BUSINESS ENGLISH AS A PART OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) TO ECONOMIC STUDENTS

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Abstract: Business English is one of the examples of the English for a Specific Purpose, in the case of Business English, it is largely used in international trade by many whose primary spoken or written language is English. In a globally connected world, Business English is becoming increasingly important as more and more companies need their staff to be multi-lingual language. The goal of any Business English Course is to allow its users to effectively communicate with others in a business environment, whether that communication is in correspondence, face to face meetings, or other methods. Therefore, a Business English Language may include topics such as business English reading, letters, and resumes, business phrases, or terms of sale, advertising, and marketing. Related to the definition of Business English or English for Business Purposes, it shares the important elements of needs analysis, syllabus design, course design, and the selection and development of materials with all ESP fields of work. Teaching Business English (English for Business) requires a teacher’s awareness of the subject matter. ESP combines the subject matter and English language teaching skills. The role of a teacher at this stage is managing to adapt teaching skills and strategies for teaching Business English.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Business English, learner/student’s needs, authentic materials.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is considered to be the “language of communication” even English as an International Language, nowadays the people in this world required to learn English, which has resulted in a huge demand for the teachers of English. However, the gradual economic globalization, among other factors, has brought about the great demand of one other aspect within English Language Teaching (ELT) that is, the teaching of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). The teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been seen as a separate activity within English language teaching (ELT). It is believed that for some of its teaching ESP has developed its own methodology and its research draws on research from various disciplines in addition to applied linguistics – this is the key distinguishing characteristic of ESP. ESP, if sometimes moved away from the established trends in general ELT, has always been with needs analysis and preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their field of study or work situation.

Kennedy and Bolitho (1991) maintain that the concept of “communication” differs from one specialty to another, depending on the kind of human activity. Business English is not the same as scientific or political English. Teaching English in these contexts is called English for Specific Purposes (Kennedy & Bolitho 1991 is cited in Hernandez & Perez Paredes 2002). Savignon (2002) argues that a language for a purpose means the use of English for “real and immediate communicative purposes”. The term ESP, resulted from an urgent call for matching up the English courses and learners’ needs. ESP is characterized by three aspects: Needs analysis, time (its courses are restricted to a limited time), and language which is learnt to acquire knowledge of the discipline in English and not for the sake of having a general education (Basturkmen, 2006).
Business English must be seen in the larger context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as it shares the important characteristics of needs analysis, syllabus design, course design, materials selection and development which are common to all fields of work in ESP. As with other varieties of ESP, Business English involves a specific language corpus and emphasis on specific types of communication in a specific context. However, it was pointed out that Business English is different from other varieties of ESP due to its mix of specific content and general content (Ellis & Johnson, 1994).

According to Dudley-Evans (1977), ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner and makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves; ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, Lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre. It has also underlined the fact that ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English. We see that ESP can, but it is not necessarily concerned with a specific discipline, nor does it have to be aimed at a certain age group or ability range. ESP should be seen simply as an approach to teaching, or what Dudley-Evans describes as an “attitude of mind”. This is a similar conclusion to that made by Hutchinson et al. (1987) stated that ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning.

Business English is one of the forms of the language used for a Specific Purpose. In the case of Business English, it is largely used in international trade by many whose primary spoken or written language is not English. In a globally connected world, Business English is becoming increasingly important as more and more companies need their staff to be multilingual. The ultimate goal of any Business English Course is to allow its users to effectively communicate with others in a business environment, whether that communication is in correspondence, face to face meetings, or other methods. Therefore, a Business English Language Course may include topics such as business English in reading, writing letters and resumes, business phrases, or terms of sale, advertising, and marketing aspect.

THEORETICAL REVIEW
Overview of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or English for Special Purposes arose as a term in the 1960’s as it became increasingly aware that general English courses frequently did not meet learner or employers' needs. As English continues to dominate as the lingua Franca of business, media, technology, medicine, education, and research, the demand for ESP is growing rapidly, particularly in L2 countries where English is mainly used for instrumental purposes. People in these countries, including Albania, learn English in order to fulfill the school curriculum requirement, to pass standardized English proficiency tests, or to obtain a promotion or professional development at work. Instead of learning English for such purposes, isn’t it better and in their favor to learn English regarding their professional fields so that they can easily find a job in their future and can also be more professional.

English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain. Although the acronym ESP had earlier stood for English for Special Purpose, the word special was soon replaced with Specific, since it places more emphasis on purpose or purposefulness. In other words, it implies that the use of English is specific, and connected to professions, institutional procedures and occupational requirements.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach rather than a product – meaning that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language, teaching material or methodology. Strevens’ (1988) makes a distinction between definition of ESP: 1) absolute characteristics (language teaching is designed to meet specified needs of the learner; related in
content to particular disciplines, occupation and activities; centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, text, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of the discourse; designed in contrast with General English) and 2) two variable characteristics (ESP may be restricted to the language skills to be learned, e.g. reading; and not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology).

Robinson’s (1991: 3) definition of ESP is based on two criteria: 1) ESP is normally ‘goal-directed’, and 2) ESP courses develop from a needs analysis which aim to specify what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English, and a number of characteristics which explain that ESP courses are generally constrained by a limited time period in which their objectives have to be achieved and are taught to adults in homogenous classes in terms of the work or specialist studies that the students are involved in.

Types of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Since the teachers and researchers of ESP are interested in the distinctive features of the English language determined by the profession or branch of science where the students will function as second language users, it is possible to separate many types of ESP (e.g. Medical English, English for IT, English for Law, English for Tourism, Business English, etc.). However, as in the case of differentiating ESP from ELT, the attempt to identify the types of EST proves to be utterly problematic.

David Carter (1983) identifies three types of ESP: 1) English as a restricted language, 2) English for Academic and Occupational Purposes and 3) English with specific topics. On the other hand, Hutchinson & Waters (1987: 16-17) provide the “tree of ELT” where ESP is divided into three branches: a) English for Science and Technology (EST), b) English for Business and Economics (EBE), and c) English for Social Studies (ESS). They further divide each of these branches into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), but they admit that these two branches are not strictly separated: “people can work and study simultaneously”. It is safe to say that EAP and EOP serve the same end purpose: employment, although the means to achieve this purpose are different.

With reference to "ELT" these two kinds of expectations are mainly two types of ESP according to the motivation, position, and status of the learners which become reasons of learning English such as English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) add type of ESP according to the need of scientists and technologists. This type is called English for Science and Technology (EST). The description as follow:

1. English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

EOP is taught in such a situation in which learners need to use English as part of their work or profession (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984: 4). There will be differences in such courses depending on whether the learners are learning English before; during or after the time they are being trained in their job or profession. The content of an English program for someone actually engaged, for example, on a secretarial course - with its acquisition of practical skills and theoretical knowledge - is going to be different from a program for someone who is already a qualified secretary but now needs to operate in English.

2. English for Academic Purposes

EAP is taught generally within educational institutions to students requiring English in their studies. The language taught may be based on particular disciplines at higher levels of education when the student is specializing (in study) or intends to specialize (pre-study) in a particular subject. In cases such as an overseas student studying in university level, the learning of study skills (listening to lectures, taking notes, writing reports, reading textbooks) will probably form a major part of the student’s English course.
Frequently in such a situation it is common to find the aims and methods of the English language department at variance with the requirements of science and technology departments, the former still concerned with drilling conversational English and manipulating structural patterns while the latter require swift and effective reading skills. However, in these situations, there is a need to see the role of English basically in terms of its providing accessibility to knowledge contained in textbooks, periodicals, and journals, reports, and abstracts (Mackay and Mountford, 1978:7). Further they will have to involve in presentation of new knowledge such as papers, university theses, longer reports, articles in scientific journals, and others.

**Benefits of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

On the basis of what has been said before, one is now in a position to state the benefits of ESP. Basically, these are threefold in that they help achieve speed, efficiency, and effectiveness in learning. The description as follow:

1. **Learning Speed**

   ESP results in faster acquisition of required linguistic items. This is because it follows the pattern of the native speakers’ acquisition of language for specific purposes, in which speakers learn what they need, when they need it, in authentic, content-based contexts. ESP does not only follow this pattern, but also improves upon it by providing an opportunity to learn in an accelerated, intensive context (Wright, 1992: 5).

2. **Learning Efficiency**

   On an ESP course, the trainees make the maximal use of their learning resources, all of which are brought to bear on acquiring specific, pre-identified linguistic items and skills. Obviously, the needs analysis is of vital importance here since it enables trainers to determine the specific requirements of trainees.

3. **Learning Effectiveness**

   On completion of an ESP course, the trainees are ready to use language appropriately and correctly in job related tasks, which have been identified prior to the course by means of a needs analysis. Accordingly, English becomes usable immediately in the employment context. In addition, the trainees are prepared for further job-related training in English. Such preparation will result in greater academic performance since no time is wasted in acquiring the necessary language (ibid.).

   The benefits of ESP can be brought out further by contrasting ESP courses with General English courses. Such courses deal with many different topics, necessarily at a superficial level. In addition, they deal with many different skills, usually attempting to give equal treatment to each. Due to the general nature of these courses, they can be extremely useful, which is why they comprise the vast majority of English courses. However, for students with specific learning needs, they are seriously lacking because their scope is too wide. The trainees learn many irrelevant things. Relevant material, if it is included at all, is treated in insufficient depth. These deficiencies cause the acquisition of the required linguistic items to be slow and minimal, and upon the completion of the course, the trainees are not prepared to function effectively in the required employment contexts.

**Business English in English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

Business English is one of the forms of the language used for a Specific Purpose, such as Maritime English, Aviation English, Technical English, or Scientific English. In the case of Business English, it is largely used in international trade by many whose primary spoken or written language in English. In a globally connected world, Business English is becoming increasingly important as more and more companies need their staff to be multi-lingual language.
The ultimate goal of any Business English Course is to allow its users to effectively communicate with others in a business environment, whether that communication is in correspondence, face to face meetings, or other methods. Therefore, a Business English Language Course may include topics such as business English reading, letters and resumes, business phrases, or terms of sale, advertising, and marketing.

According to Belcher (2009), English for Business Purposes (EBP) has recently become a flourishing field within English for Specific Purposes, both as regards teaching and research. Increased internationalization and a worldwide preference for English as the lingua Franca for business mean that English is not only being used more widely by – and among – non-native speakers to do business, but is also used more frequently to communicate ‘about business’ with groups around the world such as (potential) employees, consumers and investors, for whom English may not necessarily be their mother tongue (Planken, van Meurs & Radlinska, 2010: 225–226).

As regards a definition of Business English or English for Business Purposes, it shares the important elements of needs analysis, syllabus design, course design, and the selection and development of materials with all ESP fields of work. Similarly to other varieties of ESP, Business English necessitates the definition of a specific language corpus. It also emphasizes particular kinds of communication in a specific context. As for differences between Business English and other varieties of ESP, Business English is frequently a combination of specific content which is related, e.g. for a particular area of industry and to a general content which is related to the general ability of effective communication, albeit in business contexts and environments (Ellis & Johnson, 2003:3).

However, Business English, as a variety of ESP, shares a number of characteristics with General English, still differing in point of content: it is a mixture of specific content and general content; therefore, Business English is English for communication in a specific context. As Bradridge tells that teaching Business English means saying goodbye to crowded classrooms of unmotivated noisy teens and hello to negotiating the time schedule and better pay with very motivated and highly intelligent professionals.

Hence the challenges that teachers of Business English face in their activity are as follows: What should the main focus be on? Specialized vocabulary? Improving communication skills in a business-related context? More specifically, what do non-native students in economics and business need to know about Business English in order to face the future challenges in their careers. How should a Business English course be designed in order to fulfill the expectations and necessities of the future. And what teaching and learning techniques are most appropriate to the content of such a course.

Teaching Business English (English for Business)

Teaching Business English (English for Business) requires a teacher’s awareness of the subject matter. As a matter of fact, ESP combines the subject matter and English language teaching skills. The role of a teacher at this stage is managing to adapt teaching skills and strategies for teaching Business English. Such integration is very motivating for students because they will have the opportunity to put into practice their knowledge acquired during their Business English lessons in their major sphere of study, whether it is economics, commerce, business management or marketing.

In this course, students have particular purpose and focus for learning the language as they study English not only to understand everyday speech, but also use the language in a special context for career opportunities. A Business English program is therefore built on the assessment of purposes, needs and functions for which English is required. More and more universities all over the world are offering ESP courses to meet the global need as well as to meet students’ future career needs.
Course Design of Business English (English for Business)

There have been many developments over the past decades in terms of the way teachers and course designers look at Business English. In the 1960s and 1970s the specialist vocabulary was seen as the distinguishing component between General English and Business English. Textbooks at that time were intended to offer target specialist vocabulary in a context of a written text or dialogue which dealt with a specific topic (for example, banking). Exercises mainly comprised comprehension questions about the text and vocabulary drills. Such textbooks did not take into account the learners' previous knowledge nor did they consider how the learner might use language in real life.

Later on, in the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s course books began to put a greater emphasis on communication skills, on speaking, writing, listening and reading within a business context. Business English teaching became thus more focused on functional areas – language for recommending, expressing opinions, giving advice, showing agreement, etc. These developments have continued so far as there appeared a growing need for enhancing such skills as presentation techniques, negotiating or meeting skills. The practical use of language prevailed over the theoretical knowledge about the language. In what concerns teaching Business English speaking skills, the students should be taught how to handle a job interview, which is an important part of an employment file, what tips they should have in mind when they apply for a particular job. When designing a course in Business English, Ellis and Johnson (1994) suggest a few specific steps to consider, in contrast to General English courses, such as:

1. Needs analysis: what do students need to know in order to face the requirements of their future job environment?
2. Assessment of level: using written tests, we can see what level of language students have at the beginning of the course.
3. Syllabus: set courses, like the ones taught in colleges, should have a fixed objectives and syllabus.
4. Course objectives: should be defined in relation to the needs analysis findings; in the case of pre-experience learners they can be worded in terms of their course of study or in terms of required language improvement (command of structures, functions etc.)
5. Time: in the case of college language training, time is limited so the course should be structured according to the duration (number of weeks, semesters etc.).
6. Learner expectations: in the case of Business English, learners are likely to be more goal-orientated and to expect success.
7. Evaluation of progress: written or oral examination, dependent on particular circumstances.

What is certain is that a key feature of an ESP course is that the content and objectives of the course are directed towards the specific needs of the learners. This means that ESP courses focus on the language, skills, and genres appropriate to the specific activities the learners need to carry out in English. The material (the content) should be provided by the professors or experts in the subject. It should always be authentic (the main purpose of teaching skills is to enable students to deal with authentic information despite their level of English), up-to-date (the informational exchange is growing more intense), and relevant for the students’ specializations (they ought to be given the information representative of their target language use situation).

The most important difference between ESP and general ELT lies, therefore in the learners and their purposes for learning English. Typically (although not always) ESP students are adult learners who already have some acquaintance with English and are learning the language in order to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions. ESP focuses more on language in context than on teaching the structures of grammar and language.
Fiorito (2005) states that “ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world (or wishes); instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners”. What is in question here is that ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching. This is extremely stimulating for the students since they are enabled to apply what they learn in their English classes to their main field of study, whether it be economics, business management, accounting, IT, or engineering. The opportunity to use the vocabulary and structures that they learn in a meaningful context not only increases their motivation but also reinforces what is taught. The process of learning here is two-field since the students' knowledge and abilities in their subject-matter fields also enhance their ability to acquire English. Subject-matter knowledge serves as the context necessary for them to understand the English taught in the classroom.

Therefore, ESP is basic language learning to be studied before, but not during college; College English should be more advanced, more specialized, and match students’ majors of study, particularly in technological universities where students are trained to perform on-the-job; and finally, compared with EGP, ESP is more effective in increasing students’ learning motivation because it relates to their fields of study and caters to their needs.

Therefore, “English for specific purposes is a term that refers to teaching or studying English for a particular career (like law, medicine) or for business in general”. There is a specific reason for which English is learned. If we focus on the origin of ESP and its development is closely linked with learners’ interest in various specific disciplines, e.g. law English’, English for Hotel Industry or English for Tourist Management’, English for business, English for medicine, etc. Students learn English for a specific purpose, represented by studying the subject matter, to gain and develop appropriate knowledge and skills through English. Students study ESP not only they are interested in English language, but because they have to perform a task in English. Their command of the English language must be such that they can reach a satisfactory level in their specialist subject studies. In other words, students who have studied English for Specific Purposes during their university years, would be easy for them to adapt to their work conditions and would be easily employed in their field.

Role of Teacher in Teaching Business English

ESP teachers are provided with the necessary knowledge and tools to deal with their own students’ specializations. It should be remembered - ESP teachers are not specialists in the field, but in teaching English, their subject is English for the profession but not the profession in English. They help students, who know their subject better than the teachers do, develop the essential skills in understanding, using, and/or presenting authentic information in their profession. A professional ESP teacher must be able to switch from one professional field to another without being obliged to spend months on getting started. He/she simply brings the necessary tools, frameworks, and principles of course design apply them to new material.

It is also rightfully noticed a misconception that in the field of ESP the teacher has to be an expert in the subject matter. The teacher does not have to teach negotiation strategies, management theory, etc. He underlines the fact that the teacher should be seen as an expert in presenting and explaining the language and in taking care of the learners’ language problems. The Business English teacher has to prepare students to communicate in a foreign language, i.e. English about business issues students specialize in.

Nowadays the portrait of the traditional teachers is shifting rapidly towards self-directed learning or student-oriented learning, and these can be done due to the new technologies. Therefore, teachers should be familiar with the modern technology and the new methodological approaches. “The teachers need to learn new skills of Business English for effective teaching in order to use them and enhance the communication skills of the learners” (Chen 16-33). It is up to each and every teacher to use and implement in the same time the
new technologies in his/her own class of Business English, and his/her attitude towards technology will influence both their approach to teaching Business English and the students’ feedback.

**Tips for Teaching Business English**

Many teachers of English as a foreign language feel intimidated by the prospect of teaching business English. Here are some tips to teach Business English:

1. **Find out what your students want to achieve**
   
   You’ll be teaching busy adults who are used to working towards objectives. You should therefore discuss with them at the beginning of the course what they would like to achieve. This usually means breaking things down into skills: telephoning more effectively, writing more coherent emails, chairing meetings, etc. Teachers should help set these objectives by analyzing the needs of the learners early on. This “needs analysis” can then be shared with the learners and referred to as a way of keeping them engaged and motivated throughout the course.

2. **Get a clear idea about the contexts in which learners use English**
   
   A very important part of the need analysis process should be a discussion about the context in which the course participants need to perform: Why are they learning English? Who do they communicate with in their work and under what conditions? Someone who is learning English just to brush up fluency skills will have different needs and expectations for someone who is learning English to supervise a team working in another country. We should also remember that business is conducted on a global level and there is a strong possibility that your students will be communicating with other non-native speakers. It’s a good idea to research, cross-cultural communication and find out how people from different backgrounds do business.

3. **Be businesslike but keep energy levels high**
   
   To make the right impression, it is important to teach in a business-like way. This affects what you say, and how you behave, but also what you wear. If people are going to work in-company, then punctuality, professionalism and competence are crucial. Student talking time (STT) is likely to be much higher in a business English classroom, so ensure there are plenty of opportunities for collaborative task work and speaking practice. Where possible, leave reading and writing for self-study or homework.

4. **Choose your materials wisely**
   
   As in the general English classroom, learners will expect you to bring materials to class. There are lots of books and online resources available, but it is important to choose materials that create “authentic” situations in the classroom. Probably the most important resource is the learners themselves. They can provide you with real materials from their working lives – the things they need to read and understand, or perhaps even create and present. These could be leaflets, emails, PowerPoint presentations or reports. Don’t forget: concentrate on goals and needs. Find out why these resources are important and what your learners want to take away from the lesson. Then come to an agreement with them about how to meet these needs.

**Authentic Material in Business English**

Authentic materials are especially important for ESP trainees, since they reproduce an immersion environment and provide a realistic context for tasks that relate to learners’ needs. Realia and authentic materials increase learners’ motivation, but are difficult to adapt to the learners’ level of language, especially at the beginning level. It is also important to note that preparing such materials can be very time-consuming. Nowadays, authentic materials must be constantly updated, as they are more and more frequently on demand in ESP classes; with the advance of technology, the sources of authentic materials are practically limitless.
All areas of human activity result in products which can somehow be involved in the learning of a foreign language. Various authors have grouped and listed them. Examples of materials appropriate for teaching Business English include TV and radio commercials, interviews, the news, reality or other shows, films, documentaries, video clips, presentations, lectures, etc. This diversity and accessibility allow learners to find and bring their own materials they feel most relevant to their needs. Reading/Printed materials, newspapers and magazines, specialized literature, newspaper ads, reports, photos, menus, brand logos, various reports, brochures, company documents and correspondence, transcripts of meetings, financial reports, agreements invoices, press releases etc.

Realia, all kinds of real world and cultural objects fall into this group. They are generally used to illustrate some points made during the task-based activities and thus make them more memorable.

The Internet is a wonderful resource for teachers of Business English. The Internet can enrich your lessons, provide you with authentic and up-to-date materials, and help you prepare for lessons as well as provide a fantastic opportunity for both your own research and that of your students. No matter how much experience or confidence you have in incorporating the Internet into your business English classes, you can take advantage of the benefits the Internet offers you at any level.

CONCLUSION

English is unquestionably the language of business and Business English, which is a variety of ESP, and shares a number of characteristics with General English, still differing in point of content; Business English is the English required when you do business; Business English became a topic to be taught distinctively in the late 60s and early 70s when it was already very clear for specialists that it was different from General English at least in point of vocabulary. There have been four major influences over the last ten years with a great impact on the process of teaching and learning of Business English: the development of technology, new powerhouse economies, markets, financial sector.

The Business English teacher is primarily a language teacher and does not need to be an expert in any particular field of business, does not need a business background to succeed in teaching Business English. When used effectively, authentic materials help bring the real world into the classroom and significantly enliven the language class.

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