



THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR ECONOMISTS

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Annotation

The increasing importance of English as an international language has resulted in the expansion of one particular aspect of English Language Teaching, namely the teaching of English for Specific Purposes. This relatively new aspect of English Language Teaching has its basis in an investigation of the purposes of the learners and the set of communicative needs arising from those purposes. These particular needs will guide teachers in designing different course materials, in choosing the kind of English to be taught, the topics and themes through which it will be taught, the skills and activities they will make use of. All these aspects could be perceived as a real challenge for both teachers and learners. Consequently, the aim of this study is to offer some immediately accessible guidelines into teaching English to students in Economics.

Keywords: economics, scarce resources, goods, inputs, outputs, economic theories, macroeconomics, microeconomics.

Students in Economics and their needs

Students can be defined through a number of special characteristics: 'They can engage with abstract thought, have a range of life experiences, definite expectations about the learning process, their own set patterns of learning, and are more disciplined than children. On the other hand, students have a number of characteristics which can make learning and teaching problematic: can be critical of teaching methods, anxious and under-confident because of previous

failure and worry about diminishing learning power with age'. They also face certain linguistic problems (e.g. 'fossilized' errors such as persistent deviations from the second language norm or language transfer), which have a negative influence on the productive skills when dealing with economics in English. Students may also have different reasons for learning economics in English, different personalities and ways of relating to and working with other people, different skills, aptitudes and abilities, different topics they find interesting, different learning styles, different previous learning experiences, different speeds of working and learning. Contrary to young learners who enjoy variety in the field of activities performed in class, students are far more selective. For instance, they generally dislike role-plays and made-up stories, probably because of their practicality and life experience. Although they claim they would like to drill and do grammar exercises, they do not enjoy these activities. Another important aspect of their way of studying is that they generally avoid doing homework or any other additional tasks that might help them to consolidate economics structures and vocabulary. They keep complaining about shortage of time, work load and family commitments. Nevertheless, activities of listening and speaking spontaneously are among their preferences. Motivation is an important part of learning. Students, contrary to young learners who can study for the sake of a good grade or other indirect rewards, put forth sustained efforts for some other goals than the immediate enjoyment of the activity itself. Internal and external factors that promote learners' reasons for learning are challenges and promotions at work, requirements for English literacy, overseas assignments and trips, workshops and conferences in English, welcoming foreign visitors, professional differentiation and specialization, e-communication. Moreover, students have distinct, individual reasons for being in an economics class and learning English. Teachers teach better if they know more about all those reasons.

Learning Styles

Students may be grouped according to their preferred learning styles. Using multiple learning styles for learning is a relatively new approach to teaching. Differences in cognitive styles influence learners' priorities for a particular approach to learning. Learning styles are 'specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations'. According to Richards and Lockhart, the common



learning styles for each type of learners are: - concrete learners, who use active means of processing information; - analytical learners, who prefer logical and systematic presentation of new material. Other researchers also name them logical or mathematical learners as they prefer using logic, reasoning and systems; - communicative learners, who prefer a social approach. They may be also referred to as social/interpersonal learners (they prefer to learn in groups or with other people) or verbal/linguistic learners (they prefer using words, both in speech and writing); - authority-oriented learners, who prefer the teacher's authority. Other researchers describe learning styles in a more detailed manner and add to the list above solitary or intrapersonal learners, who prefer to work alone and use self-study. Most of the studies investigating learning styles accept the following main categories: visual, aural and kinaesthetic learners. Visual or spatial learners learn through seeing, so they prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding. They need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to the tone of voice, the pitch, the speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder. Some strategies for auditory learners are: sharing notes and asking peers for feedback, making audio-recording notes and listening to them, verbalizing answers first in one's head before writing them down, orally summarizing and discussing short fragments of a reading passage, reading to oneself aloud or having someone else do it. Physical/tactile or kinesthetic learners learn through moving, doing and touching, so they prefer using their body, hands and sense of touch. They learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration. Learning a series of facts while doing some form of exercise, engaging in activity-based role-plays, linking language to learning through processes involving physical activity, physically highlighting key language and pieces of information are only a few of the strategies that might be applied when working with this type of learners. Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may have one dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles. Others might use different styles, according to the circumstance they find themselves in. The truth is that nobody can talk about some right mix of learning styles. Moreover,



someone's learning styles are not fixed. For instance, one can develop ability in less dominant styles, as well as further develops styles that somebody else already uses well.

Training strategies in teaching English to students in Economics

One of the important goals in learning a foreign language is to develop the skill of listening comprehension. Listening activities often prove to be time-consuming. After listening to some passage, most of the students usually make complaints about all being too fast. Or different students recall the passage differently. Moreover, they often misinterpret the recorded information and claim that they have definitely heard it. The best approach in this case is to lengthen pauses during the listening activity, according to the scheme listening – pause – listening – pause etc. These pauses give students the 'thinking time' they need to process information. At first students might need longer pauses after a brief listening, but gradually they will develop the ability to process longer passages without any pauses and get the information right. The issue of developing speaking skills in English for students in Economics is particularly difficult. The major reason is that oral and listening skills are interrelated: the better listening comprehension, the better speaking skills. That is why they should be developed simultaneously. Competence in speaking skills is also hard to develop as factors like emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitude, motivation, uneasiness, self-doubt or frustration come into play, making the teachers' task even more difficult.

Consequently, the teachers' efforts should be directed towards encouraging students to speak out their minds on all aspects of covered materials and persuading them that making mistakes is a natural process of learning Economics in a foreign language. Reading an economics text in a English might be challenging too. Many students easily give up doing it, as they feel they do not know all the words and need the dictionary all the time. They usually classify the activity of reading as time-consuming and boring. Teachers might find useful to make their students enjoy this activity by providing them with the following tips: decide on why the students have to read the text; find the right place to read; survey the text in order to find out how long it is, if there is a table of contents or a conclusion; if there are any unfamiliar words look them up in a good online dictionary; read headings and diagrams; during reading, try to summarize the main idea of each paragraph and if there are no subheadings, create their own;



make some bullet point notes as they proceed through the text; if there is a conclusion of the end of one chapter, read it first. In speaking, the students might be interviewed individually or in pairs, asking them informally for advice about what would be useful to work on during the future lessons or showing the intended course-book or materials for the lecture and discuss them together in order to select the most appropriate ones. Or teachers might collect oral feedback comments about the course at the end of the lessons. Through observing, the teacher sets the students tasks to do in class. This will allow him/her to observe them working, speaking, and using the language. The teacher will be able to diagnose the students' language or skills problems and discover more about what they need.

Conclusion

A method is a way of teaching. The choice of a method is dependent on the teacher's approach, namely what he/she believes about how people learn or how teaching helps people learn. Any teacher then has to make methodological decisions about the course aims, the teaching techniques, the type of activities, the methods of assessment. Despite the various methods that could be approached by language teachers, many of them nowadays do not follow one single method. Over the years, they develop a personal methodology, built from their own selection of what they consider to be the best and most appropriate of what they have learnt about. There are individual preferences regarding how students like to communicate and learn. A complete repertoire of teaching and learning approaches improves learning. Students who approach the learning process with a wide range of strategies have more options available for meeting expectations. Increased student awareness of different learning styles builds multiple perspectives, which help students to better understand others and to be prepared to work within their learning community. Every individual student has his or her own specific purpose for learning Economics in English. A needs analysis is an essential starting point in teaching students, as teachers cannot really address a student's specific needs unless they are absolutely clear about what they are. A successful English course for students in Economics is one that is learner-centred and helps to meet the foreign language needs of the learners.



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