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TEACHING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ECONOMICS DISCOURSE AT
UKRAINIAN TERTIARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract. *The article deals with the problem of teaching oral English language economics discourse to future managers. The notions “discourse”, “economics discourse” “discourse competence” have been under study. The linguistic and sociocultural peculiarities of oral English language economics discourse have been singled out. The system of work on teaching oral English language economics discourse oriented at communicative-discourse skills development in future managers has been offered. The following interactive techniques: role playing, case studies, professional presentations, project work which were introduced into the process of teaching with the purpose of effective students’ economics discourse competence development have been presented in the article.*

Keywords: *economics discourse, teaching English-language economics discourse, interactive techniques, students majoring in economics and business.*

In recent years there has been a steady increase in interest and research into economics discourse by both economists and applied linguists which has spawned an expanding body of work. Besides these investigations have also proven to be very useful for educators attempting to find solutions to the difficulties that students often have with the specialised language of economics at both the lexicogrammatical and discourse levels. But in spite of all these researches there are a lot of blank spots left.

Thus, the aim of this work is to investigate the effective techniques of teaching English-language economics discourse at Ukrainian tertiary schools. The subject is English-language economics discourse and the object is the process of teaching English-language economics discourse at Ukrainian tertiary schools. The logic of our work intends to disclose the notion “discourse” first of all.

Discourse, as to the words of P. Brooker, is generally used to designate the forms of representation, codes, conventions and habits of language that produce specific fields of culturally and historically located meanings [1].

Study of discourse is a vast field, consisting of many subdisciplines. It has roots in a range of theoretical traditions that investigate the relations between language and speech. The notion “discourse” is the subject of heated debates nowadays. It has become one of the key critical terms in the vocabulary of the humanities and the social sciences, so it is not surprising that it is contentious. Discourse encompasses the use of spoken, written and signed language and multimedia forms of communication, and is not restricted to “non-fictional” nor verbal materials. Although early linguistic approaches judged the unit of discourse to be larger than the sentence, phenomena of interest can range from silence, to a single utterance (such as “ok”), to a novel, a set of newspaper articles or a conversation.

In modern linguistic theory the term “discourse” has been used by many scholars (G. Brown, G. Chaveau, J. Dubois, M. Giacomo, L. Guespin, R. Lakoff, G. Yule) to denote any coherent body of statements that produces a self-confirming account of reality by defining an object of attention and generating concepts with which to analyse it (medical discourse, legal discourse, aesthetic discourse). As to the definition given in the dictionary of linguistics and phonetics by D. Crystal, discourse is regarded to be a behavioral unit which has a pre-theoretical status in linguistics: it is a set of utterances which constitute any recognizable speech event. A classification of discourse functions, with particular reference to type of subject-matter, the situation, and the behaviour of the speaker, is often carried out in sociolinguistic studies, e.g. distinguishing dialogues versus monologues, or (more specifically) oratory, ritual, insults, narrative, and so on [2, p. 96].

According to the words of L. Trimble, “discourse means a collection of connected language units – such as sentences and paragraphs – that together make up a coherent, cohesive text” [8, p. 2].

Analysing economics discourse we can say that it has been the subject of attention by many scholars for years now. Its main features have been summarized by Swales [5] and comprise the following: a tendency towards nominalisation, the use of the passive voice, an extensive use of hypotheticality (Tadros) [6], the importance of conditionals (Mead & Henderson) [4], the fluctuation between countable and uncountable uses of nouns (for example, equilibrium), a high degree of abstraction (Mason) [3], the use of personification and finally the persuasiveness of metaphors.

Also it is rich in visual information that refers to various drawings, diagrams, graphs, tables and charts that are used across the spectrum of economics discourse types and are worth having a special educational attention paid to them because in the oral speech while explaining some economic information the specialists should also disclose the sense of the tables, charts which are presented to the audience and make them decipherable. With this purpose while teaching students a special accent should be laid on this item.

Examining the economics discourse we can single out in it the language of economics, the language of economic documentation, the language of economic advertisement, the language of business telephoning. Besides, it should be mentioned the discourse is divided into oral and written. As to the oral discourse, we refer to it the following kinds: business meetings, conferences, negotiations with foreign partners, business telephoning, presentations, interviews on job hunting, economic forums, briefings etc.

As to the written discourse, we refer to it the following kinds: texts of business correspondence (business letters, e-mails, faxes, memos) and economic documentation (contracts, financial reports, accounts, declarations, invoices, agreements, notifications).

In our work we pay a special attention to the problem of teaching oral economics discourse and development of students' oral economics discourse competence.

Analysing the discourse competence we can say that it is used to refer to two related, but distinct abilities. It refers to the ability to understand and construct monologues or written texts of different genres, such as narratives, procedural texts, expository texts, persuasive (hortatory) texts, descriptions and others. These discourse genres have different characteristics, but in each genre there are some elements that help to make the text coherent, and other elements which are used to make important points distinctive or prominent. Discourse competence could also refer to the ability to participate effectively in conversations. It involves knowing and using the mostly-unwritten rules for interaction in various communication situations within a given speech community and culture. It includes, among other things, knowing how to initiate and manage conversations and negotiate meaning with other people. It also includes knowing what sorts of body language, eye contact and proximity to other people are appropriate and acting accordingly.

For the development of students' discourse competence at the economic facilities we recommend the teacher to conduct the following steps. First of all, choose the definite discourse kind which will be taught, then introduce this kind of discourse, its structure, components to the students and analyse the situations in which this discourse takes place. After it, it is recommended to teach the students to plan the following communicative actions during the discourse creation, to predict the development of the communicative situation and the results of communication, to develop mini-discourses in class, to learn the use of the discourse markers in the necessary places during the speech, to develop the real discourse under the teacher's supervision, to learn the standard rules of English verbal and non-verbal behaviour which are characteristic of the discourse under study and finally to make a presentation on some topic within the learned kind of discourse in class.

Besides, it is strictly recommended to introduce into the teaching process at Ukrainian economic tertiary schools some interactive techniques which will make a great use of developing the students' oral discourse competence in English.

The first technique which is worth discussing is role playing. It is based on classroom modeling of target language communication situations. In such modeled situations every learner communicator acts out

the roles typical for those modeled situations (a customer, a client, a buyer, etc. – the number of possible roles is unlimited). While acting out roles, the learner-communicator is supposed to solve some extralinguistic problems (set in the assignment/instruction to the role play) with the purpose of achieving some extra-linguistic goals (those goals having been either explicitly set in the assignment/instruction to the role play or formulated by learners-communicators themselves in the process of role playing). The learner communicator is also supposed to take into account the modeled situations, the roles, and the possible relationships between communicators in accordance with those roles, as well as the communicative intentions of all participants in that particular piece of communication. If all the above conditions are observed, role playing becomes a kind of life-size experience for students in which modeled life-size problems are being solved and modeled life-size goals are being achieved through the medium of the target language. This allows for subconscious acquisition of the target language in the process of living the modeled experience [7, p. 29].

The illustrations of the cases of role playing aimed at English oral economics discourse competence development are given below. 1. Role-play: conducting an interview. Introduction into situation. There is a vacancy of the position of a PR manager / chief accountant / IT specialist in one international firm. There are 3 candidates applying for each position. All of them are invited for a job interview. The representative of the company is going to interview these people and choose the most suitable one for the definite position. Task: The candidates have to prepare the information about themselves. Think over the questions which can be asked by the interviewer and the answers to them, their behavior during the interview, their appearance. Prepare the questions they can ask at the end of the interview.

The interviewer has to prepare his role: at first he must greet the applicant and introduce himself; try to make the applicant feel at his ease; ask questions about the applicant's job experience, evaluate each candidate, choose the best one for this position in his opinion and ground his point of view. 2. Role-play: conducting a scientific conference. Introduction into situation. Nowadays there are a lot of opportunities for those who want to continue their studies or to perfect themselves as professionals. Numerous programmes, international conferences or congresses offer a person a great chance to master his skills and show his abilities. Conference is one of such kinds of activity. They are usually organized either by a scientific society or by a group of researchers with a common interest in the sphere of economics. Conferences are usually filled with presentations, panel discussions, round tables on various issues and workshops.

Professional conferences are meetings of professionals in a given subject or profession, dealing with organizational matters, matters concerning the status of the profession, and scientific or technical developments. It differs from an academic conference in having broader goals, and usually a much broader attendance. Presenters usually base their talk around a visual presentation that displays key figures and research results. The parts of the conference are the following: 1) plenary session, 2) concurrent session, 3) poster session, 4) slide presentations, 5) workshop, 6) closing plenary session = final plenary.

Plenary session is a term to define the part of the conference when all members of all parties are to attend. These sessions may contain a broad range of content from keynotes to panel discussions and are not necessarily related to a specific style of delivery. The term has been used to describe when information is summarized.

Concurrent session is the session which includes all interest section-sponsored workshops, papers, demonstrations and colloquia.

Poster session is the presentation of research information by an individual or representatives of research teams with a professional focus. The work is usually peer reviewed. Posters are used to promote and explain research work. They are typically shown during conferences, either as a complement to a talk or scientific paper, or as a publication. They are of lesser importance than actual articles, but they can be a good

introduction to a new piece of research before the paper is published. They can be scientific tables, instructions, artwork.

Slide presentation is a presentation with the help of computer software package used to display information, normally in the form of a slide show. **Workshop** is a session in which there is active audience participation via the experiencing and discussing of tasks provided by the presenter. **Closing plenary session (= final plenary)** is a session in which all the results of the conference are summarized and evaluated.

Let's show the definite **tasks** which are offered to the students to fulfill. Tasks: 1) Your friend is going to participate at the scientific conference but he is the first-timer and doesn't know how to do it. Explain to him what steps he/she should undertake and what papers to fill in. 2) Imagine you are appointed to organize the conference. Offer the name of the conference (for example, "The role of a contemporary economist in the polycultural informational environment"; the names of the workshops you are going to organize; present the programme of social events during the conference; suggest variants for accommodation of the participants. 3) Imagine you should organize Resources Exhibition at the conference. Think what materials you can present, what Publishing Houses will prevail at your demonstration tables, what economic books will be of special offer to the members of the conference. Choose the most useful books in your opinion and prepare a mini-presentation of these books for the conference participants. Name the advantages of buying books from the Resources Exhibition Center.

In such a way game situations contribute to the intensification of students' discourse competence development, increase students' motivation to foreign language learning, broaden the area of professional knowledge.

The next interactive technique which is used in our work is **case studies**. In case studies the emphasis is on students themselves producing new knowledge in the process of discussing an issue or a problem, instead of getting that knowledge ready-made from a teacher or a textbook. As a result, not only knowledge is acquired but professional skills are developed as well.

Cases in ESP teaching and learning are real or quasi-real (virtual, invented) situations from the areas of students' future professional activities. Those situations are discussed by students in the target language in their pairs or small groups with the aim of finding a solution of the issue/problem that arose as a result of the given situation or with the aim of disclosing the cause or results of that situation. When working on a case, students get from their teacher or their textbook some detailed information concerning the situation in question and it is on the basis of such information that they are expected to make conclusions and suggest their own solutions [7, p. 53].

The examples of a case study fully meet the demands of English economics discourse competence development. **Task.** Find own solution of the problem situation. **Introduction into situation.** Buffet Ltd. is a UK food company with a restaurant chain in Germany. There is a big problem at their Stuttgart office: the head of the office, Sam Benetti, and the Project Manager, Max Davis, do not get on with each other. As a result the profits are getting smaller. 2. Corel Inc. is a part of a multinational company, based in Boston, the USA. It has recently merged with another company. As a result of the merger, the management cut the workforce by 20%; introduced open-plan offices; appointed new local directors. Most employees are worried about losing job security that can lead to more redundancies.

The third technique which is also worth disclosing is project work. **Project work** is based on project tasks, which model real-life productive activities and require relatively long-term fulfillment (from one week to a whole semester). Project tasks are assigned to individual students or groups of them, and for fulfilling such project tasks, students need to share their responsibilities and functions, divide the task among themselves, work autonomously in and out of class to complete the part of the entire project assigned to them. At the end, they report the completion of their part of the project to other students demonstrating the

results of that completion in some material form. When the entire project has been completed by all the students in the group, the final results need to be reported and demonstrated [7, p. 44]

The example of project work aimed at English economics discourse competence development is presented beneath. **Task.** Create the Web-page of your company. Imagine the company of your own, the products it makes or services it provides. Design the web-page: the colours of the page background, the print, the location of the main items and pictures, number of pages, advertising slogans and eye-catching images. Demonstrate this web-page in class and present your company to the group explaining the company's activity, present-day policy, the target audience, the kinds of products or goods it offers.

One more technique which requires a special attention is professional presentations. Professional presentations in an ESP course can be defined as prepared or spontaneous monologue-type speaking activities of different duration with a definite (modeled) professional aim and in a definite (modeled) professional situation. Speaking in presentations is based on analytic research of a definite professional issue/problem; presentations have clear and logical composition and structure, internal unity, coherence, and cohesion, and are aimed at informing, motivating, or persuading listeners in what concerns their further professional activities (also modeled) [7, p. 59].

The following example will demonstrate the work of this technique. **Task.** Conduct all the preparatory research work of collecting the materials and making the presentation on the topic "Welcome to Odessa region" (Economy of Odessa region. The main tendencies of Odessa industries development. The most well-known Odessa enterprises). Prepare Power Point presentation and present it in class.

In conclusion, it is necessary to state that all the difficulties that students often have with the specialised language of economics at the discourse levels can be overcome with introducing the above-mentioned interactive techniques which play a great role in English oral economics discourse competence development.

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