

Instructional Design Principals for Business English Language Teaching at Tertiary Level

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Abstract

In the world of business, trade and commerce today, English is widely used as a major medium of communication in both large corporate entities and small business concerns. Thus having an excellent proficiency in English language has become a vital issue in achieving success in this arena. As a matter of fact, efficiency in English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is an asset for business correspondence. A poor presentation can destroy the prospect of a quality product or a selling technique or even a marketing policy. It is evident that the students of this area are highly motivated by business related study. “Business English” can bridge the both domains of English and Business. “Business English” which is an issue of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), has a very thoughtful and research-oriented arrangement of language teaching on the basis of needs analysis, formulation of goals and objectives, specific syllabus design, appropriate material development, effective teaching as well as accurate evaluation. ‘Advertisement is harmful’ is a stormy, argumentative topic for debate in English class. Topics like Business Ethics, mortgage loan, poverty alleviation, bidding, microcredit, currency, tax, morality can be chosen for speaking and writing from real life experience. Activities like role playing, making phone or conference calls, doing presentations, taking part in meetings, writing minutes, being involved in negotiations, writing emails and reports will

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help learners achieving proficiency in English class. It helps in processing and disseminating information quickly and accurately in real life situation of professional life. The paper reflects how an effective ESP course can be designed for a particular group of students of Business Administration.

Keywords: ESP, register analysis, rhetorical or discourse analysis, Target situation analysis, Skills and strategies, learning - centred approach

Introduction

Massive advancement in every field of life now-a-days in global perspective has reduced the distance among the countries in different ways. The development of art, culture, business, research, technology and communication has thoroughly changed the objectives of English language teaching. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged to meet all the rising demand of the academic and professional learners.

ESP has got planning of language teaching for all particular groups of learners. At tertiary level, it is expected that a student will develop a good command of English language. If s/he fails to have a good command of the skills of English language like listening, speaking, reading and writing, s/he should be taught intensively. ESP has very innovative and research-oriented arrangement of language teaching on the basis of register analysis, rhetorical or discourse analysis, target situation analysis, skills and strategies, learning – centred approach etc. for a group of academic or professional learners.

The learners of tertiary level are invariably stimulated by their subject related texts. Myth, fairy-tales, rhetoric terms, semantics, pragmatics, life of writers, interesting extract from poem, fictions can be interesting materials for teaching English language to the students of English literature, medical students will be interested in the description of newly identified diseases or recently invented medicines

and/or instruments. On the other hand, the students of the Department of Law or professional lawyers may have interest on different new and complex case studies, investigation reports, or challenging crime issues and solutions. A wonderful presentation of launching a product can attract the student or professionals of Business faculty. ESP believes that if the point of interests of the learners varies, why will we generalize all learners with same materials? The target for learning language and levels of previous knowledge will also vary. Thus, for an individual group of learners, a tailor-made ESP course is thus suitable, motivating, interesting, and effective.

The whole activities are divided into two major groups:

ESP is an ever growing or developing area. From its beginning in the 1960s, it has undergone several changes. Since the mood of life and lifestyle is getting changed, ESP is reviewing its planning. On the basis of such changing, two major arena have emerged in the world of ESP:

- a. Pedagogy in course Planning
- b. Diversity in teaching

Pedagogy in course Planning encompasses the following areas of research:

The concept of special language: register analysis

Nature of language used by the lawyers is different from the language used by the students of literature. Medical English is different from English for the engineers. Teaching English to students at tertiary level must be specific and area-related while their career groups are based on individual preferences (*e.g.*, Doctor, Lawyer, and Businessman). If we analyze the type of language used by the scientists, we will see that present simple tense, passive voice and nominal compounds are commonly used. So while preparing a tailor made ESP syllabus for the scientists/ would be scientists, we need to give priority on these

focused structures. In ESP, register analysis of the language of target area is a significant turning point.

Beyond the sentence: rhetorical or discourse analysis

When we move forward, we reach from sentence to text level. Like sentence structure, organization of texts also vary from area to area of tertiary level. Science texts are thus different from commercial texts. So when to deal with beyond sentence level, an ESP teacher do care whether to focus more on narrative or argumentative.

Target situation analysis

It is a unique trend in ESP to analyze the target situation before designing English language course. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have considered it as ‘Learners’ reasons for learning’. According to them “Given that the purpose of an ESP course is to enable learners to function adequately in a target situation, that is, the situation in which the learners will use the language they are learning, then the ESP course design process should proceed by first identifying the target situation and then carrying out a rigorous analysis of the linguistic features of that situation. The identified features will form the syllabus of the ESP course.” (Page 12)

Skills and strategies

Specifying or determining the skills and strategies is the 4th stage of designing ESP course. It is obvious that where the physicians need to develop all the four skills of language e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing, the nurses need only the first three skills to develop. Hence, the ESP syllabus for nurses will mainly be based on speaking and listening based whereas, a medical English course will focus on covering all the four skills to equip them to meet the challenge of their target situation.

A learning – centred approach

ESP has innovative ideas about language learning. ESP unlike other approaches, does not deal with mere description and exemplification rather it deals the use of language. So ‘learn language, not about the language’ can be the slogan in this regard. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) once again have considered it as “A truly valid approach to ESP must be based on an understanding of the processes of language learning” (Page, 14)

Diversity in teaching

‘Be ESP teacher, be effective teacher’ is a maxim for ESP teachers. An ESP teacher has to perform so many roles. S/he needs to perform the role of a needs analyst, a setter of goals and objectives, a syllabus designer, a materials developer, a teacher and an evaluator.

We cannot ignore the necessity of learning English as a medium study or profession, neither can we avoid the failure of teaching English language proficiency teaching. So we need to keep teaching English to the students of tertiary level. If we be the teacher of ESP, we will be the successful teachers.

Success of a teacher depends on sound learning of the learners. ESP ensures learning language to the students with different interest in academic area and profession. Since ESP has got very strong point of engaging students from very first step of student learning to the last step, it can claim to be effective approach. Diverse teaching includes the following methods:

Active teaching

Active teaching concentrates on learners and ensures diversity in teaching activities inside the classroom and outside too. Here, the teacher will brainstorm on how to involve learners into different creative activities. ESP is synonymous to active teaching. S/he will rush to the possible future work places of his/her learners to assess the

nature of language. Then s/he will design the materials, teach them by creating mock real life situation through role playing. So besides mere teaching, an ESP teacher knows how to involve his/her learners for an effective result.

Motivating teaching

ESP courses are tailor made courses based on the specific needs analysis. Syllabus design is particular. Materials are collected from the learners' academic or professional areas. Teaching is diversified. So ESP is enriched with so many motivating factors to ensure English language teaching.

Engaging teaching

In ESP, both the teacher and students get engaged before starting the course. The first step entitled needs analysis is determined on the basis of the necessities, lacks and even wants of the learners. Syllabus is based on the skills they need to develop. Materials are chosen and used in classroom in a very creating way. So from beginning to end it is an engaging arrangement for both the teacher and learners.

Outcome based teaching

ESP ensures language learning for a particular group of learner. The use of the word ensure is very desperate in this sentence. But ESP has the arrangement to meet the challenge since it is based on the outcome or target situation analysis. ESP learners are mature and more motivated. A cosmetic purpose of paying more money is remarkable. So the teacher and the learners are accountable in the whole process.

Planned teaching

The journey of ESP teaching is an enthusiastic journey 'from complex to simple' for a teacher. The teacher knows the destination of the learners; S/he knows the starting level of the learners. S/he knows the interest and intention of the learners. So to lead the learners towards

their destination is not a big challenge for him/her. The ESP syllabus is derived from a detailed analysis of the language features of the target situation. The learners feel interested because the syllabus is designed only for them even considering their opinions. Teaching materials are designed from the area of the job or study of the learners. Teaching is versatile.

Teaching provided by a versatile teacher

In ESP, the person who is a needs analyst is also a setter of goals and objectives, a syllabus designer, a material developer and a teacher as well as an evaluator. Therefore, there is no gap among the steps of a whole project of language teaching. ESP syllabus indicates why to teach besides what to teach. So instruction is clear. Moreover, the teacher himself /herself select, adapt or write the materials. So s/he can use those very effectively in classroom situation and outside the classroom, An ESP teacher obviously takes his, her learners from remembering , understanding level to analyzing, applying, evaluating and creating level.

Continuous research based teaching

An ESP teacher is all in all. If at the middle of the semester, it is found that the expected output is not seen, the teacher can review the syllabus, redesign the materials and refine teaching method. S/he can motivate his /her learners towards learning. The teacher needs to design a fresh course for the new batch with same professional target group. So it is ever engaging approach and thus innovative and effective.

Implementation of both Pedagogy in course Planning and Diversity in teaching in Business English in classroom situation

Teaching is a unique art and ESP has taught its teachers to be proficient in this art. Learners, teachers, materials, classroom facilities all are the ingredients of teaching process, ESP showed us how to blend all materials harmoniously towards its goal of effective teaching.

My teaching experience, after adopting ESP approach, is really worthy one. It taught me how to engage the learners into their classroom or real-life situation. If once we, the teachers, can arouse curiosity and engage them, learning materials will no longer be confined within the covers of the books rather it will come up to the life of the learners and will enlighten. Thus we can achieve the outcomes of teaching.

After the rigorous practice of theory of ESP, I found myself to be well equipped. In Summer 2016, I was offered to teach an English language course to 34 students of the Department of Business Administration. While all my colleagues were teaching all their students with same general language materials, I was thinking of designing an ESP to reach the outcomes:

At the end of the course the learners can

- Identify the real life situation and clarify the mood of delivering thoughtful and prospective speech
- Compare and contrast the formal and informal situation and expression
- Play the role of significant imaginary characters
- Can make conference call, virtual records and phone calls
- Can present a topic very attractively
- May call a meeting, participate and even preside over a meeting
- May negotiate in some prescribed deals
- Finally can write business letter, emails and reports

Keeping the outcomes in mind, I have analyze the register of the language necessary to serve the above mentioned purposes. I have determined the pedagogy of clarifying discourse of language. While analyze the target situation, I found that along with a very good command in English language, clear logic, strong argumentative power, sharp sense judgment, high convincing power, strong defensive quality they should develop. So, besides the theoretical

reviews of some basic sentence structures, we marched to discourse level.

According to the plan, through lecture, interactive session, and brainstorming group discussion, we completed comprehending levels of study. Then we compared and contrasted the prospect of some real life issues on the basis of their contributions to enrich the life, community and surrounding. Then I as a facilitator, I gave the students the authority of individual topic, they selected their topics and planned to uphold through some creative ideas and exemplifications. All of the students seemed to be interested and serious as well to highlight the distinguished features, major/ representative characters from reality.

In their endeavor, they utilize both their intellectual and creative power. With very limited resource, they designed costumes to represent the characters. As they could engage themselves devotedly in playing roles, I am sure they will never forget these as they usually forget after traditional memorization process.

It is evident that the learners have enjoyed the contents and feel affinity with the sequences given to them. They could learn a lot since they could interpret the situation from real life experience. Mock job interviews have given new ideas and understanding. Role playing on the basis of dialogues between employers-employee, shopkeeper – consumer, presenter –participants, two parties in negotiation have taken them to the height reality. Thus they could really explore elementary level of remembering and understanding level to higher creative level. They seemed to be very confident when they could complete preparing a new product by determining the target consumers and by selecting publication media. While the students were debating over brainstorming issue like ‘Advertisement is harmful’ both the parties were restless to exemplify from their practical perspective. While dramatizing their English script on practicing values and moralities, or business ethics, they seemed to just be motivated to the virtues and avoid the vices in their lives.

Actually, they could have the insight that this sort of an ESP course can contribute in their professional progress. Automatically they were motivated to grasp the art and achieve the skills.

Conclusion

Instrumental motivation like appreciation, achieving handsome score or availing a job or promotion or scholarship is related to such types of courses. There is a cosmetic purpose, too (of paying and earning handsome amount of money) which makes the both the parties conscious of their achievement of prescribed skills out of the program. In this discussion, it is clear that ESP is a way out to teach particular group of learners intensively as well as effectively through the steps needs analysis, formation of goals and objectives, syllabus design, materials development, teaching and evaluation.

Work cited

Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.