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BUSINESS ENGLISH AS A PREREQUISITE FOR ADEQUATE BEHAVIOUR IN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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Introducing Business English courses at university level in Ukraine is described from the perspective of the development of adequate behaviour in business environment within university graduates. Milestones of change and the outcomes of BE courses introduced in the state-owned National Mining University as well as the output of BE and ESP National Projects initiated by the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine supported by the British Council Ukraine are examined. The model of BE developed as a result of these Projects which reflects the authors' teaching and learning experience is given. Special attention is drawn to the innovations introduced and the modern theories in teaching/learning they are based on. The concept and approaches used by the Department of Foreign Languages in their teaching Business English are given using the data of action research being carried out by the authors. The up-to-date approaches used to BE teaching/learning are evaluated.

Problem setting. Globalization of the world economy and the steps Ukraine is taking towards its membership in the European Union have been leading to constructive reforms which embrace all the spheres of the Ukrainian society including education. On its way to European integration Ukraine is reforming its higher education by introducing changes and the latest innovations in higher education and language education in particular.

This paper describes the experience of introducing changes in Business English teaching and learning at the State Higher Educational Institution “National Mining

University” (Ukraine) and its Institute of Economics that is aimed at developing graduates’ adequate behaviour in the international business environment they will find themselves in the future.

From our perspective, English university courses, no matter how they are called, belong to ESP courses as they are taught for specific purposes of learners, who are aware of their needs. However, vocational needs of students are delayed for them whereas study and exam needs are immediate for students. Business English (BE) as a part of ESP can be considered ESP courses, which are seen by us as English for Business Purposes (EBP/BE), where business needs are the delayed ones, though pre-vocational needs are obvious for students as the result of their learning the specialist-subjects.

Success in business is impossible without effective communication. Moreover, the majority of non-native English speaking countries use English as a language for communication that takes place within business circles and different branches of industry in the majority of countries in the world, wherein communication can be successful only in case both the sender and the receiver understand the *same information* as a result of their communication. That is why developing adequate language behaviour also known as communicative language competences defined by Common European Framework of References for Languages as those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means, where users and learners of a language are viewed as “social agents”, i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action” (CEFR, 2001: 9) are within the aims of university ESP/BE courses.

Competences as the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions are considered to be the pillars of knowledge building and skills development. According to Block and Cameron, ‘communication skills’ and the new literacies caused by new technologies as well as competence in one or more second foreign language(s) belong to valuable ‘linguistic capital’, if to use Pierre

Bourdeu's (1991) term (Block & Cameron, 2012: 5). The idea that communicative language competence in at least one of foreign languages is a benefit, which provides university graduates with an additional value, requires qualitative teaching and thorough choice of methods and approaches to be used when teaching ESP/BE at the university level.

Analysis of up-to-date/ recent research results. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) appeared in 1970s as a response to globalization and integration in different areas of human life, including education. Ann M Johns and Donna Price Machado identify ESP as a movement based on the proposition that *all* language teaching should be tailored to the specific learning and language use needs of identified groups of students – and also sensitive to the sociocultural contexts in which these students will be using English (Johns & Machado, 2001: 43). They propose the following categories of ESP: English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), particularly VESL and EBP (English for Business Purposes), and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) covering the following academic courses dependent on students' specialism: English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE), English for Law (ELP) etc. Keith Harding points out that in ESP “the purpose for learning language is paramount and relates directly to what the learner needs to do in their vocation or job” (Harding, 2007: 6). She also spawns EAP, EBP and EOP as ESP courses.

Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters who have made a survey of different theories to ESP movement and its trends identify ESP as a learning-centred approach not a product, i.e. ‘learning by doing’, where Business English is referred to as English for Business and Economics (Hutchinson, T. & A. Waters, 1987: 16).

Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John see EBP as an umbrella term for Business English courses (1998: 53). They stress the fact that Business English is difficult to define, though they have managed to identify different BE courses based on the learners' experience in business: the Academic Business English (ABE) courses for the students who are specialised in business, finance, accounting and

banking etc., English for General Business Purposes (EGBP) for “pre-experience learners or those at the very early stage of their career”, English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP) “run for job-experienced learners who bring business knowledge and skills to the language-learning situation” (1987: 53, 55 – 56).

M. Ellis and C. Johnson share these ideas and point out that BE must be seen in the overall context of ESP, where “Business English implies the definition of a specific language corpus and emphasis on particular kind of communication in a specific context” (Ellis & Johnson, 1994: 3). They distinguish BE from other varieties of ESP by that it is often a mix of specific content (relating to a particular job area and industry), and general content (relating to general ability to communicate more effectively” (ibid.).

From the perspective of the Ukrainian BE researchers O. Tarnopolsky and S. Kozhushko, BE is an umbrella for General English (GE) and ESP, where GE is considered to be the most disputable issue as the majority of ESP practitioners and theorists treat GE as English for No Obvious Reasons and BE as English for business purposes that makes it to belong to ESP. The Business English Proper (BEP) proposed by the Ukrainian BE practitioners is seen by them as some kind of BE core common for various ESP courses. Moreover, they see BEP and ESP as relatively autonomous and independent from each other (Tarnopolsky & Kozhushko, 2004: 18 – 19).

Nick Brieger, a world leading authority in BE, identifies scope of BE from the perspective of General Language Knowledge (GLK) and General Language Skills (GLS): listening, speaking, reading and writing, Specialist Language Knowledge (SLK): Professional Area correspondent to the learners’ specialism area and Professional Function in dependence of business area, and Professional Communication Skills (PCS): socializing, telephoning, giving presentations, meetings, negotiating etc., business correspondence, contract drafting, report writing etc. (1998).

Background for the authors' proposals. The National ESP Curriculum for Universities (2005) designed on the basis of the findings of a baseline study of the situation in ESP in Ukraine in 2004 (Baseline Study, 2004) and its dissemination all over Ukraine presupposes that BE is a core ESP course for students trained for Business and Law, though some elements of BE are incorporated in ESP courses for other specialism areas. Innovative by its nature, the Curriculum is needs-based, outcomes-focused, skills-oriented, modular and cyclic in its design. Generic job-related skills, an innovation proposed by the authors, enable university graduates to function effectively in culturally diverse academic and professional environment and various generic job-related areas and situations. “The Curriculum proposes that communicative competences in English be acquired for real-life academic and job-related areas and situations which are generic for students of different specialisms” (National ESP Curriculum for Universities, 2005: 39).

Our experiential learning, while designing National ESP Curriculum, teaching/training experience, classroom action research and ongoing evaluation have brought us to the model of BE. Being derived from Nick Brieger’s model, it reflects the innovations proposed by the National ESP Curriculum for Ukrainian universities (2005), design which of we were involved within the National ESP Curriculum Project initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and supported by the British Council (2003 – 2005).

Following the innovations of the National ESP Curriculum (consistency with internationally accepted and recognized standards – CEFR descriptors of language behaviour; modular design and organization that meets the requirements of the ECTS; generic job-related skills; innovative approach to syllabus content, that is objectives – outcomes – assessment; encouraging lifelong learning and learners’ autonomy etc.), the content of a BE Course covers both professional content: Business Basics, Basics of Management, Marketing, Finance etc., and professionally-oriented (business) language competences that cover general competences, communicative language competences (language knowledge and skills, sociocultural awareness), pragmatic competences, including generic job-related, soft skills and

lifelong competences: learning to learn, study skills and strategies etc. The latter is considered to be a societal demand and put as a practical aim for an ESP university course. For detail see the scope of BE given in Fig. 1.

B U S I N E S S E N G L I S H	Professionally- oriented (Business) communicative language competences (Linguistic competence; Sociolinguistic competence; Pragmatic competence; Lifelong competence)	
	Skills	<i>Generic Job-related Skills:</i> Socialising (business-lunches, dinners, parties etc.) Giving presentations Participating in discussions, meetings, forums etc. (both F2F and online) Telephoning Negotiating Business correspondence: letters, faxes, messages, memos, e-mails, SMS etc. <i>Soft (Social) Skills</i> (communication, interaction, organization, self-management), including <i>Leadership Skills</i> <i>Study skills</i> (information location, academic speaking, academic writing, assessment, organisation and self-awareness etc.)
	Knowledge	<i>Working knowledge of:</i> Pronunciation Grammar (grammatical structures needed to express appropriate functions and notions, rules of syntax, language forms etc.) Vocabulary (range of relevant vocabulary, including terminology, related to academic and professional areas)
	Awareness and Understanding	<i>Sociocultural awareness and understanding of:</i> how core values, beliefs and behaviour in Ukrainian academic and professional environment differ from culture to culture (international, national, institutional); different corporate cultures within business contexts and how they relate to each other <i>Knowledge of</i> rules of how people should interact in business situations (recognise appropriate gestures, eye contact, personal space, and body language in each situation)
	Professional Content	
	Knowledge of:	Business Basics (Types and Forms of Business) Management (Operations Management; Production Management; HR Management; R & D (Innovation) Management, Environmental Management etc.) Marketing Finance and accounting Logistics E-commerce etc.
Outcome: <i>As the result of learning students should be able to behave adequately and react appropriately in common social, academic and professional situations</i>		

in everyday life.

Fig. 1 Scope of Business English

The scope of BE were identified on the needs analysis of future employers, students' needs, administrators' needs got via survey the needs and expectations of the primary and secondary stakeholders of BE teaching/learning process while carrying out a baseline study on the current situation of ESP in Ukraine and ongoing needs analysis.

The employers questioned represent the following main spheres of future students' occupational involvement: economics (60%), technology (21.5%), science (12.5%), humanities (5%). They consider language knowledge to be desirable (72%) or essential (14%) and state that their employees use English to access information via the Internet (70%); to deal with business documents (68%); to read specialist literature (60.5%); for meetings, presentations and negotiations (59%); for telephoning (53.5%).

The analysed data indicate that the employees should be able to deal with business communication/correspondence; to interpret the information acquired from the Internet, magazines and journals; to take part in holding meetings, presentations or negotiations. The findings obtained reflect the current demand for English in an employment market in industry, technology and science which is in a state of constant change and development.' (Baseline Study, 2004: 72).

From our perspective, BE courses should follow modular design, where each module is aimed at development specific generic job-related skills, the priority of which is identified according to the learners' language proficiency level and year of study. Keeping in mind the latest theories described above, it should be appropriate to start with EGAP course during which English for general academic purposes and elements of EGBP are incorporated. If time allotted to English courses permits, EGBP/EBP can be taken further. If not, EGBP can be proposed as an obligatory course for students specialized in Business and Economics some kind like EBE

courses described above or an optional course for students specialized in other specialism areas. EAP courses and ESBP/ABE courses are appropriate to Master's degree level students dependent on their specialism area (see Fig. 2).

The obligatory ESP course for Bachelor's students covers EGAP and EGBP (see Fig. 2). There are four modules at this course: Socialising in social and academic environment, Obtaining and processing information for specific purposes, Participating in conferences and meeting, Communicating in writing. Thus, the focus is shifted from language knowledge (grammar, syntax, general vocabulary etc.) and language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that is typical for GE courses to job-generic related skills and working language knowledge that is seen by us as prerequisites for efficient and effective communication in the academic and professional environment.

Bachelor's students	
Year 1	EGAP, including elements of EGBP (English for General Academic Purposes/English for study with the elements of English for General Business Purposes)
Year 2	EGBP (English for General Business Purposes)
Year 3	EBP (English for Business Purposes)
Year 4	ABE (Academic Business English – delivering lectures and providing workshops in English on specialist-subjects for students of language demanded specialisms)
Master's degree students	
Year 1	EAP and ABE/ESBP (English for Academic Purposes and/or English for Specific Business Purposes/Academic Business English)

Fig. 2 BE courses at tertiary level

At the next stage, i.e. next year students continue to develop their generic job-related skills at the new level: Socialising in academic and professional/business environment, Giving presentations, Participating in meetings, Business correspondence etc. In other words, as learners go deeper in their specialism area at their specialist-subjects, they are able to go deeper in BE that allows to raise the level of their language proficiency, i.e. develop their language behavior at higher level, and develop better understanding of their future specialism.

From our perspective, the cyclic nature of BE course, i.e. learning BE step by step, starting from the academic environment students are familiar with and bringing learners from their academic environment to their future professional environment will contribute to the development of learners' language behavior appropriate and adequate to the environment they are in. To provide the effectiveness of learning and successful implementation of the model described, there is a need in understanding innovations proposed and the up-to-date methods and approaches described below.

Generic job-related skills. Communication can be successful only when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information as a result of the communication. Problems with communication can appear at every stage of the communication process both in the classroom and in real life situations.

Keeping in mind target situation, clearly identified in EQS for future managers and specialists, and using multidisciplinary skills-based approach, the content of a typical ESP/BE course covers the skills used by managers in business communication: socializing, giving presentations, participating in meetings and negotiations, telephoning, business correspondence and report writing, contract drafting etc. that allow Ukrainian graduates be successful at job market both home and international. Following this innovation, language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are developed in an integrated way within the context close to students' real life. Such approach eases both a process of learning English and the study process at the university on whole as study skills are incorporated in BE /ESP courses (see Fig. 1).

Soft (social) skills. Soft skills are defined by Nieragden as people's ability to handle the soft skills side of business such as influencing, communication, team management, delegating, appraising, presenting, motivating is now recognized as key to making businesses more profitable and better places to work.

For many years, it was thought that a person's intelligence (IQ or intelligence quotient) determined how people succeeded in life. Schools and universities used IQ tests to choose students for scholarship programs and some companies even used IQ scores when hiring. In the last decade, researchers have found that IQ isn't the only predictor of a person's success. They are now looking at emotional intelligence (EQ) or emotional quotient as another determinant of a person's success in life (Goleman, 1995). We can't but agree that emotional intelligence is not a substitute for IQ and technical and professional abilities. Nowadays, managers are more and more often measured and evaluated on "their ability to motivate an organization, to assess the performance of their staff, to make clear and well-balanced decisions, and, first and foremost, their ability to develop and communicate ideas and visions" (Niergaden, 2000) that is the matter of EQ.

Following the interdisciplinary nature of BE for Business and Law specialism area, soft skills are within the scope of BE (see Fig. 1) as they are considered to be pragmatic skills for future managers and professionals. Soft skills are based on such crucial skills as *interaction* (co-operation, tolerance, conflict handling, team working, (n)etiquette etc.), *communication* (active listening skills, presentation skills and delegating skills so necessary while working in team), *organization* (problem solving, troubleshooting etc.) and *self-management* which is based on self-awareness, self-organisation, learning willingness, and decision making etc. All these skills are interconnected and integrated in language skills used for communication. Herein, active listening and active reading, which presupposes interaction with the written texts, are rather helpful in finding the solution to a problem, providing effective and sustainable interaction.

Lifelong learning competence. Nowadays in the epoch of rapid changes in technologies **and changing social and business environment**, there is a strong need in ongoing professional development that is impossible without lifelong competence to be developed at the university level. Although any learning undertaken throughout life, whether formal or informal, can be considered lifelong learning, the European Commission defined it as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective (Recommendation of the European Parliament: 2006).

According to the Recommendation of the European Parliament (2006), *communication in foreign languages* identified as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context is among eight key competences for lifelong learning. It is considered to be fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society as they are seen as a major factor in innovation, productivity and competitiveness. Being the key competence for lifelong learning, communication in foreign languages involves in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding.

Learning to learn, which is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities (EP Recommendation: 2006) is the other key competence.

Though all the key competences for lifelong learning are interdependent, the emphasis in each of them is made on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, decision taking etc. that is reflected in the BE university courses designed using the model described above.

We realise that the development of communicative competence relies on students' ability to learn, on subject knowledge and prior experience which occurs within a study – and specialism-related situational context. Ability to learn, i.e.

‘knowing how to learn’, referred to by CEF (2001: 12) as the ability to observe and participate in new experiences and to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, modifying the latter when necessary, belongs to general competences which are within the aims of BE courses that should encourage lifelong learning and learner’s autonomy. The active use of procedural knowledge (‘learning to learn’) forms the basis for efficient and autonomous learning of languages by the university graduates when being in the professional settings.

To prepare students for effective communication both in classroom and outside it, to develop skills how to be up-to-date within the field of study or job, absorbing information within reports or learning specialist information, a variety of approaches are used for teaching BE as an ESP. Being aware of the modern theories of language acquisition, we realise that “as teachers we can influence what we teach, but what learners learn is determined by the learners alone” (Hutchinson & Waters 1996: 72).

That is why ‘learning by doing’ proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1996) known as learning-centred approach that is very close to *action learning* defined by McGill and Beaty as “a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done” (McGill & Beaty 2004: 11).

The key points in action learning is that learning is problem-based, self-directed and encouraging reflection on actions, being in a supporting ‘set’ of peers that provide a dialogue with each other. Thus, managing of the learning process is shifted from teachers to individual learners. The role of reflection while learning is stressed by Scrivener too, who points out that “the process of learning often involves five steps: (1) doing something; (2) recalling what happened; (3) reflecting on that; (4) drawing conclusions; (5) using those conclusions to inform and prepare for future practical experience” (Scrivener: 1994) that is very close to Kolb’s Reflective Cycle. Moreover, solving problems or performing tasks, using English as a means for communication within a set of peers, contribute much to developing generic job-related skills and soft skills in particular as well as to new knowledge in the students’ specialism area because of sharing, exchanging information and getting input both

from peers, a teacher and the materials used. The experiential learning provided by teacher in the classroom via placing learners' in the contexts and situations close to real life will help university graduates feel comfortable in their future working environment and behave adequately there.

Being rooted in multi-disciplinary nature of BE, *task-based learning* is considered a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching/learning ESP (Dudley-Evans & St Maggie John: 1997). For example, to teach BE for managers, we use a wide range of original texts of various genres: from management training to management practice, and the tasks used at BE classes may be similar to those given while teaching/learning management. The main criterion to text selection is based on understanding texts as TALO (Text as a Linguistic Object) vs TAVI (Text as a Vehicle of Information). The last one distinguishes texts to be used in ESP teaching/learning from those usually used in GE. Although for the students of lower levels both approaches to reading can be used as teacher's choice is dependent on needs analysis that raise teacher's awareness of student's gaps and lacks in learning EFL. In any case, treating texts as TAVI, i.e. focus on obtaining information necessary for specialist study, is more appropriate for BE teaching/learning.

According to Widdowson, the task is concerned with 'pragmatic meaning' and outcome, which 'refers to what learners arrive at when they have completed the task' (Ellis 2004: 8). Tasks engage cognitive processes, which are sorting, classifying, ordering, reasoning etc. and have clearly defined communicative outcome. While performing tasks students interact with each other, using the language and in this way develop all the mentioned above competences.

According to Jane Willis, task is a goal-oriented activity with a clear purpose. "Doing a communication task involves achieving an outcome, creating a final product that can be appreciated by other" (Willis,). She describes the typical design of a task-based lesson that have three phases in common, where the first phase is 'pre-task' and concerns the various activities teachers and students can undertake before they start the task, the second phase, so called 'the during task' phase, which

centres around the task itself and affords various instructional options, and final phase, 'post-task' which involves procedures for following up on the task performance. She points out that only 'the during task' phase is obligatory in task-based teaching. Although options selected from the 'pre-task' and 'post-task' phases are not obligatory, they can serve a crucial role in ensuring that the task performance is maximally effective for language development (Ellis, 2004: 243).

Task-based approach is widely used by us in materials design gathered in English for Study and Work course book (Kostrzytska, Zuyenok, Shvets et al.: 2010, 2014) that proves its efficiency in developing adequate language behavior of the university graduates. Employment of the University graduates and their successful career in business and research some of which are recognized at the international level could be seen as an evidence of ESP/BE courses and their innovations effectiveness.

Although, bearing in mind BE nature, it is impossible to prescribe or recommend the only one method to BE teaching/learning as needs analysis is a starting point of making decisions on how organize a process of learning English more effectively. From our perspective, integrating various approaches such as communicative language approach, cooperative and collaborative approaches and all the mentioned above will raise the effectiveness of ESP courses as a BE course for future specialists, managers and economists.

Conclusions. The experience of the National Mining University demonstrates an evidence of positive changes in teaching/learning ESP, and BE in particular, which are in consistence with international and EU trends in learning foreign languages. Although, there are some challenges caused by the shortening of the time allotted to the obligatory ESP university course and low language proficiency level of school-leavers, to overcome these challenges a set of optional BE courses are recommended within the model of BE presented by the authors.

The BE model described reflects both authors' theoretical knowledge and their teaching and learning experience got from the practical implications of the latest

innovations to ESP/BE teaching/learning. Developing all the BE components in an integrated way, using a multi- and inter-disciplinary approach to provide action learning, make the learning process close to real life, interesting and appropriate to the university students needs that have lead to the outcomes relevant to the future specialism of students and successful career of the National Mining University graduates. Cooperating and collaborating at English classes while doing tasks students develop their soft skills as well as tolerance and flexibility that will help them to function adequately in their professional environment.

Close cooperation and collaboration of specialist departments with the university departments of foreign languages and potential employers will contribute to quality assurance of EFL teaching and enhance BE/ESP teaching quality that will raise Ukrainian graduates' competitiveness at the international job markets and provide academic mobility both of teachers and students.

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