

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: TEACHING PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION TO CHEMICAL-TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the importance of English for specific purposes for future chemical-technology engineers, as well as the development of students' skills which are presumably already existent in the students' learning acquisition process in teaching them academic and technical communication in English in a specific format based on structural exercises aiming to reinforce and consolidate in a specific chemical-technology context are discussed. In addition, some examples of activities that actively involve students in practical training, which serve to develop their verbal communication skill.

Keywords: professional communication, communication skills, approach, context, project, a variety of communicative activities, specific work-related tasks.

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada aniq maqsadlar uchun ingliz tilining bo'lajak kimyogar-texnolog muhandislar uchun qanchalik muhim ekanligi va talabalrining ingliz tilida og'zaki akademik va texnik muloqot qilishlarini rivojlantirish jarayonida ularda allaqachon mavjud bo'lgan ko'nikmalarini muayyan kimyoviy-texnologik kontekstda mustahkamlashga qaratilgan tizimli mashqlarga asoslangan o'ziga xos yondoshuvlar haqida so'z boradi. Bundan tashqari, o'quvchilarni amaliy mashg'ulotlarga faol jalb etuvchi, ularda og'zaki muloqot ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga xizmat qiluvchi ayrim faoliyat namunalari berilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: akademik va texnik muloqot, muloqot qobiliyatlari, yondashuv, kontekst, loyiha, turlicha so'zlashuv faoliyatlari, kasbiy faoliyat bilan bog'liq topshiriqlar.

INTRODUCTION

The significant changes occurring in a society in view of processes of globalisation of economy and a labour market, integration of Uzbekistan into the world community and revolution in the field of information-communication technologies, conduct to increase of a role of professional communications speaking another language. These processes dictate new requirements to vocational training of specialists, as a whole, and to their language preparation, in particular. The characteristic of

graduate of non - philological speciality effectively prepared for these changes are foreign language skills in sphere of the professional work.

To meet these requirements implementing certain measures assigned in the order about the measures on the development of the system of learning foreign languages by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted on December 10, 2012 is a good job in the face of foreign language teachers. One of the measures is delivering some special subjects, particularly, on the technical and international specialties, in English and training specialties those can speak foreign languages fluently. Being able to speak a foreign language gives them wide opportunities to introduce with the successes of world's civilization and to use the world information resources on enormous scale, as well as, to create conditions for the development of international relations and partnership¹.

The present paper is intended to approach the topic of oral communication within the context of teaching English for Specific Purposes more specifically, teaching English for chemical-technology engineering students. The main purpose in the paper is overcoming the most significant difficulties encountered a language instructor when working with chemical-technology students. The study of academic and technical English is dominated in the specifics of their field of science. This involves a specific format based on structural exercises aiming to reinforce and consolidate, in a specific chemical-technology context, skills which are presumably already existent in the students' learning acquisition process.

METHODS

The choice of teaching approaches and methods in teaching ESP depends, first of all, on the linguistic and communicative needs of students, the specificity of the texts (speech) used in current and target situations, the learning methods and strategies of students, as well as the specific language learning context. Among the various didactic methods available, content-based and task-based, language-teaching approaches seem to be the best for ESP courses and exercises such as problem solving, simulations, and observations, role-plays, case studies, discourse analysis should reflect real situations and situations that students encounter in their daily work^{2,3}.

As Adriana Vizental (2007) identifies there are two basic modes of oral communication: the conversational (dialogic) mode and the expositional (monologic) one. Both modes can be applied to the purposes of practicing oral skills in

¹ Chet tillarni o'rganish tizmini yanada takomillashtirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida. Ma'rifat gazetasi №99, 12.12.12.

² Nunan, D. 2004. Task-based Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³ Richards J. C., Rodgers T. S. 2001. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

engineering students, as there is a variety of oral communication models with their inherent features.⁴

The conversational mode resembles more natural communication, as it implies face-to-face communication and a rapid exchange of replies. A. Vizental notes the following types of activities describing the interview method: “question-answer exchange, brainstorming, conversation, simulation, role-play, improvisation, discussion, debate”⁵.

And Dannels (2002) identifies there are five important features related to speaking in the field of engineering⁶. They are:

1. *Simplicity*. A technical speech in the field of engineering should be primarily simple, devoid of figures of speech, without stylistic ornaments and figurative meaning. It should provide to-the-point, factual, practical information. Nevertheless, it should not become too dry and rudimentary.

2. *Persuasiveness*. A good technical speaker should attract the audience and convince them. He/she should bring arguments/counterarguments supported by relevant proofs in order to maintain a certain idea or principle.

3. *Results-oriented*. The production of any communicative act in the sphere of engineering is directly linked to a certain result. In order for the speech to be successful, it must take into account the audience and the communicative purpose in order to assess the expected result. The result is dependent on the specific situation of the speech act, for example:

- follow instructions;
- successful negotiations;
- accurate information exchange (conversation, discussion);
- accurate transfer of technical information (report);
- better promotion within the company (negotiations);
- finding a convenient job (job interview);
- proof of professional qualification (conference report);
- proof of appropriate academic training (final paper defense), etc.

4. *Numerically-rich*. Chemical-engineering is traditionally a domain of figures. A speaker who intends to make a good impression, to be credible and to meet his/her objectives will support his ideas, opinions, descriptions of processes etc. with relevant figures.

⁴ Vizental, Adriana. 2007. Metodica predarii limbii engleze. Strategies of Teaching and Testing English as a Foreign Language. Iasi: Polirom.

⁵ Dana RUS, Assistant Professor Ph.D., “Petru Maior” University of Tîrgu Mureş. Communicative strategies in teaching English for specific purposes.

⁶ Dannels, D. P. 2002. Communication across the curriculum and in the disciplines. Speaking in engineering. Communication Education, 51(3)

5. *Visually sophisticated.* The reason why technical communication is called “technical” is not only its belonging to the sphere of the technical sciences. For the most part, the specific technical communication acts make intensive use of a varied range of visual aids such as posters, power-point presentations, tables, charts, and diagrams etc.

ESP learners are usually adults who have already learned English and have some knowledge of a variety of subjects that ESP teachers may not be familiar with. ESP learners need language to be equipped with professional communication skills for specific work-related tasks. Therefore, ESP teachers use students’ specific subject knowledge, which differs from General English in terms of classroom interaction and methods. A good ESP teacher will use the following strategies to reduce the negative effects of the students’ emotional reactions to learning and to increase the positive emotions:

- utilize pair work and group work, such as pyramid discussions in order to reduce the stress of speaking in front of the class;
- structure the task by introducing the task, removing obstacles, providing clear instructions, concept checking, demonstrating the task, running the activity, closing the activity, and providing feedback;
- give time to think and do, listen to the students, ask questions, let students think and answer, and support them to finish;
- emphasize on the process rather than the product because getting the answer is more important than getting the correct answer.
- make the procedure fun, variations, and variety.
- avoid monotonous and mechanical instruction.

Chemical-technology engineering students are also required to make proof of their oral communication skills in a variety of circumstances. Among these, the most relevant are: the oral responses during seminars, courses and laboratory works, oral projects, presentations, participations in students’ conferences, oral presentation of reports, of practical activities, oral exams and colloquia, final defenses of their graduation papers. Moreover, one of the most important circumstances when they need to display proficient oral skills and sufficient practice of oral communication is the job interview.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the important role that communicative skills have in the profile of a successful chemist-technologist and chemical-technology engineers, one observation is natural: speaking practice within ESP classes should gain a more prominent status.

These activities can be used in a variety of activities in which students become involved and which they appreciate. Here are some possible applications:

1. The classical “yes-no” speaking game (method used: question-answer exchanges).

One student thinks of a specific engineering-technology object that is characteristic of their field of study, e.g. ‘U-tube’. The rest of the students must find the word by asking questions, but they are allowed to ask only ‘yes-no’ questions.

Sample questions: “Is it a substance?” “Can you see it in this room?” “Is it a material?” “Is it a piece of equipment?” “Is it a glass ware”? The student who asks the final question will take the first student’s place.

2. A dice speaking game (method used: brainstorming).

The teacher draws squares detached corresponding covered word (a term) on the board e.g. 7 squares. Each student rolls the dice and they need to say one letter. The word must belong to their specialty. The teacher asks some questions. Questions expose the features of the covered term. This activity is good as a warmer.

3. Time travelling (method used: question-answer, simulation, improvisation, and role-play).

3 or 4 students are called in front of the class, facing their course mates. The students in front of the class pretend to be a group of delegation of engineer-technologists from abroad. One of the students is called as an interpreter. The interpreter introduces guests to his/her course mates, and then this activity is proceeded as a small special meeting corresponding their specialty.

4. Which course? (debate, discussion): The students work in pairs. They need to decide upon a new course which they would like to see integrated into the academic curriculum for engineering-technology and discuss its advantages and importance in an engineer-technologists’ professional formation. Alternatively, the two students can choose a course, which they have studied / are going to study, a course, which, in their opinion, has the highest relevance for the engineering-technology profile. They will bring arguments in favor of their favorite course, anticipate their colleague’s counterarguments and discuss until one of the student accepts the other student’s arguments.

5. Find the difference (conversation, question-answer): The students work in pairs. They are both given images of a technical representation of any scientific tables or schemes demonstrating chemical/technological experiments/processes. They are demanded to elucidate scientific tables or schemes. This exercise works well with engineering-technology students, who are traditionally inclined to working with visual representations, figures and measures.

In order to exercise the skills which are required for an efficient practice of the expository mode, students can be asked to participate in a wide range of activities, among which we mention the following tasks:

1. Prepare a 1-minute speech on one of the following topics: The importance of chemistry in our life; My favorite Institute course, Prospects of the chemical-technology career, Report on my graduation dissertation, etc.

2. Prepare a 10-minute speech on one of the themes above (students are given the assignment at the beginning of the semester and they need to do basic research in order to prepare their speeches);

3. Project work: the students are given a common project, which they prepare during the semester and present during the exam. Each team member has a clearly defined task within the group and the results of the project are presented by using a diverse range of visuals, which are specific for the engineering projects (PowerPoint presentations, graphs, tables, charts, other figures).

CONCLUSION

Arriving at a conclusion, one can say that institute curricula must adapt their requirements in order to prepare chemical-technology engineering students who should be successful on an increasingly competitive labor market, in the conditions of the growing importance of communication skills. The practice of different models of oral communication in the technical field will equip the students with the theoretical background and with the actual experience, which will enable them to perform effectively in real communication situations.

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