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ESP COURSE DESIGN: EOP TOUR GUIDE
КУРС «АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ДЛЯ СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫХ ЦЕЛЕЙ»: ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНАЯ ГРУППА «ТУРИЗМ»

Abstract

This paper examines the English language needs in an ESP course at Amur State University, Russia. The course designed was based on a Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA) and Context Analysis taking into accounts some basic concepts forwarded by Kay Westerfield and Jennifer Rice through online teacher training course with University of Oregon, Linguistics Department, American English Institute (UO AEI) «English for Specific purposes, Best Practices».

The author of the article completed the course administered by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final project «ESP Course Design: EOP Tour Guide» now is a part of the curriculum of the target professional group of students. Feedback from the ESP group (EOP: Tour Guide) indicated that the course content was tailored to suit their professional needs and wants and contributed to a positive EL experience for these learners who are adult students from a non-native English speaking background.

Аннотация

В статье анализируются цели языкового курса «Английский для специальных целей», разработанного сотрудниками Амурского государственного университета. Курс составлен на основе трех видов анализа: анализ цели (TSA), анализ ситуации (PSA), анализ условий для реализации курса (Context Analysis). Указанные виды анализа отражены в он-лайн курсе для преподавателей английского языка как иностранного, организованного факультетом лингвистики университета Орегона «English for Specific purposes, Best Practices». Авторами курса являются профессор Университета Орегона Кей Уестерфилд и Дженнифер Райс, координатор и инструктор курсов по методике преподавания английского языка как иностранного.

Автор статьи прошел обучение в рамках указанного курса, организованного Государственным Департаментом США (Бюро образовательных и культурных программ). Проект «ESP Course Design: EOP Tour Guide» в настоящий момент апробирован и используется в практике преподавания языковых дисциплин учебного плана студентов бакалавриата, обучающихся по направлению подготовки «Туризм». Результаты внедрения полученных в ходе работы над проектом результатов показывают, что содержание курса было спланировано, исходя из профессиональных потребностей студентов, что

положительно сказалось на изучении английского языка данной группой студентов, не являющихся носителями английского языка.

1. Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a needs based concept to determine which language skills should be profitably developed for academic and professional success of students. It takes into account certain basic questions like: «who the learners are, what their linguistic background or level of competence is, what their view to language learning is, what their purpose and expectations are, what particular skill they will need in their actual, on- the-job situation etc.» [Singh, 2005].

The ESP approach provides opportunities to the learners to acquire English naturally, by working with language in a context that they comprehend and find interesting. However, designing an ESP course is always challenging for the instructor. There are several reasons for that. Firstly, designing a relevant ESP course is often seen as a short-range activity as most institutions provide very limited planning time before instructors teach courses. Secondly, some teachers' abilities to provide conducive, engaging and relevant lessons for their students are limited due to the lack of a professional (not in ELT!) background. Finally, the classroom environment sometimes doesn't meet the required standards (the lack of Internet access, etc.). What steps should be taken to overcome these problems in order to make an ESP course productive and beneficial for both the learners and instructors?

2. Issues in ESP Course design

Traditionally, any ESP Course is aimed at developing language skills of a particular group of learners. Obviously, an ESP course should be considered as something specific for a particular group of students for their future job environment – EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). A study conducted by Martinez indicates that most EOP programs incorporate basic job skills such as «…job search, interviewing, preparing resumes, letters and filling out work-related forms» [Martinez, 2001]. In EOP an instructor (teacher) is more interested in exposing the learners to workplace skills so that they will manage to succeed in that workplace.

The central issue of any ESP course is the starting point in materials and course design. This is important because practitioners have to be selective at specific content-based materials and in order to achieve their goal. A reliable

Needs analysis (NA, examining various forms of methods and teaching tools have to be identified to provide information about learners, educational environment, materials, etc. Course design refers to the planning and structuring of a course to achieve the needed goals. It includes the following elements: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), Context Analysis. Moreover the course designer's approach to syllabus and methodology is also an important part of the process. In this article the target group of learners the ESP Course was designed is EOP Tour Guide.

3. Procedures

The first step was the Target Situation Analysis (TSA). According to the definition provided by Kay Westerfield and her colleagues Target Situation Analysis (TSA) means «…what does the learner need to be able to do with the language in the future» [Friedenberg, Westerfield, 2003].

T a b l e 1. **Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**

Target Learner Goals:	Sources of Information:
Now? to be able to tell the customer about the type of the holiday he (she) has chosen to be able to give suggestions about different types of tours and be good at describing places (preferred destinations) to be good at giving directions (speaking skills) to respond appropriately to travelers' complaints to make an effective oral presentation about the sights (touring a city (place)	1. Focus Group (four-year-students/seniors) who have gained some professional experience through internships (experience related to one of their majors (English for Tourism)). 2. Employers (Travel Agencies).
In the near future (delayed needs)? being aware of culture clash (knowing the culture of the country he (she) is working inside out) so that he (she) will give the instructions about how to behave in another country	1. Content experts (people working in the field, who are familiar with the tasks the learners need to perform).
Information still needed: Communication Activities and related «micro functions» [Munby, 1998] Language forms appropriate in the field (linguistic context). That might depend on whether a Tour Guide works in his (her) own country or abroad.	**Sources of Information?** ESP Textbooks. Informal consultations with sponsors, learners.

Through the Present Situation Analysis (PSA) we described the group of potential learners. What are the language strengths and weaknesses of a target group? What is their language experience? In other word PSA is «what can the learner do with the language now» [Friedenberg, Westerfield, 2003].

T a b l e 2. **Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**

1. What is their current level of English? (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking) pre-intermediate level of English past language learning experience differs	**Sources of Information:** 1. Needs Assessment: EAP Learner Sample Questionnaire. 2. Incoming tests to estimate the current level of language. 3. Sample written or oral texts relevant to the field[1]
2. What is their current level of knowledge about the content area? absence of language practice in professional field their objective is to become proficient in «English for Tourism» to get a good job position	**Sources of Information:** 1. The current target learners.
3. What are their "wants" in regard to language learning? Tour Guide inside the country of residence Tour Guide outside the country of residence	**Sources of Information:** 1. Former students who have knowledge of the skills needed.
Information still needed: how to design a curriculum for such learners to teach effectively (what are possible approaches to course design) what materials should be used and on what stages of the Course (syllabus and materials design)	**Sources of Information?** 1. ESP research in the field.

Context Analysis is «what is the environment in which the learning will take place» [Friedenberg,Westerfield, 2003].

T a b l e 3. **People in Context Analysis**

Who are the stakeholders in the proposed course? Russia, Amur Region, Blagoveshchensk Amur State University (AmSU) The Department of International Business and Tourism (EL teachers and students) Tour Agencies of Blagoveshchensk **Why do they want this course to be developed?** They want this course to be developed, because they need graduates:	**Information still needed:** 1) what skills are required (preferred) for the learners? 2) what tasks are they expected to perform (language, communicative, etc.)?

[1] Short abstracts from authentic text (oral or written). Each learner is given the task to read (or listen to) the text and do some Post-Reading Exercises (e.g. Fill in the blanks using information from the text) or Post-Listening Exercises (Over to You Activity e.g. Give directions according to the pattern).

with excellent command in English in the professional field with ability to act confidently in different situations to help the clients (tourists) Moreover, the course goes far beyond General English, which distinguishes the graduates among other learners and can contribute to their successful application process.	**Information still needed:** 1) what skills are required (preferred) for the learners? 2) what tasks are they expected to perform (language, communicative, etc.)?

T a b l e 4. **Physical setting of the course**

How will the training be delivered –traditional face-to-face instruction, online, computer-based, or a combination?	Information still needed: 1) what equipment is necessary (optional) for the course
Traditional face-to-face instruction (3 times a week; 1.30 class each). **Where is the school/company located? And where will the course be held?** The company (ies) is (are) located in the city where Tourism is a fast developing and growing industry. The course will be held in the State University, The Department of International Business and Tourism. **Does this have an impact on the learners?** It definitely does, since the learners are highly motivated. They are competing in applying for the suggested vacancies and have a desire to go through the application process successfully. The language plays a vital role here. **Describe the room used for the course: size, furniture, light, noise.** The room is big enough for the group of 10-12 students, with necessary equipment (DVD, MP3), except for computers. Unfortunately, it is still a problem to have as many rooms with free access to the Internet as necessary, but there is the way out from this problem: room exchange for some classes when I need to use computers. **Will the course always be held in the same room?** No (*See Question above*)	

A number of questions should have been answered while designing the course. These concern the nature of the course and teaching resources (see Tables 5–6).

The last but not the least, it is advisable to conduct a preliminary survey that can show the real needs of the learners, their language awareness and readiness to start the course. The following sample questions could be helpful for such a survey (see Table 7).

T a b l e 5. **Nature of the course**

Is this a new course or one to be revised?	A new one (learners had a Course of General English)
Is learner attendance mandatory or optional?	Mandatory
Will the course be open to all qualified applicants or will enrollment be restricted to a certain group of people, e.g. students who have completed a certain series of classes at the university?	To all qualified applicants (their qualification is checked at the entrance exam, when they have to pass RSA (Russian State Exam) in English)
Are tests required? Who develops them?	Some tests are required: as a form of control at the end of each term (it consists of four parts: Listening, Vocabulary (Idioms, Phrasal Verbs, Active Vocabulary from the Units), Grammar, Writing/Reading). The instructor is responsible for developing the tests.
How many total hours will the course be offered? Over what period of time?	Two terms (fall & spring) – 144 hours total (36 weeks; 2 times a week; 1.30 class each).
How often will the class meet face to face and for how many minutes per class?	Traditional face-to-face instruction (2 times a week; 1.30 class each).

T a b l e 6. **Teaching resources**

| What potential materials are already available to use or adapt for the course?
Dubick I, O'Keeffe M. English for International Tourism (Pearson Education Limited ((Longman))
Strutt P. English for International Tourism (Pearson Education Limited ((Longman))
Stott T., Revell R. Highly Recommended (Oxford)
Wood N. Tourism and Catering. Workshop (Oxford)
Walker R., Harding K. Tourism (Oxford University Press)
English Course for Tourism Management (Higher Education Press)
Duckworth M. High Season. English for the Hotel and Tourist Industry (Oxford)
Harding K. Going International. English for Tourism (Oxford University Press)
Brochures and Catalogs for Travelers (in English)
Podcasts and Internet Sites

What is your online learning management system? Is it already in place and being used for other courses?

Online learning management system is not yet in place.

List the equipment available: black/whiteboard, overhead projector, CD/audio cassette player, DVD/videotape player, photocopy machine, computers (how many?), Internet access (What kind: high speed direct connection or dial-up modem), printer.
Whiteboard
CD player DVD player
Computers (5 (1 for two students, at least))
Internet access (high speed direct connection)
Printer | Information still needed:
1) how to get access to authentic materials (e.g. E-Libraries);
2) how to interact with native speakers (how to invite native speakers to teach the course). |

T a b l e 7. Sample Questionnaire

1. Define your language ability Elementary   Intermediate   Upper-Intermediate   Advanced
2. What learning preferences do you have? Listening (watching videos, listening to broadcasts, etc,)   Reading   Writing
3. Which skills will be the most important in your future job? Listening   Speaking   Reading   Writing
4. Please specify your language learning needs in details. **Listening:** What do you want (need) to learn to listen? 1. ___ lectures 2. ___ instructions 3. ___ videos 4. ___ other listening activity **Speaking:** What do you want (need) to learn to speak? 1. ___ asking questions 2. ___ answering questions 3. ___ group discussion 4. ___ presentations at work **Reading:** What do you want (need) to learn to read? 1. ___ journal articles 2. ___ magazines or newspaper articles 3. ___ laboratory or computer manuals 4. ___ any sources to get information specifically required for your working place **Writing:** What do you want (need) to learn to write? 1. ___ essay-type assignments 2. ___ research papers 3. ___ reports of experiments, etc. 4. ___ other writing activity

4. Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the present study.

Firstly, it has been proved that designing any ESP (EOP) course needs clear goals and preliminary actions (TSA, PSA, Context Analysis). Providing such important information as learners' professional needs and wants, assessing their language proficiency and eliminating time-consuming steps in EFL practice can definitely contribute to a successful ESP course.

Secondly, having both theoretical and practical approach to ESP course design can help EFL instructors avoid mismatch between the courses they develop and real needs of the students in their professional environment.

Finally, making ESP teaching learner-centered helps to provide positive experiences even though some students demonstrate «passive learning models» in some classes. This study has attempted to identify and explain some issues for ESP course design and explain how effective planning contributes to

positive results. By involving students in some elements of course design, ESP instructors can enhance their students English literacy development as an essential part of language acquisition.

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