TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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Teaching English for Specific Purposes and General English is analysed in the article. The scientific approach of a scientist M. Rosenberg is presented. The experience of teaching English for Specific Purposesat VGTU is alsopresented. The ideas and teaching methods from the classes of general English can be transferred to the classes of English for Specific Purposes.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, Business English, geodesy.

Introduction

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at a technical university has its own challenges. Teacher has to answer a lot of questions: Are there really major differences between teaching English for Specific Purposes / Business English and teaching general English? Do the goals of the students differ widely? Is there a noticeable difference in motivation?

English for Specific Purposes and General English

Recently in the magazine *English Teaching Professional* (Rosenberg 2004: 36) I have read an article where these issues were analyzed. The author of the article, Marjorie Rosenberg, is an instructor at the Padagogische Akademie in Austria. Marjorie Rosenberg considers where English for Specific Purposes / Business English and General English overlap.

To address these questions specifically, the author of the article asked a group of teachers of the English language to brainstorm the differences and the similarities between general and Business English. The diagram below shows a number of the ideas that teachers have come up with.

Business English

* specialized vocabulary
* motivation related to job
* teach negotiation and presentation
* techniques
* students very goal-oriented
* more serious
* business correspondence

General English

* free-time activity
* more freedom in deviation from plan
* more time for games
* more relaxed atmosphere
* songs
* literature
* general writing skills
* social event

What Business and general English have in common

* grammar and functions
* general vocabulary
* anxiety about capabilities
* everyday English
* small talk
* travel vocabulary
* survival English
* tour skills
* current events

After doing this exercise, many teachers were surprised at the large amount of overlap which exists. Marjorie Rosenberg wrote "we often tend to separate Business English and English for Special Purposes from general English. Although the vast majority of teachers are trained first as general English teachers, they feel that they need to teach these specialised fields in a totally different way. Communicative teaching has become an important part of our classrooms in general English courses, but activities which are lively and fun are not always transferred into the more 'serious' world of Business English. On the other hand, many ideas which are taken directly from the business world and used successfully to teach business students could be also transferred to the general English classroom, giving our learners a new perspective on the communication skills involved in becoming proficient in a language" (2004: 36).

How is English for Specific Purposes taught at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University? During the first semester the first year students of geodesy at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University were taught general English, but gradually specific material on geodesy was also presented. During the first lecture every student introduced himself / herself speaking in front of others. They answered different questions. One of the questions was about their choice to study geodesy. Their home task was to specify scientifically, i.e. to define the term "geodesy". Students were using different sources and the best definition was that from the Internet: "Geodesy is the discipline that deals with the measuement and representation of the earth, its gravity field and geodynamic phenomena (polar motion, earth tides, and crustal motion) in three-dimentional time varying space. Geodesy is primarily concerned with positioning and the gravity field and geometric aspects of their temporal variations". Students were not happy to speak facing the audience, and they were right. In her article Marjorie Rosenberg writes, that "speaking in front of others is one of the greatest fears that people have, so training in giving presentations is not only useful for business people who have to do this as part of their jobs, but also for learners who work in a wide variety of professions" (2004: 37).

The geodesy students had many opportunities to give presentations: introducing Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, presenting their dream country or speaking about their favourite author. Preparing for the presentation on introduction of the euro, students visited the museum of the Bank of Lithuania, where they watched a film on money in English and enjoyed the excursion. An effective presentation requires skills such as clarity in speech and phrasing, linking and control language, timing interventions, assertiveness, defending a vulnerable position and handling and asking questions. During the first month of studies much time was spent in the computer class of the university, revising grammar and questions. That was interesting for the students, and according to Marjorie Rosenberg

"our students deserve the best we can give them and that includes a relaxed, but energetic and lively atmosphere in the classroom, creating a community to which both learners and teachers are eager to belong."(2004:37). After translation of the texts about seven wonders of the world (the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Lighthouse of Alexandria), the students had interesting discussions, made drawings of the piramid of Giza, painted the colossus of Rhodes.

Students love material that they feel is tailormade for them. The article of *Discussion on the Orthometric Height Realization* from the magazine *Geodesy and Cartography* (Tenzer 2005: 12–19) was complicated to translate but interesting from the point of view of geodesy. We analyzed this article together in class and the students had to chose another article for themselves for home reading and make a presentation on the article afterwards. During the second semester we usually read texts on geodesy from text-books and scientific magazines as well as articles from Geographical Magazine, such as *Paper or Pixels: Where to Next for Maps* (Ashworth 2003: 56–57). *A Distorted View of the British Isles. Ptolemy's British Isles map* (Distorted 2004: 21) and others. Finishing the map theme we visit Varnelis' Museum to widen our knowledge on maps, where one can enjoy a wonderful collection of pictures, books and especially that of maps. Students are happy to chose some readings from the Internet, e. g. *A Brief History of Early Geodesy*. They are given such a task as to find terms in the text (e. g. geoid, geodesy, ellipsoid, latitude and others) and compile cross-words.

Conclusion

As you can see from the examples presented in this article, we can conclude that though the motivation and goals of the students studying English for Specific Purposes and General English are slightly different, various ideas and teaching methods can be transferred to the classes of English for Specific Purposes from the classes of general English and vice verce, giving our learners the opportunity to acquire better skills in a foreign language.

References

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ANGLŲ KALBOS MOKYMAS NEKALBINĖJE AUKŠTOJOJE MOKYKLOJE

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Straipsnyje nagrinėjami specialiosios, arba verslo, ir bendrosios anglų kalbos mokymo skirtumai ir panašumai, jų tarpusavio ryšys mokant anglų kalbos ir pateikiama konkrečių pavyzdžių, dėstant anglų kalbą VGTU geodezijos specialybės studentams.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: specialioji anglų kalba, verslo anglų kalba, bendroji anglų kalba, geodezija.

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