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Linguacultural Features of Teaching

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Abstract. Teaching English for specific purposes to non-linguistic students presents some challenges due to several factors. They are determined by the growing demands of the global economy towards the level of professional competence, diversification of the employers' demands to the employees and the need to account for the cultural peculiarities of regional economies. The authors present a study of organizing the process of English for specific purposes teaching considering linguacultural features. The authors assess the role of English in the modern world and the global economy. English continues to change the language behavior of people around the globe and is currently the primary tool for large-scale bilingualism. The article analyses the main linguacultural features of different regional business communities' representatives. The article outlines the primary courses design requirements: the communicative orientation and integrating the linguacultural features of professional communication. The authors substantiate the need to develop a methodological, theoretical and practical basis for the implementation of the linguacultural component of the course for the university students.

Keywords. linguacultural component, linguistic training, linguacultural features.

I. Introduction.

The importance of the international communication in the modern society is directly related to the global issues of developing science, technologies, economies and maintaining reasonable relations and understanding across different cultures. Our society is subject to all kinds of misunderstandings on many levels, from a personal relationship to business and politics. The goal of linguistic training of university students is to satisfy those social needs that are associated with the active integration of our specialists into world science and professional activities. Success in professional activity on the global market is treated as an achievement of professional goals. For modern professionals, the ultimate goal of studying a foreign language is "the formation of a linguistic, socioeconomic competence that assumes an adequate use of foreign language code in the implementation of all types of verbal and non-verbal professional intercultural communication in the economic sphere" The objectives of the University course of foreign language

include the development of language, speech, and socio-cultural competence, i.e., mastering the system of a foreign language for scientific and professional communication, proceeding in the cross-cultural interactions with representatives of a different cultural realm. English, as one of the main universally recognized languages of international professional communication, is assumed to ensure the equal access of graduates of Russian universities to the international professional community. Teaching English for special purposes (ESP) for students of non-linguistic profiles presents some challenges due to several factors. They are determined by the growing demands of the global economy to the level of professional competence of graduates, by the diversification of employers' demands for workers, as well as by the need to consider cultural characteristics of the regional economies. Apparently, for successful interaction with other people, choosing the appropriate trajectory of relations requires extensive social knowledge. At least, it includes: assessing the situation, assessing the interlocutor, potential relationships with

him and his behaviour, strategic planning of the communication style, assimilating the experience of social interaction, social intuition. Such experience of social and cross-cultural interaction can and should be integrated into the process of university teaching English. Also, the main emphasis in such training should be placed on the ability to take into account the linguacultural differences of representatives of different professional and business communities depending on the region

The main components of the ESP course, such as analysing the needs of students and pragmatic focus of the course content, should be adjusted taking into account the cultural characteristics of potential professionals and language users. According to some authors, correct identification of the students' language needs is a crucial issue in the design of the course and continues to be a professional challenge for ESP teachers around the world. They suggest a flexible approach to the development of the course and the implementation of teaching methodology based on a socio-cultural approach. These conditions can make ESP teaching attractive and practical. The authors dwell that students should gain a deeper understanding of cultural values, corporate culture norms and even professional jargon, which are inherent in representatives of different cultures. They should also consider and master some verbal and non-verbal norms of behaviour, which helps to avoid misunderstandings or even conflict situations associated with critical discrepancies in professional etiquette. Let's consider the basic requirements, which, in our opinion, are necessary to implement when designing both primary (compulsory) ESP course and additional (optional) language courses for university students. In particular, such courses can be introduced into the optional training program "Interpreter in the professional communication sphere" realized at the Orenburg State University for the students of non-linguistic profiles. The first

requirement for the content of the course is suggested to be the development and intensification of the communicative focus of both content and teaching technologies. Such a requirement results from the need to teach not just language as such, but language as an instrument of communicative activity in conditions of intercultural professional communication. Communication acts both as a training goal and as a means to achieve this goal. Communicative approach implies maximum convergence of the teaching process by its nature with the process of communication. The communicative approach involves the mastery of various speech functions, that is, the ability to express communication intents (request, consent, invitation, refusal, advice, reproach, etc.). This understanding of the communicative approach allowed the researchers (M. Canale, G. Yule, B. Stephen, E. I. Passov, et al.) to describe its main features: communication focus of the teaching and learning process realized in various types of speech activity; focus not only on the content of communication but also on its forms; functionality in the selection and organization of the material: linguistic and speech material should be selected following the functions and communicative intentions of the speaker; situations as critical forms in the selection of material and organization of training: language and speech material should be selected concerning certain situations of communication and practiced in typical situations as well; use of authentic materials, which include language forms typical for the expression of a particular communicative intention, authentic texts and communication situations, as well as various verbal and non-verbal means characteristic of native speakers; use of genuinely communicative tasks that contribute to the formation of communication skills, and practice format adequate to the conditions of real communication (pair and group work); individualization of the teaching process: the use of person-centred approach, that is, considering the students' needs in the

planning and organization of classes, reliance on individual cognitive styles and learning strategies, the use of students' personal experience. Thus, it is evident that the teaching process should be focused mainly on communicative activity, and not on the grammatical component. This does not mean ignoring grammatical accuracy. However, recent studies indicate a tendency to simplifying the grammatical structures used in ESP and the transition to more basic linguistic. The next requirement is considering linguacultural features in teaching English for special purposes. First, it is necessary to consider more deeply the special status of English in the modern world and its unique influence on the global intercultural communication processes. Regarding the population of the Earth, English is superior to the extent of the spread of Latin during the medieval period, to Sanskrit in the ancestral territory of South Asia, as well as to Spanish, Arabic, and French. In other words, English continues to change the linguistic behaviour of people around the globe and is currently the main tool for large-scale bilingualism, since being bilingual now means speaking English as a second language, a language of broader communication, along with one or more of its own languages region. The influence of English penetrates through literary works, international media, cinema and now also through electronic media and the worldwide network. The hegemony of the English language in different countries is manifested in the spheres of business, science, education, management, literature, international communication. However, more importantly, it manifests itself in relation to the English language by its users. This is the only natural language ever in history, which is spoken as a second (or foreign) language by a significantly bigger number of people than it is spoken by native speakers worldwide who now determine the 3SHS Web of processes of spreading and teaching English, its functioning as a universal communication tool.

Communicating in English outside the Western countries is mainly communicating with non-native speakers. Thus, the scale of the spread of the English language and its influence on other cultures and languages is a unique phenomenon in history. Thus, speaking about requirements to the ESP course, we can assume that the integration of knowledge about the language behaviour of non-native language users, in line with the dynamics of the development of language norms inherent in native speakers and their integration into the content of training, guarantees the authenticity of academic requirements for students. When organizing the educational intercultural communication, it is necessary to consider both the individual cognitive space of the participants and their inner cultural level. It is known that even in case of a common cognitive base and belonging to one nation, misunderstanding can occur because of the divergence of personal cultures. Intercultural communication can be effectively realized on the levels of the language, culture, and personality of the subjects of communication. The organization of optimal intercultural professional communication in the teaching process implies several preconditions. These include: sufficient knowledge of the national characteristics of representatives of another linguacultural community, the appropriate motivation for communication (the creation of a zone of intersection, the readiness to assimilate the cultural stereotypes of another ethnos or society, expand their cognitive base and perceive the communicative (verbal and nonverbal) behaviour of others). Also, finally, successful intercultural interaction is achieved by the expedient and effective behaviour of communicants who establish and maintain professional communication. If we consider the essential linguacultural features inherent in business communications among representatives of international business communities, the most distinctive features can be observed in two main categories: cultures based on

interpersonal relations (relationship-based cultures) and cultures based on social norms (rule-based cultures). Each type of culture corresponds to its style of communication, in particular, communication in the professional sphere. Researchers define these styles by these two categories: 1. Relationship-based cultures correspond to high-context communication style. 2. Rule-based cultures correspond to low-context communication style. Communicative behaviour in the professional sphere in relationship-based cultures is regulated by the relations "subordinate - superior." Persons of higher rank require explicit (expressive, verbal and nonverbal) linguistic expression of respect. Thus, a natural communicative environment for the expression of interpersonal relations in the professional sphere is formed. It implies implicit norms of communicative behaviour in every professional situation, which tends to a high context of communication. Communicative behaviour in the professional sphere in rule-based cultures is based on the social norms and the rules that are adopted and implemented by the entire business community. These rules are presented in the explicit form and stand above interpersonal relations, which do not matter for professional contacts. This phenomenon has an impact on the behaviour of communicants, which is more regulated, i.e., tends to low context communication. According to the materials of the Council of Europe program, the teaching of a foreign language and culture includes training foreign language teachers concerning mastering the necessary repertoire of professional and communicative roles. The latter include such roles as an active, competent and experienced language user; an organizer and active "participant" of educational and communicative events in the classroom, a master instructor, a cooperating partner, an interactive interlocutor, a sympathetic listener, an experienced colleague, a consultant, a source of information and ideas, a researcher, an experienced connoisseur,

capable of stimulating language learning and acquiring new cultural and behavioural skills and their effective use. In fact, the ideas of accounting for linguistic and cultural features can be built into the ESP course program: careful selection of relevant articles from the press, as well as from various business reviews, will provide the necessary basis for the practice of communication and analysis of the situations. Both linguistic and cultural awareness should be built into the communication process in a classroom organized by a competent teacher.

Conclusions

The ESP course should help students learn both linguistic and cultural features that are reflected in the communicative behaviour of business partners. There already exist both methodological and theoretical developments and sources that provide the necessary information for each stage of mastering competencies within each specific professional situation. We understand that creating a coherent system of nationally oriented ESP teaching program is still a matter of some perspective. Nevertheless, we hope that the existing theoretical foundations will serve as a basis for continuing scientific research in this field, as well as for the practical use in the compilation of textbooks, teaching manuals and recommendations. The level of competence for the ESP students may be significantly increased under the condition of creating a nationally oriented language learning paradigm aimed at forming a bicultural identity.

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