
MEDIA TEXTS AND TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: The processes of globalization and integration in the modern society stimulate the active development of international economic, cultural and educational relations, enhance the focus on foreign language as a language of business communication, a means of interaction and mutual understanding, a way of exploring other cultures. One outcome of foreign language learning is a foreign language communicative competence, the development of which effectively promotes communication in the professional sphere. The business foreign language integrates the specific (related to the specific professional activity) and the common (general skills for effective communication in business situations) content. Students should develop an understanding of the professional communication vocabulary by substantially expanding the volume and composition of dictionary units required for reading and comprehension of specialized text to form skills for lexical acceptance of oral and written judgments in the business context. An essential element of learning is to master the formal business style, which has many permanent features – compared to other styles it is a functional system not so open, the most stable, traditional and standardized. The renewal of the system of language learning consists of expanding the content with the inclusion of authentic texts, texts for mass information. Still insufficiently explored are the issues of integration of media texts in the process of foreign language preparation in further professional education, which is the aim of this article. The approach to such integration is realized through texts from British newspapers, analyzing various methodological approaches to the media text, emerging multilevel semiotic complex, unity of media and language properties. From the position of linguistics, the media text is an object characterized by the interaction of 4 levels: format, language, content and methodological requirements. Media literacy broadens the notion of the textbook "newspaper article", which is considered by the prism of its function-genre (news, analysis, story, advertisement) representing one of the most important and significant parameters of the typological description of the media texts. For the learning process in the system of the additional vocational education, the practical and professional-cognitive value of the text is also relevant to the selection criteria. Didactic realization has been carried out of the formal and linguistic properties of the media texts through a system of exercises.

Keywords: media texts, business English, professional education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Business English is a relatively "young" discipline in university curricula, while such a subject as Business Communication is an integral part of bachelor's and masters training programs at leading universities around the world, especially in the United States and the UK. *Business English* is a common notion comprising both *General Everyday English* and *General Business English* as well as *English for Specific Purposes* [6]. *Business English* is not limited by the linguistic means typical of a subtype of a language. In business communication, language is used in a number of pragmatic situations: forecasting and analysis, interpersonal communication, negotiation process, Studying Business English has its peculiarities. 1) For each sector, the English business vocabulary has its own specificity; some terms and expressions having one meaning in one sector and completely different meaning in another. Therefore, it is not possible to create a comprehensive single Business English course that meets the needs of specialists in all sectors. 2) Behind many terms and expressions of the English business vocabulary lies professional knowledge necessary for their correct interpretation. Therefore, the qualitative use of Business English terms and expressions takes place in the course of work or during the course of study. 3) In business situations there are special tactics of communicative behavior, i.e. communicative competence is also needed. Therefore, Business English should include English and grammar training with English business vocabulary and business communication rules. English, used in international business communication, differs from the English spoken by the native speakers of the language. For example, polite social conversation and "small talk" play a key role in establishing and maintaining relationships. Effective communicative models are based on the studies by D. Hymes, [10], M. Canale, [3], S. Sweeney, [13], L. Bachman, [1], etc. *Business English* teachers, therefore, need to consider 3 basic components of language competence: linguistic, discursive and inter-cultural. Models that mimic real communication are used to design learning situations of real social interaction. Language is no longer a simple set of language tools, lexical units and grammatical constructions, it includes a 'functional subtype'. Materials to enhance

communication competence are the video resources offered by the BBC, Oxford University Press and other publishing houses. These materials are useful and of great value, but they can not replace real communication.

2. TYPES OF MEDIA TEXT

The term media text emerges in the twentieth century in connection with the rapid development of media communication when new texts, related to radio, television, video, internet, etc. come as an alternative to the traditional printed text. The media text is a message displayed in an arbitrary form and a genre of the media and intended for simultaneous visual and auditory perception by the audience [7]. It is a “new communication product”, a feature of which is that it can be integrated into media structures of verbal, visual, sounding, multimedia aspects, which implies the integrity of its perception and the deeper immersion into its meaning. In contemporary science the problem of differentiating types of media texts is solved differently because of their diversity and their specific characteristics. An ideal classification would be where all types of media texts are separated on the basis of a single relevant criterion, but such a text is hardly available because of the diversity and complexity of the structure of texts [12]. Media texts are traditionally divided into different genres depending on their compositional and structural features. The Russian scientific literature distinguishes between genres, such as reports, storytelling, review, note, political satire, interview, etc.; in English these are: news, comments, thematic article, analysis and interview. The specificity of media texts is explained by patterns of communication, including the model of the American political scientist G. Laswell: who says it – what does it say – what is the channel – to whom – what effect is sought. Mass communication through media texts takes into account the interaction of different elements: author, addressee, channel, code, text, context, noises, feedback, communication effectiveness. It is these elements that can be criteria for the typology of the media texts [5; 4].

One of the most important and significant parameters of a typological description of media texts is their function-genre affiliation. Media texts cannot be considered “one-sidedly but as a group of their content and formal-linguistic properties” [12]. There are four main types of media texts according to their function and genre affiliation: news, information analytics and commentary, text-mark (thematic materials, English-language features), advertising [5]. Such classification is almost of a universal nature because it is built with respect to the functional-stylistic differentiation of the language and reflects the combinatorics of the functions of communication and impact in one or another media text type. The news most fully realizes one of the main features of the language (to convey a message) and one of the main functions of mass communication - the informative one. Analytical media texts combine the realization of the message function with the amplification of the impact component at the expense of expression and evaluation. The textbooks have a further enhancement of the influence function in its artistic and aesthetic version. Advertising combines the impact function in two aspects: a function of language that can be realized with the help of a rich arsenal of linguistic means of expression and a mass communication function, realizable through special media technologies. Classification allows to characterize each media text through its linguistic and media functions, and through basic formats. The first 3 types of texts in the classification refer to traditional information, analytical and artistic and publishing genres. Therefore, four main types of media texts can be distinguished by function-genre: informative; analytic; artistic-publicistic; advertising.

An important parameter in the considered classification of media texts is the thematic dominance – belonging to one or another sustainable media issue [5]. Each genre of media texts has its own thematic dominance system. D. Hartley points out that all news items can be grouped around six major news themes: politics, economics, events abroad, events in the country, accidents and sports [8]. Each big block can be detailed, for example, the business news block is presented by R. Hughes in the following way: news from corporations, companies and firms; portraits of representatives of the business world; information about new products, products, technologies; information on price policy, unemployment rate, etc.; analytical materials for economic trends and prospects; labor and managerial relationships [9]. Models of communication become the starting point for typology of texts for mass communication. The proposed typological features are not completely separate: they intersect, interact, complement and expand each other. Each of the components of the model can become a basis for systematization of the texts. A similar approach to the analysis of media texts testifies to the multi-aspect and multi-layered nature of the media product. The media text is viewed from the point of view of psychology, psycholinguistics, sociology and the cognitive approach. The perception of the newspaper text influences the specifics of the personality and the mass mechanism of perception, the attitude of the person to the object presented in the media before, at the moment and after receiving the information. Understanding is related to recognizing the pragmatic setting, directed at information or action, and depending on the ability to formulate one’s own judgments.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE MEDIA TEXTS

The newspaper text has a national-cultural specificity, manifested in the levels of semantics, syntax and structure. The impact of verbal communication is enhanced by illustrative-graphical tools with a wide range of associative links. The media text, the text of mass information, is interpreted as a semiotic phenomenon on many levels, realized in the unity of media and linguistic properties (V.L. Naer, A. D. Schweizer, A. Bel, T. van Dijk, J. Dominique, F. Hodgson, etc.). Parameters of the media text are the functional genre and the thematic dominant. British quality newspapers are characterized by informatisation, balance of author's emotions, structural-composite accuracy, moderate illustration, cultural specificity, ideological modality. Paper editions and their electronic analogs have semiotic complexes on many levels, with a uniform semantic nature and distinct common formats. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of English-language media texts [2].

Table 1. Characteristics of English language media texts

Types of text	Stylistic Features	Language	Structure
News stories	Shortness, credibility, informative, pragmatic direction of communication, factuality, incomprehensibility, implicity at the level of form, depersonalisation, collegiate authorship (correlation with the editorial staff)	Highly informative vocabulary, stylistically neutral linguistic means, limited use of connotative word combinations except words with political-valuation connotations, high degree of clichés, repetitiveness of vocabulary, cultural specific words, multi-element attributes of nouns, predominance of passive verb forms and non-personal constructions, infinite forms and gerunds.	Headline, major text body, precise structural regulation, basic information in the beginning with a slow transition to less important information
News in brief, business in brief	Shortness, facts, informative.		Headline, major text body
Readers' letters to the editor	Pragmatic direction of influence, subjectivity, appreciation, emotionality, expressiveness, encouragement, argumentation	Prevalence of written paper vocabulary over colloquial, clichés for describing political and economic realities, ideological modality and evaluation vocabulary with positive and negative colouring, stylistic means of expressiveness (metaphors, epithets, idioms), imperative and modal verb forms	Headline, major text body
Analysis-opinion-comment	Ideological modality, analytical		Headline, major text body
Features	Pragmatic influence, polemics, relative language, controversy, subjective, expressive	Connotative adjective, emotionally expressive and evaluative lexical means (calambours, metaphors, idioms), stylistic syntactic structures, simplification of complex sentences	Headline, major text body
Advertisements	Brief, imagery, expressiveness, subjective modality, terminology	Connotative adjectives, stylistic means of expression, imperative forms of the verb, narrowly specialized vocabulary in advertising	Variety of structure depending on the advertisement's target

4. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECT OF APPLYING MEDIA TEXTS

From the standpoint of linguistics and didactics, the media text is a 4-dimensional object, characterized by the interaction of 4 levels: format, language, content and methodological requirements. For the purpose of practice, the concepts of media text are distinguished as a separate text and a newspaper (printed or online) as a unit for a full daily media flow (issue, number). The term "newspaper" is related to the development of exercises, taking into account the text space of the issue of newspapers, sections, media texts, structures and fragments (Table 2 - exercises).

The main criteria for selection in the methodology of foreign language training are: accessibility of the content of the text for understanding in linguistic and meaningful terms, contributing to adequate interpretation, cognitive value, cultural value, relevance of the topic, volume of the text. For the learning process in the system of the additional vocational education, the practical and professional-cognitive value of the text is also relevant to the selection criteria. The orientation towards the practical purpose of training causes the need to incorporate texts containing facts to apply the knowledge obtained in practice. The relevance of professional interests and relevance of the topic to the events taking place in the world stimulate a speech-reflective response. In the selection of media texts, their formatting properties (paper or electronic format, fragmentary layout, short and targeted texts, text structure, verbal and non-verbal forms) are taken into account, at the linguistic level – presence or absence of

synchronizing signs names, places, etc.) in the text. The support of the media linguistics allows the idea of a newspaper article to be expanded, considering it in the context of the function and genre aspect. In this context, it becomes possible to justify the need to differentiate in the development of the methodology of the concepts in the general term 'article' as such.

The media text reflects the sphere of contemporary speech use and the ability to work with a foreign press in its new format qualitatively complements the professional competence of the specialists. Printed foreign newspapers and magazines in English have their own sites on the Internet that feature online versions of these editions, for example: <http://ipl.org/> - English-language newspapers and magazines classified by country; an informative resource called The Big Project: <http://www.thebigproject.co.uk/news/>, where a collection of links are available on the websites of all central British newspapers, the main local English newspapers, and web-pages on issues of business and novelties; the Evening Standard website: www.thisislondon.co.uk. The Guardian's website has a special section with a large number of articles specifically selected for learning English as a foreign language. The English-language television channels BBC World and CNN are widely used. Their programs are world news, topical news from different countries, interviews with famous politicians and public figures, and are a very good piece of material for each type of language-learning activity. Vocabulary consolidation exercises, comprehension questions, content development tasks, discussion of the material being watched, and role-playing games - all of these methodological approaches naturally lend themselves to the material of the TV text.

Table.2. Exercises taking into account the format and linguistic features of media texts

Learning Activities	Methodology Objectives
<i>Newspaper structure: first page, sections/rubric</i>	
Searching, comparison, confrontation of rubrics, sections, editions; grouping information on the news, geographical proximity to the reader, thematic dominance, standard media text, relevance in the interest of the public; argumentation of the process, discussion of current events; comparison with the themes in native mass media;	Activating cognitive activity; development skills for searching-reading, practical skills for tracking current events, development skills for summary, comparison, differentiation, systematization of information; development of the structure of the text;
<i>Text structure: headline, highlights</i>	
Predictions of topics, main content of the text, abbreviations with non-significant semantics; recovering the main complex from scattered structural elements selected by theme and with additional element of disorienting nature; decompression of complex headlines in grammatically correct sentences; linguistic title transformation (paraphrase, synonyms, ...); replacing headwords with synonyms with a pragmatic effect; Transformation of a headline with negative information into positive anatomy;	Development of probability forecasting mechanism; updating of linguistic experience; developing skills to establish logical links; development of lexical and grammatical skills at semantic, syntactic and syntagmatic levels; developing skills to differentiate vocabulary into evaluative and neutral one; creating a positive emotional charge;
<i>Separate Sections, Fragments</i>	
job vacancy interview with sustainable text structure; business games for advertising on the establishment of business relations; group work to fill an information passage of fragments of the text with partially removed information;	Developing interpersonal communication skills; business communication skills; Ability to summarize information received from the interlocutor;
<i>News texts</i>	
Content-meaning transformation of output negative into a positive frame; meaningful compression of news; restoring news with the efforts of the whole group (paragraphs of the text scattered like a mosaic).	Developing skills for structural, syntactic and semantic simplification; team skills development, summary of information; updating knowledge about the structure of a news text.

The British Council in Bulgaria organizes Business English courses annually to help participants learn how to communicate effectively in a variety of business situations (meetings, negotiations, presentations); to use specialized and up-to-date teaching materials that will help improve language skills in specific professional fields; to take part in business-related lessons in which to practice English by acting out specific situations, making presentations and preparing written assignments; to train in a professional environment that resembles real business situations and with the help of modern teaching technologies. The Online Student Portal provides the opportunity to consolidate and increase the progress already made. The levels of Business English mastering are: Business Preliminary (B1), Business Vantage (B2 +), and Business Higher (C1). Business English courses are also organized by learning centers starting from the A1 (Elementary) level to the Advanced Level (C1-Advanced), according to the European Language Framework. The training focuses on acquiring business communication skills. Classes include exercises, video and audio material on business English topics: how to conduct effective business correspondence; to prepare

different presentations; to improve the style of expression according to the relevant audience; to overcome the language barrier in communicating in the business environment and to significantly improve the understanding of the language; to gain freedom and confidence in the use of language in various practical situations such as telephone conversations, electronic communication, meetings, presentations, etc.

6. CONCLUSION

Mass-information text-based training integrated into the Business English Vocational Training Program in further vocational education can be successfully completed if: the methodology is developed taking into account the objectives and tasks of the program; the learning process is organized in close interrelation with the solution of current professional tasks of the target audience; the linguistic component of media texts has been demonstrated, taking into account the specifics of vocationally oriented learning; the training methodology is built on the linguistic and formal properties of the texts; the training material is structured as a system of exercises aimed at developing all components of the foreign language communicative competence in business communication.

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