

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teach English for Business Purposes

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Abstract

To design of a syllabus for teaching English for Business Purposes using an Interdisciplinary Approach for Specific Purposes a descriptive, qualitative investigation was done, with the use of methods such as analysis, synthesis and hermeneutics and not less important the technique The techniques used were: Documentary review to teach English for Business Purposes (EBP) and Previous investigation done by the author in which 15 students of the last semester and professionals were included in a previous investigation to develop a Book for Business English which is the correspondent material to develop the syllabus. To collect the data, the instrument designed was a guide for documentary review and the Book EBP by Muñoz (2018). The information obtain from the application of documentary review was tabulated manually. The data were taken to figures and tables using the Microsoft Excel program. The results obtained that the students did not have knowledge of terminology, specific phrases, vocabulary and communicative functions which is caused by the lack of resources, materials and also the lack of knowledge of ESPB at the university that coincides with previous studies about the creation of the importance of have a Business Book and a syllabus developed for students in order to achieve the process of English of Business. It is concluded that the creation of a syllabus will increase the process to develop a future investigation in which it can be apply in a course.

Keywords: English for Business Purposes, English for Specific Purposes, Interdisciplinary Approach

Introduction

English is the most widely spoken language in the whole world. English has become the international business language; it is almost a necessity for people to speak it if they are going to enter in the global business world. Researches from the whole world show that the business communication is most often conducted in English and many international companies expect that their employees need to be fluent in the English language. In Business English the students can have knowledge about which is the correspondent vocabulary that they need to use in the working area, it helps them to do all the tasks that are necessary in the general management of the company, things like: business writing reports, how to make presentations about important business topics, be included in meetings, give opinions while presenting a topic according to the meeting. Other important aspects to learn Business English include writing documents like reports, letters, can be assumed to professional roles in companies, also they prepare their lives to work in a company environment.

In the case of an interdisciplinary approach, it helps the students from the mentioned specialties, to make a connection of ideas and concepts with other disciplines. These students can take knowledge of one discipline and apply it to another using their experience. Students can create their own interdisciplinary way to learn with disciplines that are more suitable for them. The interdisciplinary studies allow those who use them to link many ideas of synthesis to conduct the student to address the correct form of learning multiple disciplines at the same time making comparison among each other. It is difficult to teachers to apply an interdisciplinary approach because of the need to have a connection among the themes, subjects, objectives, for that reason it is more significant if the students can choose their own subjects to make their learning deepest and they may reflect on the connections on how the increase their knowledge in this issue. The teachers sometimes do not have the knowledge about what an interdisciplinary study means and how to use the interdisciplinary approaches in educational environment.

At Pontifical Catholic University (PUCESE) careers and study areas do not have a currently developed about ESP. Even though it is not the only problem, students don't have the necessary materials to improve their knowledge in the different careers with English for Specific Purposes (ESP) only two or just one career has the opportunity to develop it, for their students, ESP should be one of the most important subjects that the students of universities need to know and learn because without it in careers which are connected to business world, they are going to have problems at the moment of developing their work successfully. There is a fundamental material to develop that students' communicative abilities in the English language, but it is going to work with the interdisciplinary approach, for that reason, the main question of this investigation is: "What is the effect of using an interdisciplinary approach to teach EBP to students' English language learning?"

First, having already designed a material developed according to the needs of students from business and Administration that includes specific vocabulary, themes and communicative approaches to help the students of the last levels of the Business and Administration career, to carry out the mentioned material, using English for Specific Purposes as the fundamental basis for the beginning of this research. Second joining the ESP with interdisciplinary studies, in which this research will take one of the students assigned subjects such as Administrative, Finance, Economy, Accountancy, business terms communication strategies and functions that can help them to have more influence when interacting and learning the English language to join them with ESP. Third when using the material seeing its feasibility for teaching ESP. Finally, considering the way in which the significance of the effect of this study can be considered and what will be the advantages and consequences of including interdisciplinary studies in student learning to improve their language development as professionals. This investigation gives a good contribution to the Didactics of English for Specific Purposes in Esmeraldas.

This question led to the statement of the general objective of the investigation is to design a syllabus based on an interdisciplinary approach to teach EBP. To realize this, the specific objectives are to determine the adequate teaching methodology to design a syllabus based on an interdisciplinary approach to teach EBP, to determine the contents related to an interdisciplinary approach to teach EBP, and to organize the syllabus structure following an interdisciplinary approach.

Interdisciplinary Approach

According to Mishra (2019), Interdisciplinary refers to "The combination of two or more academic disciplines into one" (p, 1). There are social problems that do not have a concluding solution only for one discipline, for that reason the interaction between different disciplines will solve this specific problem. The name that this specific interaction between two or more disciplines received is Interdisciplinary Approach. In the Interdisciplinary Approach the students can make connections between the different educational disciplines and see the co-relations which are going to improve their learning. Students also receive a more relevant, less stressful, enriching and less over time learning practice experience. Education is the process of human development, as an independent field of study or discipline, most of the content of education is the result of an interdisciplinary approach because some fundamental questions or problems in education can be solve or answering with the help of other disciplines.

According to Guo (2018), an interdisciplinary approach involves in appropriately from several disciplines or separate branches of learning to define the specific problems that are involve away of the normal disciplines boundaries and the specific solutions based in the new knowledge of following complex situations that will be carried out. In another words, the term interdisciplinary means "an organizational unit that involves two or more academic disciplines" (p, 1). Interdisciplinary programs arise from the important traditional point of view in which the traditional disciplines are unable to attach an important problem for example, in social science the disciplines such as anthropology and sociology paid attention

to the social effects of technology, the students with these like for social sciences have interests in technology studies programs.

Essential Features of Interdisciplinary Studies

Klein & Newell (1997), made the definition for interdisciplinary studies that is considered together with Boix & Dawes (2007), definition for interdisciplinary understanding, five important characteristics of interdisciplinary study apparent.

1. - Involves a process for addressing questions or solving complex problems.
2. - Draws on multiple disciplinary perspectives.
3. - Works toward the integration of multiple disciplinary insights through the construction of a more comprehensive perspective.
4. - Goal is to construct a more comprehensive perspective in answering questions or addressing complex problems by producing a greater understanding advancing existing knowledge or creating a new product that could not have been created by drawing from a single discipline.
5. - Results in correcting, complementing and supplementing the limits of disciplinary approaches.

Popular Types of General Interdisciplinary Studies Programs

There are many types of general interdisciplinary studies degree programs, which can help explain why students are asked to explain their proper knowledge in the interdisciplinary degree that they choose.

Individualized degree: these programs are usually very small and admit only those students that can demonstrate about why a designing a specific program of study is not necessary.

Interdisciplinary Studies: these are programs offer students the opportunity to study more than one discipline or field of study, give the students the opportunity to learn how an interdisciplinary study works in an academic way.

Liberal Studies: - these programs offer to broad and often interdisciplinary educations drawing from the humanities, the sciences, social sciences and the arts. Often give to students various degrees of choice when they select a depth study.

Integrative Studies: - these programs offer a synthesis of study and life.

Business English

In relation to Business English, Almeida (2017) says, “Business English is the type of English used in business contexts, such as international trade, commerce, finance, insurance, banking, and many office settings” (p, 1). As an important branch of ESP, Business English or English for Business is always related with global business society. It entails specific vocabulary, grammar structures and clarity expectations for professional communication. In terms of clarity, business English context doesn’t need to leave nothing to interpretation because you are in risk to lose money and waste time. In terms of vocabulary, Business English doesn’t need a long and sophisticated vocabulary in speaking and writing, it is necessary to avoid clichés, proverbs, idioms, phrasal verbs, long verbs. In grammar, Business English need to be simple and effective, it doesn’t use complicated grammar structures to communication as academic English, it uses words like “first” and “then” to indicate order and actions that it’s helpful at the moment to save money and time.

According to Chauvot (2010), “English for Business focuses on the English language skills necessary to communicate in an increasingly global business environment”, (p, 1). Business monopolizes specific areas such as: accounting, commerce, e-commerce, economics, finance, HR, insurance, IT, law,

manufacturing, marketing, production, property, the stock exchange, (international) trade, transport. It does not mean that everything which is not considered to be General English is in fact Business English for that reason Business English is part of English for Specific Purposes. In this case the people who are going to deal with anything with the acronym EB (English for Business) need to handle or do their correspondent jobs with knowledge in: writing e-mails and reports, making presentations, doing negotiations, using the telephone, attending and participating actively in meetings or telephone conferences, receiving visitors, etc.

For Kumar (2012), the concept of Business English has undergone some major shifts in the last few years because of a number of developments, such as advances in genre theory and the coming together of English for Business Purposes and Business Communication, inspired by the realization that there is a gap to be bridged between the academy and the globalized business world. Drawing on advances in the analysis of business discourses, especially in applied genre analysis, this state-of-the-art review revisits the frameworks currently used in English for Business Purposes and Business Communication to suggest an integration of the two approaches for the design of English for Business Communication (EBC) programmes. The study incorporates an extensive review of much of the relevant published work in all the three areas mentioned above to identify some of the main issues in EBC and illustrates a gradual shift in the rationale for the design and implementation of EBC programmes.

Syllabus

According to Breen (1989), "a syllabus is a plan of what is to be achieved through our teaching and our students' learning", our students need to know what is going to be stay with them at the moment of what is accurate to their necessities. Syllabus includes the objectives, content, structure, methodology, activities, material and resources. There are different types of syllabus: Grammar and Structural, Situational and Thematic, Functional and Notional, Task-Based, Content Based and Skill Based.

Types of Syllabus

Grammar and Structural Syllabus: it is focused in grammar rules and structure, the content is a collection of forms and structures that have being taught.

Functional and Notional Syllabus: it is focused in the functions or notions that are performed when the language is used or teach.

Situational and Thematic: it is focused in the different situations and themes in which students learn.

Skill Based Syllabus: it is focused on the development of all the four skills and interacting with the language.

Task Based Syllabus: It is focused in purposeful task in which language need to accomplish.

Content Based Syllabus: it is focused on the content and information that the students need to learn. In this case the students can study other subjects such as: Maths, Biology, Science, they are not only learning the subject also they are improvising the language.

Dunning (1989) the author suggests that the use of Business be fully accepted, should be assumed as a discipline whose students should take into account, which should be exploited efficiently with the appropriate use of the combination of other disciplines thus helping. That becomes a complementary asset, because the business world manages important government economies that our students should consider when doing a study. That is why the study of IB must be appropriate and scholar; it is necessary for children to combine disciplines such as mathematics, statistics that are subjects that are much more in common with the Business paradigm. The disciplines must be together would be very fruitful in the future

that this avenue was had to lead to constructive teaching and a more congruent dialogue between the disciplines that will help improve IBS teaching thus developing career opportunities for our students.

Cheng, Henisz, Roth & Swaminathan (2009) the authors respond in a critical way the combination between other disciplines and Business. They explain in a developed way that when trying to create Dunning's ideas, a safe environment for the IB itself developed a small isolation with the other disciplines. To prevent isolation scholars in the field of IB should not only stay abreast of and seek to integrate theoretical and empirical developments in related disciplines, but they should also increase their local interaction with scholars from those disciplines. Knowledge moves forward both at the intersection of disciplines and within them. Such efforts can bring together scholars from across departments and colleges, as well as universities, to share ideas, fund new research and move the frontier of knowledge forward together. As these efforts necessarily involve international organizational activity, scholars of IB have a legitimate demand for voice and participation.

Bajada & Trayler (2013) the authors offered that the students, whom are business graduated they need to present strong disciplinary skills as soft skills of communication and teamwork. But the business graduate from today's needs to be more than the business graduated from the past. The business graduates from the today need to be have a focus of learning more integrate. In this case approaches to developing an integrative curriculum can take many forms, but the most effective is one that is embedded throughout an entire degree program, it starts with a fundamental topic to make a map about the students' study. The subject demonstrates how is related with the other disciplines to create specific knowledge and then try to impulse to more complex issues. Taking into consideration that need is to be only structure to the business environment.

According to Sehkar, (2017) "The Business and management is an inevitable part and parcel of the society for which English is the primary source of language"(p, 1). Business people should be able to communicate in English with a diverse range of customers, buyers, sellers, suppliers and other business partners because English is the official language of business no matter where companies are headquartered. Business English is essential for a successful dealing with superiors, colleagues, subordinates and representatives of other companies from abroad. For that reason, Professional education is a course or program, designed for some career, which improves the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors of the learners. English is a language of study at the higher level of education used as a medium of instruction in order to acquire the knowledge of professional or technical subjects more result oriented. Both, Business English and General English require the development of fundamental skills of LSRW- listening, speaking, reading and writing. A good basis of General English enables the students to communicate effectively. In addition, Business English needs specific vocabulary, topics and skills used in the workplace in order to communicate accurately. English for Business focuses on the English language skills necessary to communicate in an increasingly global business environment.

Also, there are many countries that provided English for Business in online courses. Fyrberg (2018) provides an online course, in the University of Karlstad in Sweden, an ESP Business Administration Bachelor in which the course comprises two sections: Research Methods and Thesis Writing. In Research Methods, lectures focus on the different aspects of the writing process and on the features of qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

At the realization of the syllabus which is going to carry the different contents, strategies, activities and methodology, we tend to forget for whom it is designed and the true direction that reason in the study of Jeczelewski (2016), he debates "The syllabus completely ignores students' state of knowledge and their individual skills. Every student is treated in the same manner and is expected to acquire information at the same pace as his or her peers". The capacities that we measure of our students can go outside the required

range that we place in our syllabus as teachers we cannot arrange that everyone learns in the same way. We must develop activities in which our students develop their skills so that when evaluating there are good results.

The degree project entails planning and completing relevant investigations, analyzing the result and presenting conclusions. The resulting written thesis should be the product of collaboration between two students. Students are expected to participate in seminars and supervision sessions and to defend their thesis at a final seminar. They are also required to critically review and discuss other students' work. Supervision is only offered to students while the course is in progress. Students who fail to complete the project satisfactorily during this time may re-register at the next course opportunity. They will then be offered additional supervision to the extent made possible by available resources.

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Method

PUCESE is a Private Catholic Educational University stated in Esmeraldas. The career of Business Administration carried out 250 students from all the levels, 15 students of the last semester and professionals were included in a previous investigation to develop a Book for Business English which is the correspondent material to develop the syllabus. The investigation was a descriptive qualitative one. The population of study was formed by the last semester students of Business Administration and also graduated students from the mention career. The correspondent hypothesis is: If the teachers of PUCESE use an interdisciplinary approach to teach EBP the students will improve their knowledge of EBP. The independent variable is Interdisciplinary Approach and the dependent variable is English for Business Purposes (EBP). The methods were Analysis and Synthesis, Hermeneutics and Descriptive statistics. The techniques used were: Documentary review to teach EBP and Previous investigation done by the author. To collect the data, the instrument design was a guide for documentary review and the Book EBP by Muñoz (2018). The information obtain from the application of documentary review was tabulated manually. The data were taken to figures and tables using the Microsoft Excel program.

Results

Topics developed in a previous material were used as a basis for creating the syllabus. Some appropriate texts by Muñoz (2018) were used to develop the results. It was necessary to make some adaptations on them to the development of each unit. To allow the themes in consideration of the vocabulary, communicative functions and strategies needed for each area. As can be appreciated at the following figure 1



Figure 1: The communicative functions that the students need to learn about English language for Business

Source: Survey applied to the students of 8th semester Business Administration by Muñoz (2018).

In this way the creation of different modules and divide them into 4 weeks and 10 hours for instruction was made. (APPENDIX B)

Every theme was carefully prepared to make sure that it contained both content objectives and language objectives. The material that helped to develop the syllabus was following the structure that the all the contents and language objectives needed to be related and be part of the instructional plan of each for each lesson. For example, the vocabulary correspondent vocabulary referred to the technical or specific terms and the content knowledge of how other countries work at the moment of acquire meetings skills in international organizations. As can be appreciated at the figure 2:



Figure 1: The specific vocabulary that the students want to know at the moment to learn English language for Business

Source: Survey applied to the students of 8th semester Business Administration by Muñoz (2018).

More attention was given to developing student production skills, speaking and writing because these skills were pointed out in the past material from students themselves and their potential employers. The most effective learning takes always place in the emphasis of the communicative competence rather than formal accuracy. As can be appreciated at the figure 3:

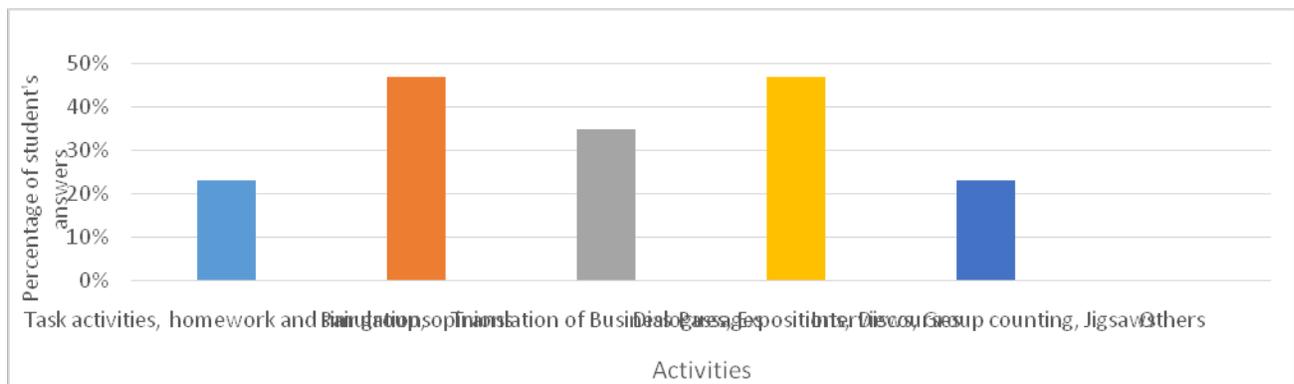


Figure 3: The activities that the students want to do at the moment to learn about English language for Business

Source: Survey applied to the students of 8th semester Business Administration by Muñoz (2018).

The students need to allow a B1 level to take the class that was about a lower intermediate according to the European Framework of Reference. Decisions were so critical to provide structure opportunities for students to use the language as much possible. This was especially important taking into consideration that English was a foreign language and the students from all the levels and sometimes they did not have the opportunity to practice outside of the classroom. As teachers we needed to offer and suggest to our students the opportunities for interaction and ways to achieve this were to obtain more prolonged

students' contribution by asking them to give the correct answers. The students' interaction was also promoted by making them to ask and answers questions in pairs or groups, in role plays and simulations by ask them for their opinions and debating about meetings and specific topics which students specially appreciated.

Discussion

The results of this research are consistent with Dunning (1989) presented a study called "The Study of International Business: A Plea for a More Interdisciplinary Approach" in this case, the author suggests that the use of Business be fully accepted, should be assumed as a discipline to include a healthy, educational and prepared environment for Business students to develop their abilities with materials specifically designed for them. His ideas were considered when developing the interdisciplinary syllabus for Business English, running from a safe environment to combining various interrelated disciplines. Finally implementing Business English as another important discipline in the field of study so that students can develop their skills and knowledge in all the disciplines taught.

Cheng, Henisz, Roth & Swaminathan (2009) did a study called "Advancing interdisciplinary research in the field of international business: Prospects, issues and challenges" in which the authors respond in a critical way the combination between other disciplines and Business, to prevent isolation scholars in the field of International Business (IB) should not only stay abreast of and seek to integrate theoretical and empirical developments in related disciplines, but they should also increase their local interaction with scholars from those disciplines. Because this research was considered the development of Business English as a fundamental part for the university study of the students who are pursuing careers of this viability. Students need to have basic studies about the business world to access this developing study. In the creation of the syllabus was taken into account the contents necessary for the development of an interdisciplinary education to abolish discrimination from other disciplines based on this field. Demanding the participation of all those who have a little advanced business knowledge.

The development of content, vocabulary and communicative functions which were necessary for teaching business English are the components that this research has in common with the research of Sehkar (2017) in which English is the language of the business community. The contents to be used to develop the syllabus structure were the following: Marketing, Finance, Accountancy, Economy and Business. The main communicative functions were: Attending business meetings and shareholders; drawing intra company papers such as letters, e-mails, etc.; communication among colleagues; interviewing clients; participation in negotiations and business phone calls. The following vocabulary developed in the syllabus: Marketing vocabulary, buying and sellers, costumers, trade, accountancy, etc. Students have to enrich their Business Vocabulary to work at the Business world.

Also, with the ideas of the syllabus designed from Fyrberg (2018) which count with 60 credits to develop their degree in Business Administration program. This syllabus contained 10 credits, 10 hours per week, and the five days of the week. As well, 2 hours of autonomous work for the students and corresponding activities in which all the four skills are involved. Each a different theme will be allowed with their corresponding activities, topics, vocabulary and communicative functions. The role of the teacher and the importance of a syllabus to develop an efficient business course were as well the relationship of this investigation with Jeczelewski (2016) investigation in which the role of the teacher as a moderator to increase students' development and encourage them to learn Business English for their professional life is made. Evaluation is one of the main techniques to process the language training of the students considering the environment of the class to apply an appropriate type of evaluation according to the required situation.

A comparison between this research and the previous studies is made. In which many important points were consider such contents, the structure of the syllabus, vocabulary, themes, activities, communicative

functions, the role of the teacher and evaluation. Also, important ideas like to implement a course to teach Business English, to encourage the students to learn and improve their life, to integrate the interdisciplinary approach to develop the corresponding syllabus based on the themes and topics that the students of the business administration degrees or professional careers with business were taken into account. It was all developed with the use of a previous material considering the needs of the students. At least studies involving Vygotsky sociocultural approach, zone of proximal development and Harris humanistic approach were the key for this research.

Conclusions

The adequate teaching methodologies to design a syllabus based on an interdisciplinary approach to teach EBP were: Task-Based Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, Community Language Teaching and Grammar Translation.

The contents related to an interdisciplinary approach to teach EBP were: Marketing, Finance, Accountancy, Economy and Business.

The syllabus structure following an interdisciplinary approach was: General Information, Rubric, Objectives, Contents, Units, Learning Strategies, Learning Results, Grades, Evaluation and Bibliography.

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