

Some insights into ESP materials selection and design

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As we are to engage our learners in reflection and self-assessment, and thus enable them to assume responsibility for their own learning, we cannot use the textbook as a series of lesson scripts. To do so would be to impose on our learners the textbook author’s learning targets and implied learning process.

No one course book should be followed slavishly and systematically. Hardly ever is there one course book able to meet the needs of an individual group of learners in an ESP context. So teachers have to develop their own personal resource ‘pack’. The main sources for such a pack are authentic materials in the field of the students’ specialism.

The inadequacy of existing teaching materials and the shortage of authentic resources to cater for ESP students’ needs can be compensated for by combining the following three strategies:

- utilising, adapting or selecting from existing textbooks (foreign and local) whenever sensible and possible
- adapting available authentic materials (off-air radio and video recording, media publications, Internet resources, etc.)
- creating new teaching materials appropriate to the needs of those involved

Prospective materials writers should use the ESP Curriculum as a guide for developing their own materials, textbooks and other teaching aids (see Appendix G for principles of learning materials development). In the meantime existing materials should be adopted and adapted as necessary. A possible guide for evaluating published materials is provided in Appendix H.

Relevant ESP teaching/learning materials should integrate modern methodology with specialist content. They should provide **a systematic means for independent self-study**. And they should comprise a range of subject specialism-related (e.g. Business English correspondence and communications, academic writing) materials in order to develop integrated skills. Authentic and locally-developed materials should supplement the courses and help create a context for various activities.

Materials should be learner-centred, provide for self-study opportunities and develop not only language skills but also transferable professional skills (such as giving presentations).

The necessity of writing this textbook derived from the overall aim of ESP syllabus for students majoring in economics and business and objectives of the module ‘Telephoning’, which were formulated in compliance with students’ needs and national qualification levels of achievement (EQS and EPP). Practically all learners of Business English need to make and receive phone calls. They need to be equipped with a range of skills and language to give them confidence to deal with any difficulties they may encounter over the phone. As we are to engage our students in

reflection and self-assessment, and thus enable them to assume responsibility for their own learning, we could not follow any existing course book systematically and tried to compensate the inadequacy of existing materials and shortage of authentic resources to cater for our students by creating new teaching materials appropriate to students' needs.

Taking into account the principles of the ESP Curriculum which served as a guide for writing this book, we tried to integrate modern methodology with specialist content.. This approach was manifested by our attempt to follow the model for materials design suggested by Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters [Hutchinson & Waters 2003, p.108, 109]. We used this model to provide a coherent framework for integration of various aspects of learning, while at the same time leaving enough room for variety to flourish. The model combines the following four elements: input, content focus, language focus and task. It acts as a vehicle, which leads the learners to the point where they are able to carry out the task that is of primary focus of the unit. The text-book is expected to incorporate authentic and locally-developed materials, which help to create a context for various activities.

It contains the following parts:

- methodology of telephoning (presents classification of phone calls, identifies telephoning-building blocks, explains template for evaluating students' performance);
- main part (consists of six units, each of them contain materials for class and self-study work and include business-related situations likely to occur in telephoning);
- appendixes (include functional exponents, business documents, letters and faxes layout).

In conclusion, I would argue towards a view of this text-book as a learner-centred one, providing opportunities for self-study and developing not only language skills but also transferable professional skills (such as dealing with phone calls and business correspondence, etc.). After several years of piloting the text-book was evaluated by all involved, and some refinements or alterations were made. We are particularly interested to hear from any institutions which has used it in their teaching/learning process.

References

1. English for Specific Purposes National Curriculum for Universities (2005). Kyiv: Lenvit.
2. Hutchinson, T., Waters, A. (2003) English for Specific Purposes.-Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.