

Action Research
into Teaching
English in Russia's
Professional Context

Action Research into Teaching English in Russia's Professional Context

Edited by

Natalia A. Gunina

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Action Research into Teaching English in Russia's Professional Context

Edited by Natalia A. Gunina

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Natalia A. Gunina and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-8061-2

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-8061-9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables.....	x
Introduction	xi
Radislav P. Millrood	
Part I: Data-based Research into Teaching English in Professional Context	
Chapter One.....	2
Meeting the Challenge of Teaching English to Engineers in Russia's Context	
Radislav P. Millrood	
Chapter Two	14
Teaching Strategies Based on Language Learners' Beliefs	
Lyudmila Yu. Korolyova and Elena Yu. Voyakina	
Part II: Case-informed Methodology of Teaching English in Professional Context	
Chapter Three	36
The Role of Case Studies in Teaching L2 in Non-Linguistic Universities	
Nataliya G. Kondrakhina, Oksana N. Petrova and N. Staroverova	
Part III: Strategic Realization of Methods of Teaching English in Professional Context	
Chapter Four.....	48
ESP Teaching Strategies (Comparative Analysis)	
Alla S. Chislova, Elena N. Donchenko and Galina S. Pshegusova	

Part IV: Simulation and Drama for Teaching English in Professional Context

Chapter Five	60
Using Simulation-Based Training to Enhance Professional Language Learning (Exemplified by the Business Game ‘Raising Funds for the Vision Film Company’)	
Ekaterina E. Dolgaleva	
Chapter Six	71
Integrating Drama into English Language Teaching of Russian University Students	
Olga E. Lomakina and Tatiana I. Gustomyasova	

Part V: Skills Development during Teaching English in Professional Context

Chapter Seven.....	86
Directions of Improving ESP Learners’ Communicative Skills	
Oleg G. Polyakov	
Chapter Eight.....	98
Teaching EAP in Russian Universities: Why It Is Essential	
Ekaterina V. Dvoretzkaya	
Chapter Nine.....	105
How to Make Teaching Scientific Writing to Master Students More Effective	
Nadezhda N. Nikulshina and Tatiana V. Mordovina	
Chapter Ten	127
Peculiarities of Teaching a Foreign Language as Discourse in Conditions of Professionally Oriented Education	
Svetlana K. Gural, Ludmila Yu. Minakova and Vladimir M. Smokotin	

Part VI: Course Design in Teaching English in Professional Context

Chapter Eleven	144
ESP Course for IT Undergraduate Students: Teachers’ Practices and Students’ Feedback	
Natalia A. Gunina	

Chapter Twelve	161
Materials Design as a Tool for ESP Teacher Professional Development Larissa Ye. Alekseyeva	
Contributors.....	180

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter Two:

Figure 2-1. Language learners' beliefs at the first stage

Figure 2-2. Language learners' beliefs at ESP stage

Chapter Four:

Figure 4-1. The cover of CD-ROM displaying different tasks of the program "TALK"

Figure 4-2. Non-verbal communication

Figure 4-3. Differentiation of various languages by listening to native speakers

Figure 4-4. Spoken English, different styles of speech

Figure 4-5. Finding the suitable ending for a proverb

Chapter Nine:

Figure 9-1. Pre-experimental results of teaching writing experimental research papers

Figure 9-2. The results of the first stage of teaching writing experimental research papers in EG and CG

Figure 9-3. The results of the second stage of teaching writing experimental research papers in EG and CG

Figure 9-4. The results of the third stage of teaching writing experimental research papers in EG and CG

Chapter Ten:

Figure 10-1. The dynamics of changing criteria for the formation of foreign language professional discourse in experimental groups

Figure 10-2. The dynamics of changing criteria for the formation of foreign language professional discourse in control groups

Figure 10-3. The Results of Observation over the Level of Foreign Language Competency Formation in EG-1

Figure 10-4. The Results of Observation over the Level of Foreign Language Competency Formation in EG-2

Chapter Eleven:

Fig. 11-1. Skills to be developed by IT undergraduates in the ESP course

Chapter Twelve:

Figure 12-1. Types of materials (Breen 1982)

Figure 12-2. Materials design model (from Hutchinson and Waters 1996)

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter One:

Table 1-1. Descriptive statistics

Chapter Two:

Table 2-1. Language learning beliefs questionnaire results

Table 2-2. Students' language learning beliefs

Chapter Six:

Table 6-1. Variety of definitions of the concept "drama"

Table 6-2. Techniques for developing autonomy

Chapter Nine:

Table 9-1. Master students' results at the third stage of teaching writing experimental research papers in EG and CG

Chapter Eleven:

Table 11-1. Content of ESP Course for IT Undergraduates

Table 11-2. Students' feedback

INTRODUCTION

RADISLAV P. MILLROOD

This book is the result of the International Scientific and Practical Conference held in Tambov (Russia) in November of 2013. The conference entitled *Teaching English for Professional Purposes* took place thanks to the collaboration of many people and institutions, in particular Tambov State Technical University, Karaganda State University named after E.A. Buketov (Kazakhstan), Southern Federal University (Rostov-on-Don), Tomsk State University, Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation (Moscow), etc. The conference was strongly supported by the publishing houses “Prosveshchenie” (Moscow) and “Express Publishing” (in Russia).

The book is based on investigative attempts of professionals to identify and meet the challenges of developing communicative competence in future engineers, economists and other specialists.

The unifying feature of all the contributions to this book is the active involvement of authors in practical instruction of English for specific professional purposes at the tertiary (bachelors’ and masters’ programs) level in Russia.

The novelty of the teaching approach advocated in this book is denunciation of the traditional practice of transferring classical methodology of communicative-oriented teaching to language classes for students with a non-linguistic/non-teaching professional orientation. The underlying idea of this publication is that a change in professional context implies a change in language teaching methodology including materials, techniques and target competences.

The book covering a number of research areas features the following parts:

1. Data-based research into teaching English in professional context.
2. Case-informed methodology of teaching English in professional context.
3. Strategic realization of methods of teaching English in professional context.

4. Simulation and drama for teaching English in professional context.
5. Skills development through teaching English in professional context.
6. Course Design in Teaching English in Professional Context

Data-based research into teaching English in professional context contains some insights into the efficient pedagogy of language instruction to future specialists.

Case-informed methodology of teaching English in professional context is based on an in-depth analysis of the factual data gathered during real-time classes conducted in professional context.

Strategic realization of methods of teaching English in professional context proceeds from the assumption that a teaching method can be made to work through a good strategy applied in class.

Simulation and drama for teaching English in professional context are presented in this book with a due consideration of the specificity of English language instruction to future professionals in non-linguistic/non-teaching professions.

Skills development during teaching English in professional context is described as a competence-oriented process integrating the art of language use and the mastery of a polytechnic profession including economic and other specialties.

Course Design in Teaching English in Professional Context is presented as a complicated process that requires a shift from traditional teaching approach, analyzing learners' needs and expectations, as well as constrictive alignment of learning outcomes, activities and assessment.

The research that has been done so far and published in this book does not only summarize active attempts of the authors to improve the art and science of teaching English in Russia's professional context, but also paves the way and draws the perspective of further research into integrating language and professional pedagogy in other cultural settings. Cultural framework of such research makes it even more insightful and useful for teachers and students.

The authors of this book hope that the cultural dimension of teaching English for professional purposes will become the subject of research by English language teaching professionals from various countries, prompting international research projects and publications.

PART I:

**DATA-BASED RESEARCH INTO TEACHING
ENGLISH IN PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT**

CHAPTER ONE

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO ENGINEERS IN RUSSIA'S CONTEXT

RADISLAV P. MILLROOD

Rationale for the research project

English language teaching for professional purposes is becoming a focal issue of research in many Russian universities as more and more students are beginning to regard English as a professional rather than a general educational or travelling tool. This is no exception to Tambov State Technical University.

In view of this change, the Department of International Scientific and Professional Communication at Tambov State Technical University has initiated a large scale research project into the area of teaching English for professional purposes to Russia's future engineers in various fields.

Our presupposition has been that this research subject in the area of language teaching methodology for professional purposes would bring us closer to understanding the driving forces, vehicles and destinations that lie behind successful curricular and guide future specialists towards the study of English as a foreign language for professional purposes.

Background for the research project

From a very general perspective, future professionals at Tambov State Technical University learn English for

- a) academic degree (English for academic purposes),
- b) implementing a successful career in the chosen professional field (English for occupational purposes),
- c) addressing individual tasks in profession (English for individual purposes).

With this picture in mind, the essence of teaching English for professional purposes means that the Department is to meet the aspirations of our students to continue their education in a different cultural environment. Besides, we have to consider the natural desire of our students to achieve the mastery of a profession, for the sake of promotion in one's position. In addition, we have to be aware of many other both predictable and hardly expected wishes that indicate the existence of personally significant goals in the chosen occupational area.

This may easily lead us to believe and hope that should we make it easier for the students to go abroad for their professional studies, or should we pave the way to their career ladder, or should we diversify the course considering individual interests, then the success of the course would be guaranteed.

Even without a structured research, we can draw a simple and sometimes disappointing conclusion that life is much stranger than scholarly logic.

The steps already taken

Some organizational steps have already been taken by the Department of International Scientific and Professional Communication at Tambov State Technical University.

In an attempt to meet the changing and diversifying demands of our students, a number of "pinpointed" teaching materials have been published to improve general English communicative skills in language learners, to enhance their interpreting competence in a number of engineering areas including nanotechnology, to give our students the necessary knowledge in business English as many of them are expected to enter the economic spheres any time soon after their graduation. Some of them are already in business.

In line with the growing tendency in Russia to broaden and facilitate students' access to the realm of e-learning, all the teaching materials created by the faculty have been made available for the students in both printed and digital formats. New teaching devices such as interactive boards and multimedia projectors are being widely employed. The integration of distance and contact teaching/learning is well under way with an increasing amount of materials now being made easily accessible on line.

Any course of English for professional purposes aims or, at least, claims to be directed to achieving some goals that would have a

particularly significant meaning for an individual. The courses that are currently being taught are designed to:

- formulate specific meaningful tasks for students,
- take into account individual demands of language learners,
- model professional activities of future engineers during classes of English,
- use specific techniques in line with the “technological thinking” of learners,
- clarify and reasonably narrow the scope of communicative competence taught,
- merge our language curricular with mastering a profession of an engineer,
- require teachers’ expertise both in language, methods and “profession”.

With all the practicality of the steps already taken, the analysis of students’ academic records has repeatedly proved that there was no direct link between the individualization, professionalization and technolization of language teaching, on the one hand, and the growth of students’ communicative competence, on the other. The reason for that was to be further sought in other directions of change.

Personal involvement and students’ authoring their language curriculum

In attempt to increase the efficiency of the English language taught for professional purposes to future engineers at Tambov State Technical University, the Department of International Scientific and Professional Communication has taken steps towards raising students’ awareness of the role of English in their professional life.

The following aspects of the situation were brought to the attention of our language learners:

- economic globalization in the modern world and the spread of English in Europe and worldwide,
- processes of active migration of professionals due to increased "permeability" of states borders,
- job opportunities in other countries and the economic need for professionals in the chosen field from abroad,
- increasing need for life-long learning to better adjust to the demands of the labor market dynamism,

- availability of both qualified and semi-qualified jobs with the English language knowledge as a precondition for employment,
- use of English as a medium of international and intercultural communication “from home” in social networks on the Internet.

These and similar subjects have been raised during the discussion sessions with the students before and during the English language course with a view to enhance their involvement in active learning.

The response of the students has always been positive with a lot of questions asked and ideas contributed. The common thread for all those exchanges has been unequivocal support for English language learning and the unquestionable recognition of its importance for professional studies and careers as well as for satisfying the learners' own individual needs.

Under the pressure of professional circumstances students have to turn into customers of educational services in order to increase their competitiveness in the labor market. In this regard, professional demands of students consistently determine the content and form of professionally oriented language training programs for different professional profiles.

Interestingly, some students expressed their interest whether English was going to remain Language #1 in the world and whether English for professional purposes would forever be more in demand than, for example, “Chinese for professional purposes”. Such questions have been prompted by the students' awareness that economic ties of Russia and China are growing rapidly. The same can be said about Germany although students are becoming aware that despite apparently successful performance of Russian-German joint ventures, the German language is losing ground in Russia both at the secondary and tertiary level of education.

English vs. Russian for professional purposes

Students have admitted the growth of importance of the Russian language knowledge for getting a job. According to the students' contributions to the discussion, the Russian language for professional purposes is gradually rising in significance among migrants seeking work in Russia. This process is being invigorated by a number of decrees made by the Russian government to make the Russian language exam obligatory for migrant workers, most of whom come from the impoverished states of the former USSR.

This has led some students to believe that perhaps in the not so distant future it will be the Russian language that will become the subject of

studies across cultures giving opportunities for professional employment for migrant specialists from abroad. In nearly all cases the students would agree that learning English for professional purposes is the order of the day even though other languages may also be of significant use for the success of a specialist.

Raising students' awareness of the objective reasons to learn English for professional purposes has proved essential in the language pedagogy but this area of improvement is certainly not sufficient to bring a positive change to attitudes and results shown by our students in their language studies.

Pedagogical ideology in transit

Learning English for professional purposes brings changes into the pedagogical ideology of the teaching process. This regards primarily and importantly the attention now given to the course output.

An important transition is now being observed in the linguistic content of the curriculum. The content of learning is no longer purely linguistic, but rather a mix of communicative and professional competence. The context of learning is not made of everyday life simulations, but rather vocational situations that would preferably reflect not so much the scope of the English language lexis and grammar but rather the richness and innovative leadership in the chosen professional areas.

The curriculum of teaching English for professional purposes can no longer be as stable and everlasting as the lexis-and-grammar based curriculum in the not so very remote past. The reason is that some cutting-edge information relevant to a certain profession is changing much more rapidly than the English grammar or vocabulary stock. This has to be reflected in the curriculum undergoing a permanent change as synchronized with the change in the state of the art in a certain profession.

The course output is measured against the standards that are dictated not only by language teaching priorities, but rather by a set of competences required by the Federal State Educational Standard in a chosen professional field as approved by the Ministry of Education.

The aftermath for the teachers is that in order to be recognized as qualified professionals for teaching English for professional purposes they need to be equally competent in communicative skills, professional language including terminology, and in the professional area chosen by the students.

This is accompanied by a crucial change in the role of the students who transit from their position of language learning subjects into the

developing professionals with the desire to acquire professional competence to compete successfully in the labor market.

The new teaching doctrine is now directed at mastering a foreign language relevant to the needs of a professional who wants to pursue a successful career. The formation of communicative competence in a foreign language is integrated in the formation of professional competence in a concrete professional context.

The change in pedagogical ideology leads to the change in the teaching methodology.

The change in methodology

It is a well-observed fact that methodology of teaching English for professional purposes is changing rapidly. One of the most noticeable facts is that extensive research work has been done across various linguistic, pedagogical and publishing centers into the precise areas of teaching English to a particular group of future professionals (V. Evans et al., Career Paths. Express Publishing. http://expresspublishing.ru/info.aspx?ob_no=29084). Courses of English for professional purposes are getting more and more tailored to specific needs of trainees.

This process is stimulated by the growing demand for professionally oriented language programs at both secondary and tertiary level of vocational / professional training. In such programs a language is no longer a separate subject of interest with the self-value in it, but rather the vehicle of much more important professional knowledge. Besides, the share of general English in such coursebooks apparently goes down, which sends a clear signal to both teachers and learners that they have entered a clearly separate area of professional training through English language instruction.

Teaching techniques are also undergoing change. They retain their focus on communicative language teaching but professional context makes a tangible impact on the method design including the approach, principles and techniques of language pedagogy. This is felt in at least three key notes characteristic of the methodology of teaching English for professional purposes.

The first key note deals with the “bottom-up” approach to teaching English for professional purposes. This means that a starting point of designing such a course consists in analyzing and considering the needs of future specialists in developing their professional competence. This is logically linked to the second key note regarding the principles of language instruction in a vocational context.

The second key note pertaining to the principles (major guidelines) of teaching English for professional purposes is the merger of communicative and professional competences as a result of an integrative English-for-profession course. *Such merger means a change in the criteria for evaluating the success of professional training programs by pushing to the fore professionals' ability to function communicatively and by moving to the back the skill to communicate professionally.* Actually, the core value of any professional engineer has always been a high degree of professional skills over other subskills necessary for a profession. The shift in the approach to understanding “competence” in a professional context has inevitably led to the transformation of teaching techniques in any course of English related to professional training. This takes us to the third key note in the methodology of such a course.

The third key note relates to the techniques of teaching English for professional purposes. Since professional context plays such an important role in shaping the approach to and the principles of any course of English for professional purposes, consideration of context is expected to be equally essential for designing adequate teaching techniques. In view of a professional context, nothing better comes to mind regarding the technicalities of language instruction to future professional engineers, than teaching English through simulation, meaning the simulation of professional situations. This means that professional circumstances are replicated or “simulated” language-, situations-, and challenges (problems)-wise.

A change in course methodology is linked to a change in designing an English-for-professional-purposes coursebook.

The change in the coursebook design

A coursebook of English for professional purposes is changing not so much in the way it looks but “from inside”. This concerns language level (according to the Common European Framework), focus on skills, and task design.

In teaching English for professional purposes, language level is inseparable from language selection. The most challenging task here is to bring “the right English language” to “the right professional”. This is especially vivid now that everyday English has ceased to be “in deficit”. It is the “English in professional context” that has turned out to be the most requested and the least explored area of research and practical pedagogy.

Regarding the language level of English in future engineers at Tambov State Technical University, it is generally estimated at the starting mark of A2 (Pre-Intermediate level) and up to B2 (Upper-Intermediate level). The

variance is explained by the prior language training that the students may have received at the earlier stages of their education at school or vocational college. Some of them may have finished secondary school with an advanced English language curriculum.

This means that a coursebook of English for professional purposes designed for future engineers studying at a university in Russia is expected to embrace three levels of English and namely: A2 - Pre-Intermediate, B1 – Intermediate, B2 – Upper-Intermediate. In addition to this challenge, the situation is quite common when students study in heterogeneous groups with mixed language levels. In such groups the teacher faces the need to meet the learning needs of students who are capable of acquiring a professionally required language at a “breakthrough”, “threshold” and “vantage” stage (in the terminology of Common European Framework). *Ideally, the three levels of English need to address the same topic areas of professional studies. That would enable the learners of different degrees of language proficiency to get actively involved in the teaching activities and to cooperate interactively during the lessons.*

Modern coursebooks of English for professional purposes see a significant change in some traditional curricula for teaching oral and written English, including old-time topics of communication and grammar. Some traditional topics have to be addressed in view of the learners' professional needs. For example, for engineering specialties such topics as 'Family life', 'Travelling' or 'Eating out' would not be in demand, while these topics may be relevant for future social workers, travel agents or hotel business employees.

Training activities in the coursebooks also undergo change. Depending on the future profession, translation activities may be relevant for future engineers, annotation writing will be in demand among future researchers and journalists, preparing presentations and writing business letters will be useful for managers, texts of city and country tours will be of interest for future guides, writing texts of advertisements might be a necessary skill for PR specialists. Plumbers, babysitters, electricians and other specialists will need a different language agenda for their course of English.

With all the steps taken by the Department of International Professional and Scientific Communication at Tambov State Technical University towards raising the standards of tuition, the results are slow to emerge. In seeking the answer to the crucial question of “Why?” a questionnaire was administered to the University graduates to enable the faculty to hear the voices of the students.

The study of “voices from the students”

A questionnaire of 20 questions in the form of statements relating to English language studies was distributed among 50 graduates taking their regular course of Business English. According to the syllabus, the students attend a lesson a week with each lesson lasting for 90 minutes. The term lasts for 16 weeks and the course takes 32 academic hours (an academic hour in Russia lasts 45 minutes) to complete.

The graduates were asked to express the degree of their agreement with the statements in the questionnaire using the following scale: +3 strongly agree, +2 agree, +1 partially agree, 0 no idea, -1 partially disagree, -2 disagree, -3 strongly disagree.

The statistical analysis was performed with the software package “IBM SPSS Statistics”.

Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics of the questionnaire responses are given in Table 1-1:

Statements	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
1 I can speak English	-1.00	2.00	.900	.73786
2 I can understand English	0.00	2.00	.900	.56765
3 I can write English	-1.00	2.00	.700	.82327
4 I can listen to English	-1.00	2.00	.700	.82327
5 I can do the learning tasks	0.00	2.00	1.400	.69921
6 I can understand authentic English speech	-3.00	2.00	.600	1.34990
7 I can understand English lectures	-2.00	2.00	.600	1.50555
8 I can understand English articles on engineering	-2.00	2.00	.700	1.33749
9 I can understand summaries of articles in English	-3.00	2.00	.900	1.52388
10 I can take short notes in English	-3.00	3.00	.800	2.09672
11 I can follow presentations in English	-3.00	3.00	.900	1.85293
12 I can be grammatically correct	-3.00	2.00	-.200	1,75119
13 I have the knowledge of western culture	-3.00	3.00	.100	2.13177
14 I can make myself understood	-1.00	3.00	1.300	1.49443
15 I want to know English	3.00	3.00	3.000	.00000
16 I am interested in professional information in English	-2.00	3.00	2.200	1.54919
17 I try to follow professional information from the developed countries	0.00	3.00	2.200	1.03280

18 I take private English language lessons	-3.00	3.00	1.900	1.91195
19 I mostly use English language on the Internet	-3.00	3.00	1.700	1.94651
20 I listen to songs and watch films in English	-3.00	3.00	1.700	1.88856

Table 1-1. Descriptive statistics

As shown in Table 1, the statements produced the students' responses with the minimal answers varying from -3 to +3. The only statement that evoked the highest positive response in some graduates of +3 was "I want to study English".

The number of statements that produced the minimum of points in some graduates was considerably higher, including the ability to understand authentic English, the knowledge of foreign culture, grammatical accuracy. Some graduates completely denied out of class involvement with the English language use, including additional private language studies, browsing the Internet and even listening to songs or watching films in English.

However, quite a few students gave the highest scoring to the statements about the knowledge of western culture, their ability to make them understood, the interest in professional information in English. They also admitted taking private English language lessons, using English on the Internet and listening to songs or watching English language films.

The mean arithmetic showed the average quantities of students' points given to the questionnaire statements. The highest average point of +3 was unanimously given by all the students to the statement "I want to study English". The lowest average mark of -2 belonged to the statement "I can be grammatically correct".

Standard deviation values signified the unanimity of the students in providing their responses to the statements of the questionnaire. The lowest deviation went to the statement "I want to know English" proving the graduates' unanimity in their evaluations.

The highest deviations were registered in responses to the statements "I can take short notes in English" and "I have the knowledge of western culture". The deviation was a little lower but equally significant in the graduates' assessments of the statements "I take private lessons in English", "I mostly use the English language on the Internet", "I can follow presentations in English" and others. This means that the students differ among themselves along the lines of their English language

competence, the use of English outside their classrooms and involvement in private language studies.

Correlation analysis

The purpose of the correlation analysis was to find out the hidden links between the students' responses to the questionnaire statements. The presupposition was that those hidden links would enable the researcher to get a deeper understanding of some mutual dependencies behind the attitude of our graduates towards English language learning.

For the correlation analysis only the links significant at the level of $p=0.01$ and $p=0.05$ were considered.

The most developed network of correlations was found out among such notions as:

- *understanding articles on engineering,*
- *taking notes while reading and listening,*
- *finding professional information in English,*
- *browsing the Internet for professional information,*
- *following presentations at conferences and seminars,*
- *private studies of English for general and professional purposes.*

These items formed a correlation galaxy with significant quotient values.

Cluster analysis

A hierarchical cluster was built based on the results of the questionnaire responses. The purpose of this statistical exercise was to analyze the semantic similarity and relationship among the graduates' responses to the statements of the questionnaire.

The peak of the hierarchy was framed by the notions of "Productive writing" and "Taking notes". Further down the hierarchy were the notions of "Language Studies" and "Professional Studies". The further step down was "Speaking English" and "Understanding English".

The hierarchy indicated that semantically there were three meaningful clusters grouping together all the graduates' responses to the questionnaire statements:

- English language writing skills,
- Integration of language and professional studies,
- General English communication skills.

The above clusters revealed the semantic structure behind the students' responses and indicated the areas to be addressed in rethinking the practice of teaching English for professional purposes to future engineers.

Conclusion

The level of communicative competence in English demonstrated by would be engineers in Russia is apparently modest. However, the demand coming from the students is in the market. Meeting this demand seems to be the only reasonable response of the English language teaching community in the ESP field in Russia.

References

- Hutchinson, T. & A. Waters. *English for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Evans, V. et al. *Career Paths*. Express Publishing.
http://expresspublishing.ru/info.aspx?ob_no=29084.

CHAPTER TWO

TEACHING STRATEGIES BASED ON LANGUAGE LEARNERS' BELIEFS

LYUDMILA YU. KOROLYOVA
AND ELENA YU. VOYAKINA

Introduction

In the modern methodology of ELT, learners' beliefs and attitudes as well as learners' motivation and capacity are considered as key points in successful L2 learning and teaching. These beliefs refer to internal factors, and are defined as "general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing learning and about the nature of language learning" (Victori and Lockhart, 1995: 224).

In this Chapter we will analyze students' beliefs and expectations at different stages of studying English at Tambov State Technical University and focus on efficient teaching strategies which are used in accordance with these attitudes.

The present study

At Tambov State Technical University (TSTU) the English course lasts four years and is divided into two stages. The first stage is teaching English to first and second-year students; the second stage – to third and fourth-year students. According to the curriculum, English is studied at the university as a second language for two academic hours a week. During the first two years, students are taught General English, while third- and fourth-year students learn English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

There are two objectives of the study: 1) to compare students' beliefs at the preliminary stage before beginning to learn English at the university and at the end of the first stage before being taught ESP;

2) to analyze teaching strategies used at both stages.

Participants

The study was based on the Language Learning Beliefs Questionnaire (see Appendix 1).

100 first-year students and 100 second-year students of Tambov State Technical University were asked to respond to the statements given in the questionnaire. The answers could vary from “strongly agree”, through “agree” and “neutral” to “disagree” and “strongly disagree”.

Results of the study (stage I)

In general the students evaluated 20 statements concerning their language learning beliefs. All the results of this questionnaire are given in the following table.

Questions	Strongly agree (st-s)	Agree (st-s)	Neutral (st-s)	Disagree (st-s)	Strongly disagree (st-s)
1. People over 40 will probably find it hard to learn a foreign language	10	50	0	30	10
2. If you don't have a special aptitude it will be really hard to learn one well	0	50	40	10	0
3. It's really important to have your errors corrected from the start when you are learning a language or you will never speak correctly	80	10	0	0	10
4. Grammar drills are very important in mastering a foreign language	60	40	0	0	0
5. You can learn a foreign language more easily if you like the people who speak that language	30	60	10	0	0
6. The best way to learn another language is to forget about lesson plans or grammar, but just spent time with people who speak the language	0	30	30	30	10
7. You shouldn't say anything in a new language until you can say it correctly	0	0	20	40	40

8. Some languages are by their nature harder than others	10	50	20	20	0
9. Attitude contributes as much as intelligence to language learning success	20	40	40	0	0
10. If you can analyze how a language works, you'll be able to speak it well	40	50	10	0	0
11. You are learning a language if you can understand it, even if you can't speak it	20	20	30	20	10
12. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another	30	60	10	0	0
13. It is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language	10	20	30	20	20
14. Is it important to listen a lot before starting to speak	50	30	10	10	0
15. Learning a foreign language is different from other academic subjects	20	60	20	0	0
16. It is important to repeat and practice a lot	90	10	0	0	0
17. It is important to understand what parts of a sentence mean when you are learning to say it	70	30	0	0	0
18. At some point you need to spend a year or so in a country where the language is spoken in order to become really fluent	0	90	10	0	0
19. Memorizing dialogues is a good way to learn a language	30	50	20	0	0
20. Being anxious is usually harmful when learning a foreign language	10	20	70	0	0
The total number of answers	580	790	370	180	100

Table 2-1. Language learning beliefs questionnaire results

Questionnaire analysis and teaching strategies (Stage I)

The language-learning belief (1): Most of the students (60%) agree that it is hard for people over 40 to learn a foreign language. 40% of the students disagree with this statement. It means that many 17- and 18-year-old people take into consideration those limits that a person's age can set,

thus taking an advantage of their youth for learning a foreign language. Other respondents do not pay attention to age limits and think that everything depends on an individual and that it is never too late to learn.

The teaching strategy: Relying on the first part of the students (60%), a foreign language teacher can encourage them to take full advantage of their age and try to master the studied language.

The language-learning belief (2): The second statement concerns a special aptitude without which it will be hard to learn a foreign language quite well. It seems to be a rather dubious statement as 40 respondents are neutral, while 50 of them agree with it.

The teaching strategy: The results imply the idea that a foreign language teacher should help students develop different skills in all types of communicative activity so that students will not feel deprived of the aptitude to learn a foreign language even if they have some difficulties. Thus, at our lessons of English we use an individual approach to students giving more difficult tasks to those for whom it is quite easy to learn a foreign language, and simpler tasks to those who find it complicated.

For example, the English language course for the first-year students includes the following topics: *Personality, Travel, Work, Language, Advertising, Business* (Cotton, Falvey, and Kent, 2008). Language groups consist of approximately 10 students and in case most of them have problems while learning English, teachers either simplify all the tasks or exclude those ones which are very difficult for the students. For instance, while doing Lesson 4 “Scenario” of Unit 1 “Personality,” the teacher asks the students to describe themselves (interests, hobbies) instead of analyzing those candidates whose profiles are given in the coursebook. If the students in the group have different abilities, more advanced students should discuss these candidates, choose the best one according to the requirements given in the coursebook and explain their choice. Other students are given the task to ask each other questions about their qualities, interests, traits of character and so on. This helps all the students understand that they have abilities for learning a foreign language.

The language-learning belief (3): The third statement gives an idea about the importance of error correction from the start. It is surprising that 80% of the students strongly agree with this, as people do not usually like when they are corrected all the time. It is assumed that correcting every mistake can discourage students and prevent them from learning a foreign language. However, the results of the questionnaire show that the students want to be corrected in order to speak a foreign language properly.

The teaching strategy: At our University we usually apply the following method based on an individual approach: if a more advanced

student makes mistakes we try to correct most of them, a less confident student's errors are corrected partially.

The language-learning belief (4): 100% of the students agree with the statement that grammar drills are important in mastering a foreign language. This indicates that our students have a very serious attitude to learning a foreign language and understand that it is impossible to master one without grammar.

The teaching strategy: At our lessons after the explanation of some grammar aspect teachers make the students use it in practice in different types of communicative activity. For example, while studying Unit 3 "Work" the teacher draws the students' attention to the use of Present Perfect Continuous. Firstly, grammar exercises from the coursebook are done. Then, the students should give their own examples and ask each other questions using Present Perfect Continuous. After that, more additional grammar exercises are given. At the next lesson, the teacher tells the difference between Present Perfect and Present Perfect Continuous. After taking some grammar exercises, the students do a job interview, ask and answer questions using these tense forms.

The language-learning belief (5): 90% of the students agree that it is possible to learn a foreign language more easily if you like the people who speak that language.

The teaching strategy: At Tambov State Technical University, teachers of English often invite English-speaking students to their lessons to give the learners an opportunity to speak and learn the language through communication with native speakers.

The language-learning belief (6): We can single out three groups according to the response to the statement about learning a foreign language without any lesson plans or grammar, but simply by spending time with those who speak that language. There are 30% of those who agree, 30% of those who disagree and 30% who are neutral. The results are a bit contradictory as in the fourth statement most of the students agree with the necessity of grammar drills. This means that the first-year students are not sure which way is the best.

The teaching strategy: It is the teacher's responsibility to show students that the most efficient method of learning a foreign language is to combine several ways. Consequently, it is important to learn grammar as well as to communicate with native speakers.

The language-learning belief (7): Most of the respondents (80%) disagree with the opinion that you should not say anything in a new language until you can say it correctly. We admit that this is the right approach to learning a foreign language because it is necessary to practise