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TEACHING PRESENTATION SKILLS TO STUDENTS OF BUSINESS ENGLISH

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Анотація. Стаття присвячена проблемі навчання студентів презентації на заняттях з ділової англійської мови. Розглядаються основні елементи презентації і пропонуються практичні поради та прийоми з підготовки та проведення успішної презентації англійською мовою.

Аннотация. Статья посвящена проблеме обучения студентов презентации на занятиях по деловому английскому языку. Рассматриваются основные элементы презентации и предлагаются практические советы и приемы по подготовке и проведению успешной презентации на английском языке.

Summary. The article is devoted to the problem of teaching presentation skills to the students of Business English. The essential elements of the presentation and some tips and practical techniques on preparing and delivering a successful oral presentation in

English are being discussed. It is suggested that structure, non-verbal communication, use of visual materials, handling questions should be taught explicitly to the students.

Ключові слова: презентація, навички презентації, ділова англійська.

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Key words: presentation, presentation skills, Business English.

Definition of the Problem. The overall aim of the National English for Specific Purposes Curriculum (ESP) is to develop students' professional language competences, enabling them to function effectively in a culturally diverse academic and professional environment. According to ESP programme, to qualify for a Bachelor's degree, together with other skills, a student should be able to communicate in English in the world of work, that includes the ability to prepare public presentations on a wide range of professional topics, using relevant means of verbal communication and adequate forms of discussion and debate [6, c. 58].

Although much information on how to prepare and deliver presentations can be found on the Internet, if students are asked to prepare and give presentations on any given topic, most of them will not take the time to do research on preparation and delivery of presentations. Therefore, it is imperative that whenever possible oral presentation skills should be added to the syllabus of Business English. The rationale is that eventually students will need oral presen-

tation skills, that is to say, while they are still pursuing their university degree and after they graduate.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Business presentations are increasingly popular, which is reflected in the wide array of textbooks on this topic. Most of them deal with practical aspects of giving presentations. This seems to be particularly true of ESP coursebooks on presentations such as *Effective Presentations* [3] and *Presenting in English* [5], both for intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. These coursebooks cover various language and rhetorical techniques for presentations, as well as structure, signposting, visual aids, body language, voice control and handling questions.

There is an abundance of ever increasing literature on various aspects of presentations in English. We'll name some of the most famous books on planning and delivering presentations: H.M. Boettinger *Moving Mountains or the Art and Craft of Letting Others See Things Your Way* (1989), C. Atkinson *Beyond Bullet Points* (2005), N. Morgan. *Give your Speech, Change the World: How To Move Your Audience to*

Action (2005), 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), S. Berkum *Confessions of a Public Speaker* (2012). A lot of books are devoted to the technical aspects of presentations, particularly on the use of Microsoft's PowerPoint. This technological innovation has almost changed the way people conceptualise presentations, and there has been a flood of books, articles and web-pages offering instructions on how to make the most of this technology in giving presentations. Examples of these would include: D. Paradi *The Visual Slide Revolution*, (2000), D. Lowe *PowerPoint 2003 for Dummies* (2003), F. Wempen *PowerPoint 2003 Bible* (2003), F. Wempen *PowerPoint Advanced Presentation Techniques* (2004), N. Oulton *Killer Presentations* (2005), S. M. Kosslyn *Clear and to the Point: 8 Psychological Principles for Compelling PowerPoint Presentations* (2007), N. Duarte *Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations* (2008), G. Reynolds *Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery* (2011), R. Williams *The Non Designer's Presentation Book* (2009), A. Kapterev *Presentation Secrets* (2011), etc.

In comparison to the English-speaking world there are not many linguistic and methodological works on teaching presentation skills in the English language in Ukraine. There is a coursebook by O. B. Tarnopolsky and Y.S. Avsiukevych *Successful Presentations*. It is designed for university students of Business and Economics who have reached the intermediate level of English (B2). The aim of the coursebook is to develop learners' skills in giving short (not longer than 5 minutes) business presentations in English.

We can't but mention theses by N.L. Drab *Teaching Professional Speaking (Monologue-Presentation) to Future Economists in German* [4], and Y. S. Avsiukevych *Methology of Teaching Presentations to Students of Business English* [1]. The latter is devoted to the methology of teaching presentation skills to the third year students of Business English. The author considers a business presentation as a discourse genre and develops a complex of exercises for teaching presentation skills to students of Business English.

Formulation of the Goals. Despite the great value of the above works, the analysis of the literature has shown that the problem of teaching Business presentation skills is not researched enough in Ukraine. That is why there is an objective necessity in further study of techniques on preparing and delivering a successful oral presentation in English.

Presentation of the Research. Before moving onto a discussion of some elements of teaching successful presentations we see it as useful to define the terms 'a presentation' and 'presentation skills'. A presentation is described as 'a speech or talk in which a new product, idea, or piece of work is shown and explained to an audience' [7].

Presentation skills are 'the set of techniques and skills required to successfully present oral information to others' [8]. These skills cover a variety of areas such as the structure of the presentation, the design of the slides, the tone of the voice, the body language, etc. Presentations skills are very useful in many aspects of work and life. Effective presentations and public speaking skills are important in business, sales, training, teaching, lecturing, and generally feeling comfortable speaking to a group of people. When you ask students to present in English, it is a tough task. They will often find it stressful in their own language, so to do it in English is even harder.

Analyzing the experience of teaching presentation skills to the students of Banking Institute of the University of Banking, NBU, we consider it necessary to draw attention to some practical tips and techniques for creating and successfully delivering effective presentations.

Taking into consideration students' needs, we divided oral presentation skills into two main sections: preparing presentations and delivering presentations. In Section One, students learn how presentations are put together and how effective slides are designed. In Section Two, students learn how to behave in front of an audience, what they may say when they start, move along and end their presentation, how to use verbal and non-verbal communication, how to handle questions, etc.

Section I. Preparation of Presentations

1. Before you start to prepare a presentation, you should ask yourself:

- «**Why** am I making this presentation?» Do I need to inform, to persuade, to train or to sell?

The objective of your presentation should be clear in your mind.

- «**Who** am I making this presentation to?»

You should know who your **audience** is. How many people? Are they experts or non-experts? How much do they know already and what will they expect from you?

- «**Where** am I making this presentation?»

You should know the **venue**. Will it be a small meeting-room or a large conference hall? What facilities and equipment are available? What are the seating arrangements?

- «How long will this presentation be?»
You should know how much **time** you have.
- «What should I say?»

You should think about the **content**. Research your topic, brainstorm your ideas, and include only the information that is relevant to your audience and your objective. Remember, you have a limited time for your presentation.

You should realise that the two key issues in the preparation of a presentation are: the message: What

do I want the audience to know when I have finished? And the audience: How do I present in a way in which the audience will understand and remember what I have said?

2. Plan the structure

A well-organised presentation with a clear structure is easier for the audience to follow. Most presentations are organised in three parts, followed by questions:

Short introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcome your audience - (introduce yourself) - introduce your subject - outline the structure of your presentation - tell the length of your presentation - explain the rules for questions
Body of presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present the subject itself
Short conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarise your presentation - thank your audience - invite questions

3. Prepare Presentation Slides

It is very helpful to use visual aids in your presentation, as it helps people to understand. People learn visually as well as orally. Be careful to:

- Avoid wordiness: use key words and phrases only, not complete sentences. Otherwise people will read the slides and pay no attention to what you are saying. Sentences can only be written if you are quoting someone directly. Slides should be used as illustrations, and demonstrate the points of a presentation, they should reinforce your words, not repeat them.

- Limit the number of ideas on each visual. Include a maximum of 4-6 points per slide.

- Choose a font that is simple and easy to read such as Times New Roman, Ariel, or Helvetica. Select a font size that is large enough to be seen at the back of the room. The minimal acceptable size is typically 24 point, and 36 point for titles. Avoid all capital letters. The use of all capitals makes statements more difficult to read and is like SHOUTING at your audience.

- Use a colour of font that contrasts with the background. So if the background color is dark, fonts should be very light in color. Use the same background consistently throughout the presentation. Reds and oranges stand out, but are hard to continually focus on; therefore, use these colors only for emphasis.

- Design diagrams and tables that are simple and clear, with readily recognised symbols. Your audience must be able to read all the data in your diagrams and tables. Often, this means that you will have to simplify a more complex or detailed table or diagram that has been prepared for a printed format.

So the design of the slides should be simple. Too many words, graphics, or different colors are distracting.

4. Rehearse the presentation

You should rehearse your presentation several times. This will help you to:

- become more familiar with what you want to say, so you feel secure and calm at the time of the presentation;

- identify weaknesses in your presentation;

- practise difficult pronunciations;

- check the time that your presentation takes and make any necessary modifications.

II. Section Two. Delivery of Presentations

It's not only what you say that is important, but also how you say it – your presentation style. Once students learn how to prepare presentations, they are ready to learn how to give presentations. Several factors should be considered when giving presentations:

- You should appear relaxed, positive and confident.

- Show passion and enthusiasm for the topic. If you are not interested in the subject, you cannot ex-

pect your audience to be interested, either.

- Interact with and pay attention to your audience. Be aware of how your audience is reacting. Are they interested or bored? If they look confused, ask them why. Stop if necessary and explain a point again. Check if the audience is still with you. You can gain the audience's attention by telling an anecdote, mentioning a really surprising fact or statistic, stating a problem or asking a question.

- Maintain eye contact with the audience. Do not read your notes or slides. Nothing bores an audience faster than the presenter who avoids eye contact with them by reading words from a prepared speech.

- Use gestures and facial expressions to help you explain, emphasise, and communicate the material. Be careful not to use distracting habits such as pacing or repeatedly adjusting your glasses or hair.

- Speak slowly, clearly and loudly enough for everyone in the room to hear you.

- Don't speak in a flat monotone – this will bore your audience. By varying your speed and tone, you will be able to keep your audience's attention.

- Emphasise key words and pause before moving on to the next idea or point.

- Use simple and clear language. Use short words and short sentences. Talk about concrete facts rather than abstract ideas. Use active verbs instead of passive verbs. Active verbs are much easier to understand.

- Use clear and explicit links between the parts of the presentation.

- Give your audience time on the visuals.

- Stick to your structure.

The last part of a presentation is the question and answer section. It can be the most difficult part be-

cause you can't prepare for it. But you should:

- welcome questions and listen carefully (and look at the questioner);

- do not interrupt the speaker;

- clarify the exact meaning of the question if you are not sure;

- remain polite when dealing with difficult questions;

- check that your questioner is satisfied with your answer.

Questions show that the audience were listening to you with interest. Questions should not be regarded as an attack on you, but as a collaborative search for deeper understanding. Questions are a good opportunity to interact with the audience. It may be helpful to try to predict what questions will be asked so that you can prepare your response in advance. Sometimes, if you do not know the answer to the question from the audience, you can tell them.

Conclusions. Presentation skills and public speaking abilities are not limited to certain special people – anyone can give a good presentation, or perform public speaking to a professional and impressive standard. Like most specialisms, this requires preparation and practice.

Teaching students the techniques to prepare and deliver a well-organised, interesting, effective presentation is very important. Content, organisation, structure, non-verbal communication, use of visual materials, handling questions should be taught explicitly to the students. The process of teaching presentation skills is divided into two main sections: preparing presentations and delivering presentations.

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