

Teaching English for Future Engineers

All Universities and academies in Russia are teaching courses in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which is defined as “the branch of English language education which focuses on training in specific domains of English to accomplish specific academic or workplace tasks” (Orr 2005, 9). Nowadays some specialists advance an idea that our students do not need ESP at all. Teaching EGL is quite enough. First let us give some definitions to understand better the difference between them.

English for General Purposes (EGP) is essentially the English language education in primary and secondary schools. Students are introduced to the sounds and symbols of English, as well as to the lexical and grammatical elements that compose spoken and written discourse. EGP also focuses on applications in general situations: appropriate dialogue with the English teachers, students, and party guests, bank tellers, postal clerks, telephone operators etc. Students also learn how to read and/or write in English using some information found in textbooks, newspaper and magazine articles, application forms, personal letters, e-mail, and home pages. They also get some country-studying information about cultural conventions, and cultural taboos.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is research and instruction that is designed to prepare students for the English used in specific disciplines or professions to accomplish specific purposes. Sometimes ESP is daunting for teachers because students on an ESP course usually know more about the subject. But this factor has to be not scaring but exciting, an interesting challenge. ESP contrasts with EGP, which is aimed at a wide range of learners. ESP trains students for their future work. EGP trains students for their current studies, but in practice the distinction is often blurred.

So, there is the question – to teach or not to teach ESP? Will our students use English at university or in their jobs after graduation? If the answer is no, then ESP is not a reasonable option for the university's English language program. The university will have to justify its existence and improve the program via other means. If the answer is yes, however, then ESP is probably the most intelligent. ESP needs a solid foundation for a stable ESP program. In an ESP analysis, answers to the following questions should be sought.

Answers to these fundamental questions will begin to specify the target skills and language required to function successfully in target English language situations. It should be noted, however, that identifying, understanding, and describing the spoken and written discourse considered appropriate by specific academic, professional, and vocational discourse communities is not an easy, one-time task.

Identifying the language targets toward which students must aim may comprise the largest percent of needs analysis, but it does not comprise it all. We must also discover where our students currently stand and how much

distance lies between them and the target before we can begin to determine where instruction is necessary.

The role of English in the fields of science, engineering, information technology, and business is ever increasing. Consequently, the university has to serve the needs of students and professionals to conduct their studies, research, and business in English on an international scale after getting knowledge in their ESP lessons. Certainly, then, the rising competence of practitioners in this field is an important professional goal.

Our students due to the Entry tests shew different levels: from Elementary to Upper-Intermediate. ESP course in Construction and Architecture is incredibly difficult for all of them. There are some reasons. Firstly, they don't know their subject well because they have just started to study it. Secondly, they don't have much interest in their study process, especially in the English language. They did not devote much time and attention to English at school. They don't have any interest in scientific work.

Fortunately, some students wanted to learn more about our region, its architecture and history, about prominent architects, constructors and other people who took part in architectural history of Urals. Some of them had to spend much time not only in the library or archives; they spent much time working with the English language. And such work within the frame of our ESP course has shown the importance of working in different fields – thinking, searching information, writing skills, translation...

The students say it is difficult but very useful. They started to understand their subject better, how to find the materials for their projects, how to write an article. Certainly, it is not a scientific research but a review. It is only the beginning of their big work during the whole study process.

With this article we have tried to highlight the practical importance of course design and implementation. We hope our work will bring not bad results for our students in their future career. There only remains for us to thank our colleagues for their help, our students for their work.

Berseneva T.S., Sushko T.Y