

BUSINESS ENGLISH AS WORLD'S NO.1 COMMUNICATION TOOL

Limba Engleză în afaceri ca principal instrument de comunicare la nivel mondial

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Abstract

This article aims to theoretically discuss major issues in English language teaching – ELT for business and management. Business English is today's Lingua Franca in the corporate world. It is the language for communication in IT communicative technologies, world spread trade and business activities, diplomacy and other spheres of life and work where people interact in order to achieve the appointed goal. Global world associated with corporal English language marks our presence and near future in the 21st century. Therefore the teaching of English takes a new turn toward EBP (English for Business Purposes) and English teachers should reorient in the direction of the business language. For the mentioned purpose linguistic skills that will help to master language proficiency will be developed.

Global business world requires adequate training in foreign language competence. Teacher training is essential in managing language course development. Communication is taken as an essential language skill in both oral and written representations. This paper will take into consideration the underlined issues.

First, contemporary demands for learning English to do business worldwide within the scope of professionally directed matters in order to communicate in business contexts, to improve employability prospects, and job opportunities worldwide is our main concern in the article.

Second, genre theory is seen as the basis for the genre approach in directing learners to develop spoken and written communicative skills focusing on socially-oriented view of writing as to get and give information in the language for the special use of English terminology.

The third major question concerns the issue of developed communicative minds in intercultural relations, the issue that must be highlighted as one of the 21st century's most important element in the foreign-language-teaching terminology.

Insufficient knowledge of the cultural context and environment in which the business is taking place, as well as the principles on which business corporations are based can lead to business misunderstandings, breakdowns in communication, and, as a result, business transactions may slow down, even the complete cessation of interconnected business relationships may stop.

The above mentioned three principles will form the basis of this paper in order to discuss the need for teaching business English.

Keywords: ELT, EBP, genre theory, intercultural relations, socially-oriented writing skills, communication

Introduction

Regardless of the fact that the teaching of a foreign language, English in the first place, favored as an important element of the education strategy in Serbia, the teaching of the business language remains as an aspect of teaching a foreign language to which small and inadequate attention is given. We mean the preparation of teachers and the strategy of instructing foreign language teachers for active business language teaching has not been raised to the level of the institution.

The business world is networked in a way that enables it to expand further, encompassing an increasing number of countries and nations of diverse civilization origin, in order to make profits in business transactions. The goal is to create business plans, evolve business development strategies for a company growth and extension, select qualified personnel for the execution of business transactions, increase the technological development of companies, and connect to the global network of business companies which requires a well-developed communication through world-wide-web among partners.

Now, an important question arises: in what language will they (corporations and business companies) communicate internationally with co-partners in the other side of the world? The answer leads to the knowledge of a foreign language "in charge" for the success of communication without limitations. English is the lingua franca language of the business world for communication purposes in both directions: oral and written. Unless the knowledge of the language is proficient, the path in communication success is open to doing business. When we talk about communication boundaries, we mean language, cultural and social barriers. Successful business achievements require a business and language expert who is familiar with the cultural differences between the nations with which he operates and acts respectfully toward the status differences and limitations that can occur in the field during communication. Since communication is mostly carried out and business prospects negotiated

in person, by telephone, via Viber, Skype, executed through social networks such as Facebook or via emails, a businessman should develop linguistic skills and competencies that would allow him to maintain business partnerships at the same level with different non-native language speakers. Therefore, it is about achieving language competence and proficiency in the official language of the business world, which today is the English language.

The role of EBP in the beginning of the 21st century

The beginning of the 21st century is the period in human history when English is estimated to be spoken by 1.75 billion people worldwide. Native English speakers like the US, Australia, and the UK are around 390 million and there are about a billion fluent speakers in India and Nigeria, millions of people that study English as a second language and some 565 million people who use the language on the internet (Harvard Review, 2012). Looking at English in the context of the world community, we can say that this language is in the possession of all people in the world no matter from which cultural area they come from. In the world, it is estimated that about 80% of the population of different original cultures is in possession of English.

Our world of today has adopted English as a global business language and as a corporate language in worldwide business companies.

Tsedal Neeley, an associate professor in the Organizational Behavior unit at the Harvard Business School and the founder of the consulting firm Global Matters who is the author of *The Language of Global Sciences*, has implemented a new term "Englishnization", because companies should, as she has stated, for the purpose of success "systematically implement the language policy" into the business plan. "Adopters will find significant advantages" (Neeley, Harvard Business Review, 2012).

According to Neeley, three major reasons are sufficient for adopting English as an official corporate language. First to mention is competitive pressure. If your goal is aiming to the leading position in taking deals with diverse customers, business partners and other factors important for managing the business successfully, English is your tool No.1 in communication. The second issue to mention refers to the globalization of tasks and resources. Our global world depends on globally dispersed employees, co-workers and potential resources imported from all around the world. "Without common ground, communication will suffer. Better language comprehension gives employees more firsthand information, which is vital to good decision making" (Neeley, 2012). In the third place, Neeley underlines M&A integration across national boundaries. This aspect is about integration of firms or companies, that are acquired or merged into one another on the world's market, and, as a result, they are expected to have English as an operating language within its members.

For the sake of business prosperity and a chance of making larger amounts of products to sell worldwide, companies are constantly bought and sold emerging into strong and big corporations. When "Zastava" in Serbian Kragujevac merged with Italian "Fiat" and Italian employees came to develop business projects in Serbia together with Serbian co-workers, the language in communication was English. If English was not the operating language, misunderstandings, slow communication, and unprepared personnel for the multi-cultural environment would become major drops in mutual understanding of the matter among employees. This can cause the business slow down. English as an operating language could be the language to avoid "playing favorites" over Italian and Serbian.

Occupational English and its use of genre theory for applied ends.

During the past 30 years, occupational English or English for Specific Purposes has turned into a vigorous movement within the field of English language teaching in schools and universities. "The very term English for Specific Purposes implies that it is English which is somehow peculiar to the range of principles and procedures which define that particular profession; and so we have English which is specific, associated with a kind of institutional activity which is also conceived of as specific" (Widdowson, 1998). Johns & Dudley-Evans (1991) discussed the scope of internationalism of English as the language for various occupational purposes, in the field of science, technology, and trade.

People in communication expect to understand and be understood during the process when they select words and put them in particular order with the aim to transfer the particular meaning. In

the world of business, communication is recognized as the No.1 skill which is required among people involved in managing business projects, making professional interest in business orientation, participating in meetings and leading discussions to obtain business goals and negotiate business in general. The modern trend in managing the business is revealed virtually. This occurs because employees and co-workers are located in different parts of the world but they still manage a business in a distance and send written emails, letters or messages or involve in business deals and discussions by long-distance calls.

Many business tasks depend on correspondence and the mechanisms of intercommunication have the purpose to convey information and ease business negotiations, deals, and transactions. For that purpose letters and e-mails are used. The skill of inter-correspondence is developed through the so-called "professional texts" (Widdowson, 2004).

The "pedagogic" or "professional" text is designed "to meet communicative purposes within particular discourse communities and with the purpose of preparing students to communicate as members of these discourse communities"(Widdowson, 2004).

Swales is considered to be a father of genre theory in teaching business English for particular occupational needs. "Swales (1990) interprets genre as a class of communicative events which share a set of communicative purposes, well recognized by expert members of the discourse community that produce and use them"(Revilla, 2008). The genre is understood as variable patterns of contents, style, rhetorical organization, and expected audience to share intended messages within the area of occupation. Communication within the genre has its purpose in the interested community. Both types of communication, written and oral are developed if all sides in communication "have adopted a rhetorical approach that examines the negotiation of meaning of the subject matter" (Faigley & Hansen, 1985).

All communication activities should be a matter of education organization in the teaching of business English or ESP in schools, universities or through classes in companies or corporate business centers. Employees and co-workers do business through long-distance telephone conversations. The Internet is a tool that helps interested parties become close and perform high standards in business advances and professional approach to business tasks. Halliday in 1985 suggested that "language is designed to fulfill three main functions: a function for relating experience, a function for creating interpersonal relationships, and a function for organizing information".

M & A Integration of English across National Borders

Managing and acquisition of business English across national boundaries are firmly linked to socio-cultural characteristics of nations. When we come to discuss the position and role of business English worldwide, we stumble over the meaning of intercultural variables in English learning. Cultural understanding is an integral part when it comes to learning and instructing people in business English trends. Since English has become a primary communications medium in business and education, not to mention science and diplomacy, all parties in communication should share the same knowledge of the language together with its adjoining cultural contexts.

In the words of three authors, Crum, Cran, MacNeil (1986), English is the language that survives in various environments, in such socio-cultural communities that have nothing in common with native English speakers cultural contents.

The socio-cultural context of the "pedagogic" text in the ESP, EBP and EST curriculum comes as a result of the process of thinking and assessing life circumstances. The English, which is taught as a foreign language (EFL, ESP, EBP) and the language of the lingua franca (ELF), contains elements of culture integrated into the teaching process by focusing on the student's attention to international topics. English speakers retain and take responsibility "to think and speak critically about world problems, to evaluate and accept different views" (Dyer and Bushell 1996). Robinson (1985) advocates a multicultural approach in teaching English as a foreign language, which would contribute to cultural sensitivity and build pupils' cultural awareness of people of other cultures and different mother tongues. "The whole idea of founding the lingua franca language continues to be permeated with the fear of economic and cultural domination and the loss of language and national identity" (Decke-Cornill 2002).

The research we undertook on a statically small sample, with 12 English teachers in Serbian high schools, was supposed to provide us with information on the cultural model of teaching. The teachers were questioned in writing through the questionnaire, and orally through an interview with the goal to initiate and develop an expert discussion about the place and role of culture in teaching English as a foreign language in Serbian schools. In the first place, our interest is focused on the attitudes of teachers in relation to the culture of peoples whose language is taught as foreign in the school. We wanted to find out their attitudes regarding the meaning of the target culture and its place within the actual classroom teaching.

In the second place, we tried to find out the teachers' attitudes towards the non-native model of foreign language speakers. In Serbian schools non-native model of teaching English prevails.

The third hypothesis we were willing to check was the one related to pedagogical implications of the matter and the possibilities of extending linguistic knowledge to the knowledge of target culture. Our task was to obtain information on teachers' behavior on the issue of culture in the Western world and the spread of linguistic and cultural imperialism of the English language across the world. We tried to explore individual and collective views of teachers in relation to the learning of a foreign language accompanied by its cultural elements. Through verbal confrontation, teachers were given the opportunity to argue for and against the idea of teaching English through culture. In the course of the debate, teachers were given the opportunity to present and suppress their attitudes and ultimately reach the final solutions to the given problem.

The analysis we performed was thematic and qualitative.

The conclusion is that, regardless of whether it is an English-language teaching for science and technology (EST) or daily communication, the curriculum approaches in terms of cultural content are the same. We'd like to state that the knowledge of the cultural behavior of the people with whom we wish to achieve business success is crucial in situations where we do not want to be misinterpreted or our behavior is considered offensive, but we would prevent further contacts and the extension of business cooperation from any misunderstanding or false interpretations.

"Global education aims to promote the awareness of students towards world nations, countries, cultures and problems" (Cates 2000). Where English is in practice the elements of the culture are also present. The empathy and understanding of cultural variables is the ultimate goal of education for global purposes (EGP).

Conclusion

Some methodological problems of teaching EBP

Another problem in the teaching of English as a foreign language for the needs of a given profession which the student believes will be his professional determination can be solved in two parts: the first part refers to the communicative role of the professional language. The communication role of ESP or EBP is performed through communication strategies that are basically accomplished through the development genre theory and by mastering language skills. By presenting a professional problem in a foreign language and by obtaining certain information as a guideline for the future solution of the problem, the student develops the ability to manipulate with various language skills as reading, writing, and understanding and through audible presentations of different opinions regarding the problem, he develops the ability to make his own judgments. The second part of the problem is solved through the so-called. the structural role of teaching English language proficiency (ESP). The student is in the position of the actors during the teaching process when he is entrusted with the role to acquire and develop the ability to clearly and accurately express his opinions and ideas in relation to the initial problem in the field of a certain profession.

The text is considered a database of information. To satisfy the learning motives, the text must be interesting and informative enough. The language of the profession, according to the theoretician of teaching Mackay, "is a restrictive repertoire of words and expressions selected from the language because such a restrictive repertoire covers every requirement within a well-defined context, task or vocation". According to Mackay, the knowledge of the restrictive 'language' by itself does not allow the speaker to effectively communicate in new situations, or in contexts outside the vocation environment (Mackey 2004). The text is the basis of professional information in the context of the

professional register. The professional language has a special lexicon, phraseology, and syntax compared to the general language (General English).

In the conclusion, we would like to emphasize our point of view and we consider that English language skills are crucial and represent one of the priority requirements in running a business and increasing development policy in business companies. English for business matters is a requirement in the first decades of the 21st century.

Global orientation in managing business world will lead to better living conditions, but it leaves an impact on the selection of goals in schools and universities.

In this conclusion, we can sum up that English for business purposes (EBP) is the end of the process of teaching and learning English in non-native speaking countries.

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