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Some Aspects of Teaching Business English to Economics Students in the Context of Their Professional Orientation

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Abstract. The article deals with the problem of teaching Business English to Economics students in the context of their professional orientation. Its effectiveness is suggested to be improved taking into account personal-oriented educational technology. Different educational materials are reviewed and the methods of their use in the process of teaching are provided. Implementation of personal-oriented technologies in the process of teaching Business English for professional purposes improves the quality of teaching as it helps to develop not only professional but also personal skills; successful implementation of the personal-oriented technologies in the process of teaching Business English is based on the principals of liberal education; correct implementation of educational materials is an important factor of increasing professional competence of future specialists in the field of Economics.

Keywords: Business English, personal-oriented educational technology, authentic teaching materials, professionally-oriented texts, role-play.

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Деякі аспекти викладання ділової англійської мови студентам економічного профілю у контексті орієнтації на професію

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Анотація. Присвячено проблемі викладання ділової англійської мови студентам економічного профілю у контексті орієнтації на професію. Запропоновано підвищення ефективності викладання, базуючись на принципах особистісно-орієнтовної технології. Розглянуто різноманітні освітні матеріали і запропоновано методику їх використання у процесі навчання.

Ключові слова: ділова англійська мова, особистісно-орієнтовна освітня технологія, аутентичні матеріали, професійно-орієнтовані тексти, рольова гра.

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Некоторые аспекты преподавания делового английского языка студентам экономического профиля в контексте ориентации на профессию

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Аннотация. Посвящается проблеме преподавания делового английского языка студентам экономического профиля в контексте ориентации на профессию. Предлагается повышение эффективности преподавания на основе принципов личностно-ориентированной технологии. Рассмотрены различные образовательные материалы и предложена методика их использования в процессе обучения.

Ключевые слова: деловой английский язык, личностно-ориентированная образовательная технология, аутентичные материалы, профессионально-ориентированные тексты, ролевая игра.

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Introduction. One of the main features of modern higher education is its humanitarian and personal orientation, thus the significant part of the teaching process is given to foreign language as it is a means of globalization and integration of youth into the international community. Knowledge of foreign language is very important nowadays as it enables students to expand cross-cultural communication, encourages them to study professional literature in foreign language and to contact with foreign friends and partners through the Internet and other media resources [1; 2; 5]. Taking into account the above mentioned we may say that knowledge of foreign language is essential for professional development of future specialists in the system of Economics students training.

The research problem. However, there is a contradiction between level of students' special training and their knowledge of professional English. The principles of professionalism and focusing on the future speciality are the main principles of teaching Business English [4]. These principles are to narrow subject focus, to form students' language competence and to follow the general trends in the global educational environment, focused on humanization.

Nowadays liberal education that provides personal-developing environment and includes innovative models of teaching and appropriate pedagogical techniques must be taken into account [1; 3]. Studying and analysis of practice show that one of the main moving forces in educational process is students' motivation. It can also be mentioned that motivation in higher educational establishments is usually more focused on professional activities than on self-determination and self-development. The students' necessity in communicative language activities in the process of teaching foreign languages is not fully realized. It can be explained by lack of educational technologies implementation in practice of higher educational establishments.

The research aim. The main aim of our research is to investigate the problem of qualitative improvement of teaching Business English to Economics students by means of reviewing different types of educational materials and revealing the effectiveness of their use on the basis of student-oriented technology. Personal-oriented education is defined as a technology concept for teaching Business English. Its main principles are: attitude to a student as to a subject of knowledge, awareness of his uniqueness, support of his initiative, independence and creative potential, development of his selfness and self-integration into society. Learning foreign language helps students to reveal their potential and the teacher's task is to direct them correctly [6].

The content of student-oriented education is enriched by the inclusion of global human and national values in the training content [7]. Learning Business English increases the practical importance of education for Economics students and may widen their professional horizons. Procedural part of the student-oriented technology in the process of teaching Business English is realized through the use of different forms of work such as pair and group work, projects, role plays, discussions, debates and many others. One of the teacher's main tasks at this stage is to create a favorable emotional background to enhance students' internal sources by means of noticing their personal growth and providing psychological and pedagogical support [2]. According to the

model of student-oriented technology the leader heads the process of teaching, stimulates self-determination and self-realization of the students and ensures their professional and personal development. Learning Business English as a special field of foreign language is based on the value system of professional competence and a need of self-realization and self-expression, it includes some cultural and special knowledge [8]. Thus, the educational materials which are involved in the process of studying are very important and must be discussed further.

Reading is considered to be one of the most important learning activities. The main component of reading instruction in higher school is work with professionally oriented texts. Nevertheless the process of reading involves such activities as analysis, synthesis, generalization, classification, prediction and many others, in the process of reading student must extract information from the text, so the significant role belongs to the result of reading, i.e. extracted information. Learning foreign language encourages logical thinking. While reading a foreign language text student can identify two trends in development of logical thinking: improvement of existing mental operations and development of new skills such as logical expressions composition. A necessary condition for the logical skills formation is the development of basic mental operations. In order to generate student's analytical skills a teacher must organize some work with a foreign language text which will help to develop some mental activities (to analyze, to compare, to draw a conclusion etc.). Analytical skills are formed during a specially organized cooperation of a teacher and a student. Of course, the main role belongs to a teacher who stimulates student's mental activity and directs him by means of various exercises, sets goals and chooses the most effective ways of working that are realized throughout the process of training.

One of the main educational resources in teaching English is a textbook [9]. Nowadays we may find huge number of textbooks and other educational resources both for teachers and students who study Business English. And it may seem that there is no problem left in teaching this subject. All a teacher has to do is to take a textbook and follow the recommendations that are presented there. Good textbook provides a solid background which is especially useful for less experienced teachers because course content, methodology and supplementary materials are already made.

Nevertheless, there are some points that must be taken into account when we choose a textbook. As we know, "Course-books can sometimes date fairly quickly. They can include culturally inappropriate content, and they may include assumptions about language learning which do not always fit with the teacher's or learners' own perceptions of how best to learn a language... The learners might have very specific requirements, depending on their cultural background and learning context. Important factors for them could include layout, clear structure, relevance, regular progress checks, entertainment, revision opportunities, self-study sections, reference sections, up-to-date content, and authenticity" [4, p. 43]. So, anyway the teacher should adapt the textbook for his students and design supplementary materials which may include business news, current TV programs, information about English speaking countries culture and many other important data.



While choosing a textbook the teacher must consider the following points:

- educational profile of the group (e.g. banking, finance, management etc.);
- specific students' needs (more oral practice, work with documentation, professional writing or reading tasks etc.);
- presence of supplementary materials;
- cultural context fit for Ukrainian students;
- presence of teacher's book or notes and vocabulary, which are rather useful.

Professionally-oriented texts for Economics students must be chosen taking into account cultural, ethic and humanitarian aspects. Texts that improve students' special knowledge and may be somehow connected with students' personal experience are preferable. Special feature of teaching Business English lies in the fact that some special topics can enrich the students' general cultural points and strengthen their professional level. Texts could be either in narrative or dialogue form but usually their main aim is to develop students' cognitive and creative skills and ability to work with special literature and documentation.

It is reasonable to use different exercises at different stages of reading. Before reading a text the teacher may suggest to allocate key words, to predict the content of the text from the heading, to guess the meaning of new words etc. While reading a text students may complete the following exercises:

- choose the phrase that represents the main idea of the text;
- read the text and place plan points in logical order;
- read the text and represent its main idea in 2–3 sentences.

At the after-reading stage teacher must control the understanding of the text content, the ability to express value judgments, to make analysis of the received information and to make certain conclusions and generalizations. Here are examples of such exercises:

- find a sentence in the text which expresses the idea ...;
- summarize the text;
- rearrange the text in the correct order;
- discuss the possible finalization of the text;
- compose a reply (if we speak about correspondence);
- identify the type of the text (persuasion, evaluation, message, etc.).

The main objective of work with a text in course of Business English as a professional-oriented subject is not only to extract information from the text but its synthesis, comparison, generalization and formation of critical thinking as well as to form students' motivation to their future profession. As practice shows, the use of such tasks helps students to develop students' analytical skills and creative abilities (to identify problems, to find their possible solutions, design logical plans) as well as gain professional experience.

Professionally-oriented texts that are used in course of Business English can be used in a variety of ways, for example during special discussions, round tables, conferences, as well as while writing reports and essays. The successful formation of the students' analytical skills is a key to successful formation of diagnostic, designing, organizational, communicative skills that help students to carry out their professional prac-

tice. Here are given main criteria for choosing special texts for Economics students who study Business English:

- 1) authenticity;
- 2) theme direction that corresponds to professional interests of the students;
- 3) creation of positive motivation.

The process of learning in higher educational establishment involves independent search of information. The most common sources of information for students are bookstores, libraries and the Internet. Though it is easy to use modern computer technologies, it is not always possible to find right material in the World Wide Web. Thus it is easy to use electronic versions of all leading newspapers and magazines, including economic. So, students are able to prepare reports, summaries, essays or even big projects and role-plays with a help of the Internet, because here they may find excellent sources of authentic materials written in modern English that contains economic, political and national colored vocabulary and covers topical issues of life around the world. Nowadays specialists in any field, and especially in economics, must be able to use modern technologies to keep abreast and the teacher's task is to provide students with information about these sources and give recommendations on selecting articles for individual and group reading. Other examples of authentic materials are: letters, agendas of the meetings, memos, e-mails, contracts, reports, company advertising brochures, audio and video recordings of real conversations, company sales videos [10, p. 52]. One of the main principles of the texts selection is their accessibility and affordability for students. But teacher must take into account that reading texts from major scientific journals may be difficult for the first-year students, who only master their profession, because these texts contain too much of the specialized terminology.

As we know, the practical use of language is more important for students than the theoretical knowledge about it. Future specialists at the very beginning of their careers will cope with emerging language problems. Business English focuses on communication skills and communicative knowledge. It teaches students to analyze, be creative when solving special professional tasks, express their thoughts in English. Role-plays, simulations and case studies are the best way to develop skills mentioned above. In role-plays student plays a role which he doesn't usually play in a real life. His behavior is usually limited by the instructions given in his role-play card. One of the main features of role-plays is an information gap as student doesn't know information about his partners. A simulation differs from the role-play as in it a student usually simulates what he might do in his real life. Case studies help students to observe particular business problems and find right decisions. Such activities provide good opportunity to practice practical skills of speaking and listening as well as stimulate students' creative potential.

One of the main principles is not to interrupt the play without necessity. Here are more recommendations for teachers about simulations:

- Do:
- take a back seat if you can and intervene as little as possible.
- Don't:
- intervene more than you really have to;
 - correct language mistakes during the debate;



- take a role yourself unless you have to make up numbers» [10, p. 3].

To make the debate interesting, the teacher must clear up all the points and set a goal of the meeting. It is very important for all the students in the group to take part in the role-play and follow the directions of the student who is in charge of the meeting. The chairperson must head the meeting as he has all the instructions. The teacher must pay students' attention to the fact that they should not strictly follow the instructions in their cards as some participants may change their minds during the simulation, so they all must compromise and respect others' points of view.

Conclusions. Thus, the following conclusions can be made: increasing effectiveness of teaching Business English is an important factor of raising the professional com-

petence of future specialists in the sphere of economics; implementation of personal-oriented technologies in the process of teaching Business English for professional purposes to Economics students improves the quality of teaching as it helps to develop not only professional but also personal skills; successful implementation of the personal-oriented technologies in the process of teaching Business English is based on the principals of liberal education; correct implementation of such educational materials as textbooks, authentic texts, role-plays, simulations and case studies is an important factor of increasing professional competence of future specialists in the field of Economics. The further researches will be devoted to the problem of computer technologies usage in the process of teaching Business English.

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