

Abstract

The interest in skills seemed to develop fairly naturally from the functional-notional materials we have discussed and was consistent with the ideas of communicative language teaching. The growth of needs analysis, a trend that ran parallel with the rise of the skills approach, identified priorities amongst the four skills for a given situation. The main principle of these skills based courses was that the teaching of language in itself is not sufficient for the development of the ability to perform the tasks required of a tertiary level student a business person or a practicing engineer. These thought process may either be fairly general, relating to all academic or professional activity or specific to a particular discipline or profession.

Key words: English for Business Purposes ESP, English for Academic Purposes EAP, English for Occupational Purposes EOP, specific trades, occupations, various disciplines.

In this lecture, it is illustrated how the principles of ESP are applied English for Occupational Purposes with a detailed look at English for business purposes. Our discussion here is concerned with adult learners, working or preparing to work in a business context, and deals with Business English. It is considered here general and specific purpose business course, identifying who are the learners, and the implications for teachers and courses.

Characteristics of Business English

English has become the international language of business. One of the consequences of the role of English as the international language is that non-British managers may be able to understand each other more easily when speaking English together than they can understand a native speaker. International English is about effective communication and, as one of course participants put it, "I am not a native speaker". Business English is difficult to define and limit in linguistic terms. Pickett highlighted the fact that there is more than one face to business communication with some of it being a lot nearer the everyday language spoken by the general public than many other segments of ESP. The diagrammatic representation he used suggests two particular aspects to Business communication: communication with the public and communication with in accompany or between companies:

- General English
- Communication with public
- Business English
- Communication among businesses
- Specialized language of particular businesses

For many businesses, communication with the public is most likely to be in the L1. The business English that NNSs require is mainly for intercompany and international conglomerates, intro-company dealings. The distinction Pickett makes ease useful but probably not fun enough for today's wide-ranging business activities. Even within is particular business, the language requirements of the team negotiating. The purpose of the interactions, the topics covered and the professional relationships will all affect the choice of the language.

English for General Business Purposes

In the same way as EAP can be divided into English for General Academic Purposes and English for Specific Academic Purposes, so we can talk of English for General Business Purposes and English for Specific Business Purposes. English for general business purposes are usually for pre-experience; learners of those at the very early stages of their carrier. Their similar to General EFL courses with the materials set in business contacts. Many learners attend these courses at a language school and groups will usually be formed on the basis of the language level and teachers to choose form, with input in the text, audio and video format plus CD-ROM. The published course books are

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mainly designed for use on the extensive course that has one or two sessions a week, over several months or years. Most units contain work on the traditional four skills plus specific grammar and vocabulary development.

In contrast, English for specific Business purposes courses are run for the job-experienced learners who bring business knowledge and skills to the language learning situation. This course is carefully tailored and likely to focus on one or two language skills and specific business communicative events. The materials often include selections from a range of published books, framework materials and specially written activities, probably stemming from the learners own business context. Courses are frequently intensive; groups are small, maximum of 6-8 and senior staff may opt for one to one tuition. Company courses may have groups with widely differing language levels. They may be run in company- by company staff, in company by external trainers or off site on the trainer's premises.

The role of needs of analysis in Business English

Needs analysis may be even more fundamental in business English than in, say, English for Science and Technology as learners' needs can be much more varied and the spectrum of language and skills less predictable. The approach to needs analysis depends on the situation and context. Pilbeam suggests that needs analysis should be concerned with establishing both a target profile of language skills which sets down the actual activities that the participants have to carry out. Such a language audit is particularly relevant to in- company work and helps to decide how many hours of language tuition are needed to bridge the gap, or what should be prioritized where time is limited. Brieger suggests needs analysis for English business will set out to identify the range of general and specialist language knowledge required, together with general and professional communication skills. For short intensive course, less time and fewer resources will be available but the EBP teacher can usually obtain some pre- course information: participants may be willing to complete a short form and supply examples commonly used documents. This information means that the EBP teacher can design the framework of the course before the participants arrive and determined specific need when the learners are on- site. In a one – to one situation this can be achieved through quite extensive interviewing and discussion as the learner is fully involved in using language during this process. In group situations, learners may not want to spend much time sharing needs; however, the early activities can be designed to combine this, and language practice.

Teachers of Business English

Personality, knowledge and experience are important to business English teacher. In the larger EAP classes there may be opportunities for personal contacts; on a one to one or small intensive course, personal contact is a key factor and trainers need to be outgoing, tactful and genuinely interested in business issues. Most ESP teachers have a language teaching background and do not have first-hand experience of the content and context of other disciplines of business. There can be good deal to learn and for an EBP teacher, more in one respect than for an EAP teacher:

EAP teachers have all been students themselves and been through the academic environment. The study skills that are integrally linked on many courses with language development are familiar. A teacher can say of examinations, listening lectures, note – taking, have been there, I have done that, although their environment may have differed from that of some of their learners in various ways including subject culture and genres. Being an effective business communicator depends not only on variable language proficiency, but also on personal and interpersonal skills. Increasingly, ESP practitioners who work in company or on company specific courses are delivering both language and skills. The trend is towards “Shorter highly job specific courses and increasing emphasis on skills courses”.

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