

DESIGNING THE ESP COURSE FOR LAW STUDENTS

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is aimed at developing learners' foreign language communicative competence in the professional field. The essence of ESP lies in its integration with special disciplines so that students can acquire additional professional knowledge, skills and competences.

According to Dudley-Evans (1998), ESP can be described in terms of absolute and variable characteristics. Any ESP course is expected to have the following absolute characteristics:

- meeting specific needs of learners;
- focusing on the content of the professional field it serves;
- teaching the language appropriate to the professional area it is designed for.

Variable characteristics may differ depending on the course, its duration, forms of delivery and target audience. Some ESP courses might make use of methodology that is employed in General English, while others might focus on the techniques that used in teaching professional disciplines. Most ESP courses are designed for university students or adult learners who are in a professional work situation.

The didactic and pedagogical aspects of teaching English for specific purposes are based on the assumption that learners are future specialists who have their own career goals and aspirations, their desire and need to practically use the acquired knowledge and skills in their professional life. Since a personal learning path is becoming increasingly important, a well-designed ESP course is expected to be individualized. This means that the content of the course is adapted to the needs of each learner.

Another important consideration is motivation for learning. Most students doing a course in ESP understand that it is necessary to meet the job requirements and adapt to changing life circumstances. In the process of teaching English for specific purposes, the formation of professional motivation for learning a foreign language is crucial. It requires a new approach to the selection of content, which is designed to contribute to the comprehensive and holistic formation of the student's personality, preparing them for future professional activities.

Any ESP course has to be well-balanced and include the language material (phonetic, lexical, grammatical, spelling); areas of communication, topics, situations, with regard to the learners' professional field, as well as a system of knowledge of national culture features and that of the country of the language being studied.

The development of appropriate learning materials and textbooks requires great effort of materials developers, since the field of teaching English for special purposes is insufficiently developed, primarily in a linguistic sense. Teachers have to deal with the problem of selecting appropriate terms specific to disciplines, grammar structures, lexical collocations (phrases), phrasal verbs and idioms related to a particular field.

One of the most important features of ESP courses is the authenticity of learning materials, as well as teaching methods and professional skills. At the same time, the language content and professional are combined, so that students can master both the linguistic competence and their profession in inextricable unity.

The course “English for law students” developed at the Department of Foreign Languages and Professional Communication, Tambov State Technical University, is addressed to students studying law and allows students to master the communicative competence in English at the level of B1 + – B2.

The course is aimed at developing practical skills of legal English, which is necessary for making a successful career in law.

The purpose of the course is teaching foreign speaking and writing professional communication, as well as forming intercultural communication skills, including stereotypes of thinking and behavior in the culture of the language being studied.

During the course students familiarize themselves with the main branches of law and relevant legal terminology. They also learn how to write CVs and cover letters, write notes on the case and memos, as well as become familiar with the basic rules of legal translation.

The course is aimed at the formation of the competencies provided by the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education in the Russian Federation such as the ability to correctly and fully reflect the results of professional activities in legal and other documentation, the ability to interpret regulatory legal act, the ability to provide qualified legal opinions and advice in specific types of the legal activity.

While doing the course students:

- expand their professional vocabulary;
- consolidate the grammatical material;
- improve the ability to communicate with interlocutors verbally and in writing;
- improve their reading skills while reading authentic texts of professional topics;
- form their independent work skills in mastering the English language;
- develop their professional competencies in the field of jurisprudence;
- expand their ability to work with original foreign language sources;
- develop the skills of familiarization, search and analytical reading, taking into account the professional orientation;
- form skills in speaking and writing in a foreign language in the field of international legal activity.

The textbook includes two main modules: Career in law and Law and society. Each module consists of three sections, covering such key topics as: the concept of law and its main areas of application, legal professions, employment issues, types of crimes, judicial systems in different countries and unusual laws.

For each module, a task system has been designed that involves students' answers to key questions on the module topic, extracting information from the text for discussion, comparing facts and information, vocabulary and grammar work, discussion on proposed situations.

Assignments are divided by difficulty levels marked with asterisks, which helps to apply a differentiated approach to learning.

For example, one of the elementary level activities involves developing the skill of making associations relying on the linguistic intuition and basic knowledge of legal principles. This assignment is quite essential for teaching students professional vocabulary. Different stages can be distinguished in this process. The first stage includes the following tasks:

- match legal terms and their Russian equivalents which are given randomly, e.g. *хулиганство, bribery, самоубийство, поджог mugging, suicide, arson, взяточничество*;
- match types of crimes with their definitions, e.g.

1) arson	a) the crime of killing somebody deliberately
2) murder	b) the illegal use of fire to destroy a house, building or property

This stage is aimed at introducing new words and formation of strong associations with legal terms.

The second stage may involve pair work or group work (4 learners). It may be focused on the development of speaking skills when students are asked to make up sentences or discuss some topic using the vocabulary which is studied. There can be such tasks as:

- Work in pairs. Find the most appropriate words to make collocations that can be used to describe the given crimes and then make up as many sentences as possible, e.g.

to steal, shops, money, fire, things, goods, people, to kill, life, a house, to take, to deprive of, a person, set, a building, to enter, away

robbery – to steal money; murder -; arson –; mugging –

- Work in groups of four. Take turns to describe different crimes without naming them. Other students must guess what is meant, e.g.

It's a crime when somebody steals money from people's pockets (pickpocketing).

The medium level assignments can be based on the development of reading and speaking skills. Students are asked to read some professional text, find out the main idea and background information, discuss its relevance in the modern society and compare the data presented with the real state of affairs in their own country and abroad.

The most difficult tasks combine such types of speech activity as listening, reading, speaking and writing. For instance, learners must read the text about the main skills of a lawyer, then listen to the panel discussion of core skills of a successful lawyer, after which they highlight these core skills, define them, express their own opinions, agree or disagree with the information presented in the listening material. The final step is to write an essay about the skills a lawyer must have to succeed in his/her professional sphere. This level can also include the assignments which relate to peer assessment of essays written by students. Learners are taught to be able to critically analyze the work of other people commenting on benefits and drawbacks of essays. This activity is an integral part of their future work.

As a result of mastering the course material, students can participate in the discussion of international problems in English, find and use the necessary information from foreign sources, read professional literature, communicate with foreign partners both verbally and in writing, correctly draw up legal documents.

Список цитированных источников

1. Dudley-Evans, Developments in English for Specific Purposes : a multi-disciplinary approach. – Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1998. – 301 p.