

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Мазкур мақолада инглиз тилини ўқитишда хоҳиш-истак таҳлилининг ўрни ва вазифалари юзасидан фикр юритилган. Шунингдек, 2014 йилнинг март-май ойлари давомида иқтисодиёт университети талабалари билан олиб борилган тажриба натижалари батафсил ёритилган.

В статье рассматриваются значение и функции анализа потребностей. Также описывается эксперимент, проведенный в экономическом вузе Узбекистана в марте – мае 2014 года. Занятия английского языка проводились для профессионально ориентированных студентов (бухгалтерия) с учетом их потребностей.

This article discusses the importance of needs analysis (NA) for ESP classes and describes types of NA. Besides, the findings of an experiment held with Uzbekistan economy students during March-May 2014 year. The ESP class was based on the received Needs Assessment held with economy students in the specialty accounting business with non- native English speaking background.

Калит сўзлар: касбга йўналтирилган инглиз тили, инглиз тили хорижий тил сифатида, умумий инглиз тили, таълим берувчи, баҳолаш, аутентик, хоҳиш-истак таҳлили.

Ключевые слова: профессионально ориентированный английский, английский как иностранный язык, общий курс английского языка, практикующий, оценивание, аутентичный, анализ потребностей.

Key words: ESP, EFL, EGP, practitioner, observation, evolution, authentic, needs analysis.

ESP

The notion of language teaching focuses on teaching languages as General and Specific purposes. And due to the reforms held on teaching languages in our country - Uzbekistan, particularly in English teaching, GE and ESP tendencies are changing. As it concerns EGP comprises the common core of language sharing by most of its speakers who are usually native speakers and for non native it became ESL/EFL. Ordinary EGP is a linguistic system to learners, whereas ESP is specially made language box to specific communities of learners with highly specialized language needs.

Usually learners of ESP are adults who are familiar with language basis and are learning language to gain professional communicative skills in a particular job. Conducting ESP classes, approximately every focus on teaching field related specific vocabulary. But the results of such teaching is not successful in common, so lesson by lesson we can realize that students are not interested to the material and

the lesson that build the common sense of unnecessary and not aimed classes. Right here the words of John M. Swales, one of the expert consultants of the project ESP Centre at Alexandria University in Egypt befall said that, ESP today is not the way of teaching we viewed it in the 1960s. If in the 1960s ESP practitioners assumed their main job to teach the technical vocabulary of a field or profession, nowadays it became learner centered teaching where focus on learner needs and needs analysis as the support (Widdowson 1981; Trimble 1985; Swales 1990, Johns and Dudley-Evans 1993). Here the participation of stakeholders is also important.

The needs analysis and its types in process

The needs assessment has the essential function in conducting language classes and especially for ESP classes as the success of well designed ESP course is based on NA as Kay Westerfield mentioned (Kay Westerfield, 2010). He stated that the NA helps ESP practitioners to get information, wish and main purpose of learners and stakeholders. The term “stakeholders” stands for the people interested in the course, and in the success of it (the training program). Kay Westerfield defined them as client or sponsor who requests the course (a university department, company/organization, or individual), the learners, the teachers, and potentially others (Kay Westerfield, 2010).

As it has already confirmed, the role of needs analysis in any ESP course is vital. It concerns that needs analysis is the primary step in any successful course design that can supply activities and content of the further course components. Kay Westerfield suggested the following 3 basic analysis in organizing need assessment:

- TSA – Target Situational Analysis;
- PSA – Present Situational Analysis;
- CA – Context Analysis.

Target Situation Analysis was introduced by Chambers in 1980. It was based on the analysis suggested by Munby 'communication needs processor' (1978). In TSA we are interested in learners' needs, wishes and expectations of stakeholders in language learning. That is, we should clarify the point of their wish to do with the language in the future. The TSA looks for the following questions:

- **What tasks do the learners need to be able to do by the end of the course? To develop this point we should clarify some background information about learners:**
 - **Who are the learners?**
 - **Is this a new course or an existing one to be revised?**
 - **How the language is going to be used?**
- **Why is it important for them to perform these tasks in English?**
- **Why do learners want or need to learn these skills?**

- **Why is language needed?** (for study; for work; for training; for a combination of these; for some other purposes, e.g. status, examination, promotion)
- **Under what conditions learners will use the language?** (As a worker and language will be treated as a tool; as a student to understand lectures and discourse context of the field; as a vocational education.)

The next stage in analysis considered to be **Present Situational Analysis**, where important information about learners' current behavior in the language can be revealed.

This type of analysis concerns to held placement tests and some background information of the learners' that helps practitioners to clarify what can learners do in the target language now?

- **Year of learning target language;**
- **Current level of education: What strengths and weaknesses do they have in speaking, listening, reading, and writing?**
- **Current level of knowledge about the content area: Which key job skills do they have or lack?**
- **Current wish/desire and expectations of the learners regarding the target language learning: Why are they attending the course and what are their personal goals?**

Overall, PSA can define what are the learners able to do now in the target language? What are their strengths and weaknesses in language and skills, and what are their past language learning experiences that can affect how they learn?

Context Analysis interests in the environment in which the learning will take place. This sort of assessment requires practitioners to evaluate and find out necessary information about context of the course. The following points should be taken onto consideration:

- **People**
 - **Who are all the stakeholders in the proposed course?** (Learners; Authority; Sponsor; Teachers).
- **Physical setting of the course**
 - **How will the training be delivered** (traditional face-to-face instruction; online; computer-based; or a combination)
 - **Does physical setting have an impact on the learners?**
 - **Where will the course be held?**
 - **Does this have an impact on the learners?**

- **Nature of course**
 - **How many learners are in your course?**
 - **Is enrollment in the course voluntary or involuntary?**
 - **Once enrolled, is learner attendance mandatory or optional?**
 - **How many total hours will the course be offered?**
 - **Over what period of time?**
 - **How often will the class meet face to face and for how many minutes per class?**
 - **Are summative assessments required during the course?**
 - **Who develops them?**
- **Teaching resources**
 - **What potential materials are already available to use or adapt for the course? Are they authentic**
 - **List the resources and equipment available**

As we see context analysis provides the opportunity to collect sample written or oral texts relevant to the learner's needs such as textbooks, manuals, videotapes/DVDs, business correspondence and others to use in curriculum and materials design for the course.

My experience of needs analysis

First time when I addressed needs analysis, my target learners were future accountants (students at the university) whose purpose in learning English was to build competent communication in the environment of their workplace. The questionnaire included some elements of both TSA and PSA and none elements of CA done that time. Holding questionnaire with some stakeholders, in the face of administration, at this stage considered unnecessary for me provided by the fact that their wish is clear by supported curriculum. However, Kay Westerfield mentioned that "The effective ESP practitioner will gather information from a variety of sources to build a complete view of the learners' current skills and training needs and gain crucial support for the training program from key stakeholders", Westerfield (2010). He means that gathering information from all participants is very important to build effective support for the trainings.

If to speak about my experience with ESP learner population it was EOP/EAP-accounting business: that is they were future accountants in the sphere of business; they were not working in the sphere yet, and just studying at the university. The purpose of English classes was to enable them to have competent communication in their sphere and this course is compulsory. Having rough understanding of my learners TSA and PSA the type of information I needed for the course success is mostly based on some CA and the following point were very

important for me as a designer and teacher: is the course compulsory or optional? What about attendance? If some testing are required what is the form and aim? The degree of access to the materials and equipments (copy machine, technical facilities and etc.): limited or unlimited; separated hours and total length of the course. And below the results of needs assessment results described:

Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

TSA showed that my learners were students of Economical Institute, Business Accounting field: EOP/EAP – Business Accounting. Conducted course was new that is continuation of GE classes they had in the lyceums and colleges.

By the end of the course Ss need to be able to:

- provide appropriate communication in the field (both written and spoken) in target language;
- understand and respond (fill) to requests of the special accountant blank lists in target language;
- Write accounting reports in target language using appropriate language;
- Make oral accounting reports (on required/asked issue) in target language;
- Make and fill computer accounting programs (of target language);
- maintain the cash accounts in target language;
- Make and respond to the field related phone calls in TL;
- Receive and understand information from written and spoken field related texts.

Present Situation Analysis (PSA)

To define learners' level of the English placement test held. It showed that overall level of the group is elementary-pre-intermediate. Still there were some students whose individual point was beginner too. So, I should have kept it in mind while organizing classes and activities with the multi-leveled group. Students' level of the current area seemed to be quite well: they were Ss of the Economical Institute and exploring the core of the field, learning Accountancy base, history, principles, forms and methods (paper based and computer program reports), functions, calculation principles, rules, essential taxation right, tax forms, formulas and some essential points in finance, (I mean understanding own field in L1, this information held based on consulting results of students exams).

To know students' current desire about learning English they were questioned in oral form in L1. They expressed the following desire regarding language learning:

- To know about format of accountancy in English speaking countries;

- To improve writing in accountancy especially, in reporting and business letter writing;
- To raise listening comprehension: to be able to catch the idea and details of produced Native speech of the field and non field (formal/informal);
- To be able to interact with people on different issues in the field in TL;
- To get delivered idea/information of business (much attention and preference given to accountancy) news from both written and spoken sources;
- To know basic rules and steps of presentation skills;
- To learn negotiation strategies and rules;
- And some Ss expressed a wish to learn basic Strategies of reading skills.

Context Analysis

The stakeholders in this course were ministry of the higher education, authority of the Institute: rector assistant of the educational fair, office of the head of studies, the head of department, practitioners and potential learners. Training was conducted face to face and some hours of self study. The point of impact on learners was to direct, guide them continuously. As there was lack of language atmosphere they may have it in face to face classes. Moreover, students at the University had this course as compulsory class and alternative ways of teaching did not give best results. The course sessions held at the University of Economy in Tashkent. The classes of the course held in the classroom face to face. The numbers of learners are 24 participants in a group. The course in the Institute is involuntary and once enrolled students' attendance is mandatory. When I conducted lessons with my target learners, devoted hours was 48 (38 in class and 10 self studies) hours per semester and Ss will study course 8 semesters (4 years of being Ss at the Institute). But the situation may change: the devoted hours may increase.

Summative assessment usually flows in the form of 2 midterms and a final test that is required per semester. The responsible person for the tests is the teacher conducting the course, and should follow the assessment specification and format while designing tests.

To teach business accounting classes the following materials were available:

- English for accounting by Evan Frendo and Sean Mahoney, Oxford University Press-2011: this book is suggested for Ss learning English in the field of accountancy as a main coursebook. It is non authentic
- Telephoning in English by B. Jean Naterop, Rod Revell, Cambridge University press-2008: I am planning to use it as a supplementary source and it is non authentic.

- Professional English in Use Marketing by Cate Farrall and Marianne Lindsley Excerpt Cambridge University Press- 2011 (www.cambridge.org) also planned to be used as a supplementary source, non authentic.
- Check you vocabulary for Business and Administration by Rawdon Wayat, A & C Black Publishers Ltd 38 Soho Square, London W1D 3HB -2007. Planned to be used as a supplementary source, non authentic.
- Check you vocabulary for Banking and Finance by Jon Marks, A & C Black Publishers Ltd 38 Soho Square, London W1D 3HB -2007. Planned to be used as a supplementary source, non authentic.
- The articles from scientific journal “Market, Money and Credit” published under the supervision of central bank of Uzbekistan, magazine “Business and Finance” and newspapers publishing in Uzbekistan and abroad, especially English speaking countries. They are authentic materials and a number of theme related articles can be found and used.
- Business weekly from BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/>. These materials are authentic includes weekly news about business.
- Business English Pod <http://www.businessenglishpod.com/> which provides MP3 podcast ESL lessons and audio. Materials are non authentic and wide range of business related lesson plans and course books were available.

Available resources and equipments were black/whiteboard, overhead projector, CD, DVD/videotape player, photocopy machine, printer, flipchart and a computer.

Conclusion

This analysis helped me to provide my classes purposefully and to meet the set objectives easily. Over the designing and conducting ESP classes based on NA the following factors viewed:

- ✓ Needs assessment is the key point of successful and purposeful education in ESP;
- ✓ Needs assessment provides the appropriate choice and use of methods, approaches and strategies in teaching ESP;
- ✓ With the help of NA practitioner can have clear outline and understanding of the course he/she is going to conduct;
- ✓ NA constitutes the practitioners to design the course based on the information about the situation in which the course will be run; factors which may affect the way they learn; their current skills and language use are; the tasks and activities English learners are/will be using English for; knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situation.

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