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## TEACHING PRESENTATION SKILLS TO BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENTS

*Globalization and intensive development of technologies have accelerated the necessity for future economists to be able to present ideas, concepts and strategies to multinational audience using English as lingua franca. The purpose of this paper is to analyze some theoretical and practical aspects of developing presentation skills of future economists in learning Business English in transforming Ukrainian education area. The author concludes with discussion on practices of teaching presentation skills to business students.*

**Key words:** presentation, presentation skills, Business English.

*Глобалізація та інтенсивний розвиток технологій прискорили необхідність розвитку у майбутніх економістів вмінь представляти ідеї, концепції і стратегії багатонаціональній аудиторії, використовуючи англійську мову як мову міжнародного спілкування. Мета даної статті – проаналізувати окремі теоретичні та практичні аспекти розвитку навичок презентації у майбутніх економістів у процесі навчання ділової англійської мови у реформованому просторі української освіти. Автор завершує обговорення наведенням прикладів з практики навчання навичок презентації студентів, які вивчають економічні дисципліни.*

**Ключові слова:** презентація, навички презентації, ділова англійська мова.

*Глобализация и интенсивное развитие технологий ускорили необходимость развития у будущих экономистов умений представлять идеи, концепции и стратегии многонациональной аудитории, используя английский язык как язык международного общения. Цель данной статьи – проанализировать отдельные теоретические и практические аспекты развития навыков презентации у будущих экономистов в процессе обучения деловому*

*английскому языку в реформируемом пространстве украинского образования. Автор завершает обсуждение приведением примеров из практики обучения навыкам презентации студентов, изучающих экономические дисциплины.*

**Ключевые слова:** презентация, навыки презентации, деловой английский язык.

**D***efinition of the Problem.* Global competitiveness, expansion of information space and intensive development of information and communication technologies have accelerated the necessity for business students to be able to present ideas, concepts and strategies to multinational audience using English as the language of international communication. Indeed, many employers place a high degree of importance on communication and public speaking skills and the ability to deliver formal presentations (K. Pittenger, M. Miller, & J. Mott, 2004) [2], so it is essential for Ukrainian teachers to conduct English language courses focused on attaining this goal.

**Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications.** Review of recent publications has shown that researches were mostly intended to: psychological and linguistic features of a presentation as a professionally oriented monologue (V. Kashkin, 2000; P. McCarthy & C. Hatcher, 2002; O. Popova, 2005); components of an effective presentation (R. Adler, 1998; J. King, 2002; M. Powell, 2002; N. Drab, 2005); language output, such as planning and the positive effects it can have on fluency, complexity, accuracy (E. Yuan & R. Ellis, 2003); the positive influence rehearsed output can have (P. Menim, 2003); technological aspects and

structural features of presentations in the business world (N. Drab, 2005; Y. Avsiukevych, 2009).

Business presentations are increasingly popular. There is a variety of books, which deals with theoretical and practical aspects of presentation techniques as well as structure, linking, visual aids, presentation skills (language, voice control, body language, and handling questions, etc.), for example, M. Powell "Presenting in English: How to Give Successful Presentations" (2002), M. Yate, P. Sander "The Ultimate Business Presentations Book. Make a Great Impression Every Time" (2003), J. Weissman "Presenting to Win" (2008), C. Gallo "The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs: How to Be Insanely Great in Front of Any Audience" (2009), G. Reynolds "The Naked Presenter" (2010), M. Powell "Dynamic Presentations" (2011), S. Berkum "Confessions of a Public Speaker" (2012).

As a result, J. Szdovska (2007) provides an overview of presentation skills textbooks to describe the features of the presentations integrated within a more general business English skills approach and the features of those included in a coursebook devoted purely to business presentations. Her review compares the two approaches and looks at the possible implications of teaching presentation skills in an integrated or separated way.

The analysis looks at how much contextual information is provided for each presentation and what types of speech acts are included in the discourse [5, 150]. In comparison with the English-speaking world there are not so many textbooks or manuals on teaching presentation skills in Ukraine.

**Setting the Goals.** The aim of our research is to analyze some theoretical and practical aspects of developing presentation skills of future economists in learning Business English.

**Presentation of the Research.** Business discourse views language as contextually situated social action constructed by its social actors and aims to understand how people communicate strategically in an organizational context. The term Business English is used to cover the English taught to a wide range of professional people, and students in full-time education preparing for a business career.

The present paper incorporates studies on formal presentations, spanning different aspects of it at different levels of analysis. Based on the findings it can be concluded that a presentation is defined as “a speech or talk in which a new product, idea, or piece of work is shown and explained to an audience” [3].

According to M. Yate & P. Sander (2003), “good presentations are effective at communicating the message and achieving desired outcomes. Good presentations are also efficient – they achieve their objectives with the least amount of work on your part and on the part of the audience” [7, 11].

Business presentation is described as a professionally oriented and prepared monologic statement, combined with a specific task and situational conditions, which is based on the results of an analytical study of certain problems in the sphere of business activity, has a clear logical arrangement and focused on ef-

fective communication, motivation or beliefs of a particular audience based on its basic cultural and socio-demographic characteristics. The participants of a business presentation are the presenter and the audience. There are 2 main types of business presentations: informative and persuasive (Y. Avsiukevych, 2009) [1].

Multimedia presentation combines traditional static visual information (text, graphics) and dynamic information (speech, music, video, animation), causing the possibility of effectively influencing on the different senses of learners.

Traditionally, a presentation has three-part structure: introduction, main body, and conclusion.

Presentation skills are “the set of techniques and skills required to successfully presenting oral information to others” [4]. These skills comprise a variety of areas such as the structure of the presentation; pacing, pausing, rhythm and intonation; the body language; etc. Presentations skills are highly important in life (generally feeling comfortable speaking to a person or groups of people) and career (business, sales, training, teaching, etc.).

Analyzing the experience of teaching presentation skills to business students at Petro Mohyla Black Sea State University, we consider it necessary to draw attention to some practical aspects of creating and delivering effective presentations.

Firstly, it is important to motivate learners to present in English, finding out essential drivers and wants. Sometimes, students may already have an excellent level of English but lack the confidence to speak in front of a large group. Or they may wish to widen the repertoire of foreign language to give their presentation skills more impact and coherence.

English speaking professional audiences may have quite different expectations and attitudes to business deals and future economists must adapt their

presentation skills accordingly. To this end, Business English course is aimed at Ukrainian students seeking to improve their ability to present effectively and in an easily-accessible form in English.

Secondly, the process of teaching presentation skills is divided into three main parts: preparing presentations, delivering presentations and self-reflection. Consequently, to improve presentation skills business students learn main linguistic devices; structure and signposting in formal presentations; effective use of voice (intonation, rhythm, pacing and pausing); how to use humour; nonverbal communication. Preparing presentations, using slides and visuals, managing questions, delivering presentations, and conducting self-reflection are the key components of an integrated process of developing presentation skills.

Preparing presentations includes: 1) choosing a challenging topic and planning appropriate approach to it; 2) planning the structure (short introduction, main body, short conclusions) and preparing presentation slides; 3) planning communicative strategies; 4) paying attention to body language; 5) rehearsing the presentation several times.

It is vital for presenters to focus on the importance of preparing any presentation according to the audience's needs and profile in order to meet with recognition. To this end, M. Yate & P. Sander (2003) recommend such steps to prepare a successful presentation as: "1) take audience inventory; 2) assess the situation; 3) get organized; 4) get your thoughts on the table; 5) do the research; 6) enrich the research; 7) build the body; 8) build the presentation; 9) add visual aids; 10) prepare, practise and present" [7, 19].

In delivering presentations business students are taught to pay attention to: 1) achieving the goals of a presentation; 2) interacting with the audience (using

verbal (intonation, rhythm, pacing and pausing) and nonverbal communication; using appropriate linguistic devices; giving a handout; using examples relevant to the audience; handling questions; applying a range of interactive devices to encourage participation and reflection of the audience); 3) finding an individual presentation style.

To develop presentation skills, students must prepare, practise, and look at models of good presenters or as K. Shephard (2005) calls "engaging presenters": "engaging presenters will spend as little time as possible looking away from their audience, at notes or at the screen. Engaging presenters will also use hand gestures for emphasis or to gain and maintain audience attention. They often have open arms and exposed palms. They will also use non-verbal signals consistently and synchronized with verbal messages. A speaker who steps backwards at the same time as making positive, inclusive verbal comments is likely to be interpreted negatively no matter how positive the words are" [6, 103 - 104].

Based on these guidelines, students are offered to create their own presentations, which thematically cover various areas of business focused on the formation, development of professional competencies, evaluation and self-esteem (for example, "Presentation of a Company Product / Service", "Market Research", "My Business Startup", "Business Strategy of a Company", "Leadership in Management", etc.).

There is no doubt, everyone wants to know how successful each of his/her presentations has been so teachers and students need to evaluate them against a set of predetermined desired outcomes. For example, K. Shephard (2005) proposes to use such categories of presentation attributes as content, structure, self-presentation, interaction and presentation aids

[6, 154]; or try to apply Action Evaluation (V. Friedman and V. Rothman, 2002) procedure: a presenter draws up a set of objectives for her next presentation that will test out some change in style or content; he/she then designs and implements an evaluation strategy; gives the presentation; evaluates it against the desired outcomes; decides how effective the change was; then alters the change in an attempt to improve its effect even more [6, 153].

Self-reflection part includes students' self-evaluation (for example, by answering such questions as "what did I do well?" or "what do I need to improve?"). Simultaneously, lecturer feedback and peer feedback are also important. It is useful for Business English teacher to prepare observation feedback sheet, divided into such sections as type of presentation, content, structure, non-verbal communication, use of visual materials, handling questions. After the presentation, a lecturer can comment it verbally and/or in writing. This feedback form is immensely valuable for the presenting student to be given such signposting as a mark of achievement and as a tool for improvement.

Peer feedback depends on such factors as level and culture of a group, but it is essential for a teacher to invite feedback from other students on the presentation. For instance, a lecturer can give the audience a prepared feedback form, listing the points to focus on and comment on. Students should be looking for positive points at least as much as for negative ones. This can be a useful activity as it attracts attention to the do's and don'ts of giving presentations.

Videoring a presentation for subsequent playback and comment can also be productive, but it depends on various factors. The important point is that such exercise should have a positive, beneficial result for business students' evalua-

tion and self-reflection.

Thirdly, it is also vital that Business English teachers are good presenters themselves, providing examples that will help to improve students' presentation skills. Effective lecturers must combine the talents of scholar, director, writer, and tutor in ways that contribute to student's learning. So it is necessary for a teacher to develop continuously how to present ideas, to challenge assumptions of current practice, to ask questions, to share concerns, and to discuss solutions that are appropriate to business contexts.

**Conclusions.** Thus, presenting in English helps business students to develop active vocabularies and presentation skills to express their ideas as well as techniques for effective speech structuring. Our English language courses also deal with such issues as creating presentation rapport, using visual aids, cultural influences, voice, and body language.

Based on the findings it can be concluded that presentations, especially group ones, allow students to engage in a cooperative activity that requires them to use English to explain their ideas and to negotiate meaning with a larger community of language learners while they are planning and practicing. Formal presentations can be student-centered, significant tasks, which improve the quality of learning Business English by increasing students' motivation and autonomy. However, to achieve success it is important for students to learn the various aspects involved in preparing and delivering a presentation properly. While the suggestions given in this paper are no by means exhaustive, it is hoped that they will provide teachers with some guidelines for how they can use business presentations as a means of improving students' English language skills as well as their professional competences.

Consequently, to improve presenta-

tion skills business students learn main linguistic devices; structure and signposting in formal presentations; effective use of voice and nonverbal communication. Preparing presentations, delivering pre-

sentations, and conducting self-reflection are the key components of an integrated process of developing students' presentation skills in Business English course.

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### TRANSLITERATION:

1. Avsiukevych Yu. S. *Metodyka navchannia prezentatsii anhliiskoiu movoiu studentiv ekonomichnykh spetsialnostei : avtoref. dys. na zdobuttia nauk. stupenia kand. ped. nauk : spets. 13.00.02 "Teoriia i metodyka navchannia: hermanski movy"* – Kyiv, 2009. – 21 p.
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