



"Designing an ESP Course for the Construction Industry: A Workplace Communication Focus"

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Introduction

The Construction Industry English course is designed for construction industry workers employed by an international company. This course aims to improve their workplace communication skills, teaching them to effectively participate in meetings and presentations. In order to develop a proper course, Airport English by Joan Cutting was taken as a model framework from Part 3 of Woodrow (2018).

Keywords : workplace communication skills

Rationale

Navoi is the most manufactured city in Uzbekistan, and it is considered a perfect place to construct factories. An international company that constructs factories opened a new company here and gathered specialists from different countries. Specialists who came from different countries mainly work in management roles, while native people work in ordinary roles. The company faced problems with communication among managers and wanted to teach them to communicate using English. As a solution, the heads of the company decided to conduct an ESP course for foreign workers and also include in this group one native worker from every department who is also a specialist and works as the head of that department. By designing this ESP course, the company aims to bridge the communication gap between managers from different countries and the native workforce, so at the end of the course, participants will be able to use English for instructions, exchanging opinions, and conducting presentations and meetings.

ESP Context Selection

My ESP context is "Construction Industry English," and the course is designed to be completed in 5 months. The students in this course are professionals who work in different roles in the construction industry. The group consists of fifteen 25- to 30-year-old professionals, and classes are conducted face-to face.

The students work for an international company in Navoi that specializes in the construction of agrochemical production factories. Students use English in their working context to give instructions, exchange opinions, and discuss problems. Overall, English is used as the main language for communicating in the workplace.

The students in the target group have diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as they come from different countries. Some of the students are from European countries, and English is their second language; however, they are not advanced English language speakers. Overall, learners'



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English language level ranges from A2 to B1, and they had formal and informal instructions on English. In order to check their language level, I conducted a test where I checked their knowledge on four skills.

The primary focus of the course is to improve the students' reading, listening, and speaking skills in English. Moreover, building specific vocabulary related to the construction industry is one of the aims of the course. The main focus here is to give students opportunities to improve their ability to communicate in English.

The teaching setting includes all the required equipment to facilitate effective instruction. such as a wide display, a stage to present or conduct role play, headphones, and posters of technical items. Moreover, there are posters to display technical items relevant to the construction industry, which is useful to support visual learning and vocabulary acquisition.

Needs Analysis

According to Flowerdew (2013), while designing an ESP course, the first and most essential step is to conduct a needs analysis. Serafini et al. (2015) claim that Needs analysis is an approach to clarifying the needs of learners and adapting materials according to these data. Here is the plan for how I conduct needs analysis:

1. Identifying stakeholders

Justification:

The first thing I want to do is to Identify stakeholders involved in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course, including learners, administrators, and other industry professionals. According to Woodrow (2018), the first step in conducting needs analysis is identifying stakeholders, as these people are the main participants of the course.

2. Placement tests (Appendix 1)

Justification:

I would like to administer a placement test in order to assess the language proficiency of my students determine their starting point and modify the learning materials accordingly to suit their level. Davies & West (1989) also argue that proficiency exams are essential, for assessing a students' competence level and determining their suitability for participation in the course. Additionally, as Woodrow (2018) points out identifying the current level of learners can help teachers identify any gaps, between their level and their target level.

3. Questionnaires (Appendix 2)

Justification:

To gather information, about my students learning backgrounds, preferences, reasons for learning English and preferred learning styles I plan on using questionnaires. Woodrow (2018) suggests that it is crucial to consider the wants, needs, reasons and deficiencies of each stakeholder when conducting needs assessments and designing course materials. Additionally understanding students learning backgrounds provides insights into their proficiency, in English. Woodrow (2018) also emphasizes that learners wants may differ from their needs. It is essential to take their desires into account. Viana et al. (2019) stress the significance of exploring students motivations for learning English and propose using activities as a means to identify these motives. Furthermore analyzing and considering students preferred learning styles is an aspect of conducting needs assessments since teachers can subsequently tailor their lessons using methods based on this factor.



4. Employer Interviews

Justification:

I would like to conduct interviews with the individuals who established this project in order to determine their intended goals as suggested by Viana et al. (2019). Analyzing documents or conducting interviews with the founding bodies will help me gain an understanding of what they hope to achieve. I plan on interviewing experts in the field as Viana et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of consulting specialists during needs analysis. These specialists can provide insights, into how language's used within their professional contexts and areas of expertise. Furthermore according to Chan (2018) conducting interviews, with members of a community who share practices can offer deeper insights into their work environment and professional practices.

5. Data collection

Justification:

Bosher (2018) highlights the importance of data collection in conducting needs analysis. Woodrow (2018) suggests using quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data about learners. I use these methods for my data collection process. The first step for me in data collection is to consult teachers with the same ESP context to get basic understanding about the course and Viana et al. (2019) claim that instructors should consult other teachers who teach the same course in order to get additional recommendations. Woodrow (2018) puts consulting pre-existing needs analysis in the same context as the next step in conducting needs analysis. Moreover, according to Woodrow (2018), using the triangulation method for data collection is a valid approach as, by doing so, teachers can minimize errors and the probability of meeting the target needs will be high. According to Woodrow (2018), pre-existing ESP course books should be analyzed to obtain materials. However, teachers need to know that sometimes pre-existing course materials can be inappropriate for the target context. In this case, teachers can generate materials for journals in the same sphere. Finally, according to Woodrow (2018), empirical data should be collected, with the help of which teachers can get information on different discourses and texts in general, including information about how language is used in the target situation.

Assessment

Type of assessment	Title	Percentage
Formative assessment 1	written exercise on grammar and vocabulary: gap filling and matching exercises.	20%
Formative assessment 2	role-play	20%
Formative assessment 3	Creating a Construction Industry Portfolio and Oral Presentation	20%



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Summative assessment	Creating and orally presenting domain-specific project.	40%
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Justification:

Woodrow (2018) notes that one of the main purposes of assessment in the ESP context is to analyze the linguistic weaknesses of learners. I chose written exercises according to the framework, which I took as an example, and in Formative 1, I assess my students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge as I want to first improve their knowledge on these aspects. Woodrow (2018) claims not to give the main focus to grammar in the ESP context, but he suggests not to neglect grammar completely. When it comes to vocabulary, Hutchinson (1987) claims that by testing vocabulary, instructors can make sure that students know the right words to use and can easily and correctly speak in their own situations.

According to O'Sullivan (2012), role-plays are simulations of specific domains and give opportunities for learners to interact with each other and use language as it is used in authentic settings. Moreover, O'Sullivan (2012) claims that portfolios allow students to show achievements toward certain linguistic goals, and oral presentations, according to Brown (2004), give students a chance to show off their ability to speak clearly, speak quickly, and successfully communicate information to an audience.

In summative assessment, my students will be assigned to do domain-specific projects. As O'Sullivan (2012) suggests, this is to check students' vocabulary knowledge. However, I can add oral presentation to this assessment, and with the help of this assessment, I can check not only vocabulary knowledge but also speaking. In my assessments, the main focus is given to speaking and writing, and according to Woodrow (2018), rating these skills using holistic and analytic rubrics would be beneficial.

Validity of the assessment

According to Woodrow (2018), in ESP course design, even more attention should be given to the validity of EGP or EAP, as here the instructor must clearly analyze the connection between content and language knowledge. In my formative assessment 1, I check my students' vocabulary and grammar, and for this, I use written exercises on grammar and vocabulary. This assessment is valid as it tests whether the students understand how grammar works and how well they can use appropriate words in the right situations. When it comes to role plays, it is a beneficial way to check students' communication skills. Creating a construction industry portfolio helps students see their content knowledge and how they can present it by using language. Finally, creating and orally presenting a domain-specific project can be considered a valid assessment because it measures applying domain-specific knowledge and presenting it effectively.

Reliability of the assessment

According to Cumming (2001), in order to make assessments reliable, instructors have to use a rubric and give their students clear instructions on how to create a portfolio or domain-specific project. For this reason, I want to use holistic and analytic rubrics.

Washback of the assessment



Washback, according to Figueras (2012), is the effect of tests on teaching and learning, and all of my assessments have a positive washback as they mainly encourage students to improve skills that they need to use in a specific context.

Practicality of the assessment

All of my assessments are practical as they can be assessed within the classroom, and the process of scoring is not very time-consuming, as according to Brown (2004), when the scoring process takes too much time, it lowers the practicality of the tests. Moreover, the teaching context has all the equipment needed to conduct these assessments.

Authenticity of the assessment

Woodrow (2018) highlights the importance of the authenticity of assessments and claims that tasks should stimulate the target communicative situation. Assessments like role-play, domain-specific projects, and vocabulary exercises evaluate language usage in context.

Approach to ESP Course Design

According to my students' needs and course aims, I decided to choose the task-based language teaching approach (TBLT), and I consider it appropriate to my ESP context, "Construction Industry English."

Justification:

According to Nunan (2004), in TBLT, the focus will be on using authentic tasks that learners face in their context in order to follow this method. I decided to conduct lessons on how to write project reports and present their presentations on the construction industry, as well as how to engage in meetings. Moreover, conducting role plays by using dialogs taken from authentic sources can help learners see language in context. Overall, all tasks will be designed to give learners the opportunity to improve their ability to use language in context.

Willis and Willis (2007) note that task-based language teaching (TBLT) boosts student engagement and motivation as it gives them the opportunity to participate in communicative activities. Whenever my students see how language learning is close to their field and how they can use knowledge gained in situations in their work, they show huge interest in language learning.

Finally, the task-based language learning method aligns with my assessments, as Brown (2004) claims alignment of TBLT with the usage of authentic assessments, and assessments such as role-play, oral presentations, and domain-specific projects can be considered authentic assessments, which clearly align with TBLT.

Course Aims

By the end of the course students will be able to:

Listening

- Improve listening comprehension to understand construction-related instructions, presentations, and conversations.
- improve their note-taking skills while participating in meetings and listening to presentations.



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Reading

- strengthen reading skills in order to understand construction plans and technical documents.
- identify key information from construction-related texts.

Speaking

- Improve ability to communicate effectively in construction-related discussions.
- present their presentations or ideas.
- negotiate properly.

Writing

- write construction-related documents.
- communicate with other stakeholders through email.
- work on their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

Domain-Specific Vocabulary and Terminology

- Improve knowledge of domain-specific vocabulary and terminology to understand construction-related words.
- use context-related words in oral and written communications.

Develop Cross-Cultural Communication Competence

- acquire sensitivity and adaptability in cross-cultural interactions within the construction industry.
- Learn cultural differences and how to avoid cultural shock.

Justification:

According to Hyland (2007), setting clear objectives is a crucial part of course design, so these aims are set in order to meet learners needs and also help them use English in their specific domain. Objectives help students improve their most needed skills, such as communicating properly and understanding texts, video, and audio materials related to the construction industry.

Course materials

Throughout this course, I want to use both authentic materials and textbooks. While planning needs analysis, I decided to analyze different courses conducted in this context, and I chose two different textbooks to use. I am not planning to use these textbooks completely, but I will take some portions of them. For example, the vocabulary task (Appendix 3) can be handy material to use, as it illustrates topic-related vocabulary with pictures, which is perfect material for conducting an activity in a visual learning style. Timmis (2016) claims that using visuals from texts in vocabulary tasks can help students understand and remember words related to the subject, which is good for visual learners. Furthermore the study materials consist of recordings that provide definitions, for words related to the topic. This approach caters to learning styles. Plays a crucial role in improving listening skills. According to Maftoon et al. (2016) using recordings that include word definitions from textbooks can significantly enhance students comprehension and listening abilities for those with diverse learning preferences. To assess the progress of my lesson I selected a reading task as an evaluation (see Appendix 7). The task requires students to read a passage and answer three false questions. The passage is not overly challenging allowing students to complete it as homework. Additionally since time consuming activities may not be preferred in an English, for Specific



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Purposes (ESP) context this task is designed to be efficient and practical. By completing this assignment, students can learn topic-related vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension.

When it comes to authentic materials, I decided to use video materials from YouTube. (Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ko_OMynE3Bo) I can use these materials for different purposes. For example, I can conduct listening activities by using them, or I can provide a video that showcases a construction project, such as the construction of a skyscraper or the renovation of a historical building, and conduct group discussions. According to Maftoon et al. (2016), video materials can improve learners' listening comprehension by showing them how language is used in context and natural speech patterns.

I also analyzed how Uzbek workers communicate in the workplace in their native language, translated their dialogue into English, and used it to conduct domain-specific role plays (Appendix 5). According to Macknish & Tomaš (2018), authentic materials reflect real-life language use and promote effective communication skills.

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