

LIVENING UP BUSINESS ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Political, socio-economic, ideological matters of a new century set special requirements to immediate change of traditional approach to studying foreign languages. Academic mobility, integration in world scientific-educational space, creation of optimal educational system and programs allow efficiently solve the tasks aiming at qualitative approach to education. Preparation of contemporary young people to live in a constantly changing world is a major goal of modern education. The idea of this education focuses on potential abilities of students and their realization to their advantage. Education should develop the mechanism of innovative activity, find creative ways of settling life-important issues, and serve as a stimulus to turn creativity in the norm of life.

Language teaching professionals are confronted with a lot of challenges these days, because language teaching has gone through important changes in the last few decades as a result of several conditioning factors: progress in general Linguistics, Pedagogy and Psychology, new findings of second language acquisition theories and important sociological transformations, namely the growing nature of a globalized world with the rapid widespread of new technologies. Learners are growing up with technology, and it is a natural and integrated part of their lives. For these learners the use of technology is a way to bring the outside world into the classroom. And some of these learners will in turn become teachers themselves[1]. All this proves that language teaching does not exist in the abstract but it is influenced by a wide range of individual matters and sociological and pedagogical variables of different nature.

Keywords: Innovative approach, appropriate activities, focus on motivation, fit the method to the learner, potential abilities

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays studying a foreign language is becoming more a hobby than a harsh reality. It doesn't matter how it is called: Business English, Language for Professional Purposes or Standard English. Facing economic globalization, the cultivation of cross-culture communication skills in the teaching of business English is becoming more and more important. Thus, more and more universities have set the course of cross-culture communication as core subject for learners to study [5].

The success of the process of teaching and learning largely depends on the participants – teachers and students – who have their own needs, roles, and responsibilities. It is teachers' responsibility to identify and address the needs of their students.

A modern language teacher doesn't follow one rigid method, but applies the Principled Eclecticism approach – fitting the method to the learner, not vice versa.

This means choosing the techniques and activities that are appropriate for each particular task, context and learner, with a focus on motivation and helping learners become independent and inspired to learn more.

M. Ellis M. and C. Johnson reasonably pointed out that it is a misconception that the ESP teacher ought to be an expert in subjects of business, economics or finance [3]. As a matter of fact, domain-specific language teachers, do not teach the fundamentals of economic theory, nor business strategies, nor perfect management practice. The language teacher's task is to train the students of business to communicate in English about the subject they are specialized in.

The learners might have very specific requirements, depending on their cultural background and learning context. Important factors for them could include layout, clear structure, relevance, regular progress checks, entertainment, revision opportunities, self-study sections, reference sections, up-to-date content, and authenticity [4].

Business English is quite simply the English people need to conduct business in a professional manner. It provides them with the skills to write emails, produce reports, make presentations, negotiate with clients, participate in meetings and conferences, write letters and deal with clients on the telephone and in a face-to-face situation. So, rather than focusing on general English for conversations and socializing etc., Business English focuses on communication in business related situations.

Learners are quite aware – the more words they know, the better English they speak. The English language has more than 1,000,000 words and is one of the most flexible languages in the world. It's a living language, like those other languages we use today. Understanding the lexicon of English demands more than knowing the denotative meaning of words. It requires its speakers to have connotative word comprehension and more, an understanding of figurative language. Idioms fall into this final category.

Idioms are pervasive. They're used in formal and informal speech, conversation and writing and are part of standard speech in business, education. Learners are expected to understand a variety of common idioms, which is advantageous for those planning to work in a world that increasingly uses English as the language of communication and commerce. "If you keep an open mind and play your cards right, your proficiency in English will soon be something to crow about".

The importance of idioms for non-native speakers is part of their mastery of the English language. Idioms include all the expressions speakers use that are unique to English, including clichés and slang. Business idioms are incredibly important to the students who study language. Learning idioms is appropriate for intermediate and advanced students. It's very important to teach how to use them correctly and effectively. When a non-native speaker uses an idiom correctly he will sound very fluent. But, on the other hand, if they bumble the phrase, they will sound the exact opposite.

The following exercises could serve as a good example how to work on business idioms:

1. Complete idioms and give translation

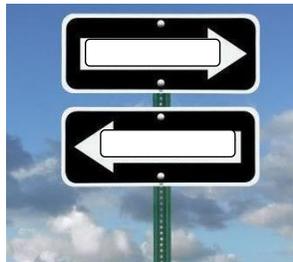
- 1) At cross ...
- 2) In all shapes ...
- 3) Back against ...
- 4) Be beside ...
- 5) By the same ...
- 6) Get down to ...
- 7) The exception ...
- 8) The facts speak ...
- 9) In the final ...
- 10) Keep one's options ...
- 11) The line of ...
- 12) On second...
- 13) Put the record ...
- 14) Be taken ...

- 15) Take the long ...
- 16) The tip of ...

*Have an open mind On reflection Shift the responsibility
Break the ice In touch with Ahead of time One way or the
other Be in the dark The tip of the iceberg Change one's mind
Break through Dead end Give and take Play ball At will
Hold water Iron out Save face Better safe than sorry Safe bet*

- 17) Wise after ...
- 18) Take into ...
- 19) It's as simple ...
- 20) Meet someone half ...

2. Choose the idiom from the box to suit the picture



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3)

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4)



5)



6)



7)



8)



9)



10)



11)



12)



13)



14)



15)



16)



17)



18)



19)



20)

3. Choose the correct item

- 1) They're close to making a deal, and we just hope they can _____ without going to trial.
 - a. Try out
 - b. Spark off
 - c. Thrash out
 - d. Shed light on
- 2) Let me help _____ the contract _____ to everybody present.
 - a. Make sense
 - b. Make clear
 - c. Make sure
 - d. Mean business
- 3) Their arguments were valid a hundred years ago and they still _____ today.
 - a. Hold true
 - b. Hold water
 - c. Hold good
 - d. Hold out for
- 4) It's hard to _____ at formal events.
 - a. Break through
 - b. Break off
 - c. Break new ground
 - d. Break the ice
- 5) It's difficult for a Boss to find any _____ with the client.
 - a. A dry run
 - b. Bare outline
 - c. Common ground
 - d. Either way
- 6) As life proves, it is easy to be _____ and almost impossible before it.
 - a. All or nothing
 - b. Wise after the event
 - c. short of
 - d. Crystal clear
- 7) An _____ analysis of the test results produced some surprising conclusions.
 - a. In aggregate
 - b. In essence
 - c. In depth
 - d. In future
- 8) We might _____ winning if we continue to play as well as we did today.
 - a. Stand a chance
 - b. Stay in touch
 - c. Take the initiative
 - d. Trigger off
- 9) He failed his exam again. He _____ for his laziness.
 - a. Pay dividends
 - b. Loose face
 - c. Put the blame on
 - d. Pay the penalty
- 10) My friend is going to _____ while he finds out about working abroad.
 - a. Keep options open
 - b. Keep an eye on
 - c. Keep in the dark
 - d. Keep in touch with
- 11) The basic aim of the company is to settle current financial difficulties _____.
 - a. In a word
 - b. In turn
 - c. In the short term
 - d. In theory
- 12) We should do our best and get profit by all means simply to _____.
 - a. Make the point
 - b. Prove the point
 - c. Take the point
 - d. Come to the point
- 13) When children grow up, it's their duty to _____.
 - a. Play ball
 - b. Pay dividends
 - c. Pay the price
 - d. Pay one's way

- 14) Entrepreneurs come _____ - the dynamic, the cautious and the greedy.
- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| a. In addition | c. In all shapes and sizes |
| b. In contrast | d. In the course of |
- 15) The problem was an _____ of our faith in the new program.
- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| a. Vicious circle | c. Snap decision |
| b. Acid test | d. Drawback |
- 16) Fortunately we _____ and these days we don't suffer damages.
- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Get to the first base | c. Get in touch with |
| b. Get across | d. Get priorities right |
- 17) It looks as if my predictions about the bankruptcy of the company are _____.
- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. Hold out for | c. Hold water |
| b. Hold good | d. Hold true |
- 18) It's time we saved the situation; the negotiations have _____.
- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| a. Reach deadlock | c. Result in |
| b. Reach a stalemate | d. Reach first base |
- 19) It's a _____ that this person will never deceive me.
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| a. Shortcut | c. Safe bet |
| b. Second opinion | d. Hard facts |
- 20) People who _____ of the actions can be relied on.
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| a. Take risks | c. Take the line |
| b. Take note of | d. Take the consequences |

CONCLUSION

A teacher should always remember that the goal is to get the students to not only understand idioms, but also learn how to use them effectively. So, communications skills are the number one priority in Business English studies. Such things as telephoning, negotiating, e-mail writing, conducting meetings are a lot more of an interest to learners, than grammar, punctuation and spelling. That's why the material for practicing business idioms should be selected from the media, newspaper and magazine articles, songs, cartoons, videos, advertisements.

The more interesting the work in class is organized, the more productive and quicker the students learn. Various exercises containing colloquial phrases and sentences can help convince the students how idioms are conversational rather than formal.

Idioms are a lot of fun both to teach and to learn and they will make the students sound more like native speakers and become better listeners, more in tune to colloquial English.

- It's as easy as pie.
- No, It's a piece of cake.
- Or maybe it's impossible to make heads or tails out of them.

Business idiomatic expressions give English its color and vitality. They are indispensable to the daily speech of the people and to the language of newspapers and books, televisions and movies. Mastering idioms requires a great deal of interest, enthusiasm, and persistence. So, the approach and methods of teaching and learning should be exciting, appealing, and inquisitive.

If ESP has sometimes moved away from trends in general ELT, it has always retained its emphasis on practical outcomes. We will see that the main concerns of ESP have always been, and remain, with needs analysis, text analysis, and preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their study or work situation [2].

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