations and separate videos on vocabulary only. Moreover, the channel has videos about the explanation of grammar topics that can be applied in business situations, such as phrasal verbs for investigating, changing the topics in meetings, etc. This article offers a detailed guideline on writing business documents like emails and reports for the participants that are comprehensible and convenient. This article is used in the writing lesson's beginning by the participants to understand the structure and purpose of business documents. It helps them to comprehend where most people go wrong in writing, the purpose of writing, the audience of writing, anticipate and answer the reader's questions in writing.

CONCLUSION

Teaching EBP learners is not challenging if the teacher has appropriate course materials, and this article has beneficial data in designing this course. This ESP course taught me several things, such as its scope and the importance of needs analysis for special learners in different contexts. Another exploration for me is approaches in ESP course design, which we used for EBP course design, and one of them is the genre-based approach, which refers to gathering the types of texts in which specific communicative situations occur. Another approach is discoursing analysis, which is about examining authentic texts and communication in a particular context. ESP courses can be highly specialized by analyzing real texts and interactions in the target communicative context and converting these into course components.

Nevertheless, the most challenging parts for me were selecting appropriate course materials and designing a syllabus list, and we think that we almost managed with both of

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them. But why almost? As this is my first experience with the selection of materials for the ESP course, we are not absolutely sure about the appropriateness of materials for the EBP course. However, the chosen materials address the criterion that the texts occur in and are specific to the chosen communicative setting. Most of them are authentic, and all of them are specialized in business settings. Furthermore, a totally new experience for me was syllabus design, and this process gave me valuable insights that we could practice by myself. In the future, we will practice it more to design better syllabus lists and sharpen this skill.

In conclusion, we desire to mention that the main source that was useful in this course is Lindy Woodrow's "Introducing Course Design in English for Specific Purposes" which was published in 2018. This book centers on all aspects and components of ESP course design, from its definition to the model ESP courses in different contexts. In general, this ESP course provided valuable insights and perspectives for me.

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