THE LANGUAGE OF ESP: UNDERSTANDING LEARNERS' FIELD

Vrakina V.V., Berkutova T.I., Sadkoska V.A.
National Technical University
"Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute",
Kharkiv

The needs to understand the requirements of other professions and willingness to adapt to these requirements differentiate the foreign language teachers for specific purposes and their colleagues teaching general foreign language. ESP teaching presumes teaching of English as a foreign language regarding specific profession, subject or purpose.

ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner. It is centered on the language, skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities. ESP may use, in specific teaching situation, a different methodology from that of general English.

In all ESP teaching situations, we must start by considering the needs of the learners and what they have to do in the target situation (Flook, 1993). The process of needs analysis often entails collecting information for the sake of having the necessary bases to develop a course which will meet the needs of a particular group of students.

According to Hutchinson and Waters target needs are mainly related to what the learner need to do and has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. And what the learner already knows and what he is deficient in as well as what he would like to gain from the language course.

Learning needs concerns about the route between the starting points (lacks) and the destination (necessities). For example, learners may be greatly motivated in the subject or work, but may completely lose interests with the long, boring and old teaching material. The learning process should be enjoyable, fulfilling, manageable and generative. It is not concerned with knowing, but with the learning. The biggest barrier preventing good teachers from getting into ESP is fear: they are worried that it is impossible to teach an ESP field without being an expert in the field. In fact, this is a misunderstanding: ESP teaching as a non-specialist is not easy, but it is far from impossible.

The truth is that given the choice between a subject specialist who cannot teach, and a good teacher with very limited subject knowledge, the good teacher is better every time. General English teachers have vital skills such as classroom management, motivation and discipline, and deep knowledge of how English works and of how languages are learned. All of these things are crucial to the success of any language course. Keep your lessons fun and well-structured, keep your learners motivated and engaged, and you are bound to get good results.