【論　文】

Creating Effective Business English Courses for Lower-level Learners

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Abstract

While the acquisition of English as a second language can present several challenges for students, the pursuit of learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) adds an additional layer of linguistic and content-based complexity to these efforts; especially for lower-level learners. The first part of this paper provides some background information on ESP and suggests some key factors for teachers to consider when creating Business English courses. The next section addresses some of the challenges that learners face in their effort to acquire Business English, such as affective factors and the struggle to navigate sophisticated business language and content. Some suggestions are then given on how to help students overcome these affective factors, and, for teachers, how to best select and adapt materials for Business English courses. Finally, some recommendations are made to help support teachers in their efforts to teach Business English to lower-level learners and those in mixed-level classes. The appendix to this paper includes some activities that we have found to be effective in the Business English classroom.

Introduction

Learners of English (ELLs) face a variety of challenges in their attempt to acquire what is arguably one of the most difficult languages to master. Apart from the complex linguistic elements inherent in English, many learners deal with a variety of affective factors, such as stress, anxiety, and a lack of confidence and motivation. As teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL), we also face our own set of obstacles, as we strive to provide language courses that are engaging, dynamic, level-appropriate, and pedagogically sound.

If EFL teachers face a number of challenges, what then are they to do when confronted with the daunting task of developing courses to help learners achieve language proficiency in a specific content area, such as business, science, or computers? English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, which use a content-based instructional approach, are designed with this very objective in mind.

Though ESP courses share some common ground with language-focused EFL courses, there are several features that set them apart. Some of these differences include the teaching approach, course design, and types of materials that are employed. With respect to the latter, the lexical and syntactic complexity of ESP teaching materials are best suited to language learners with an intermediate or advanced level of English (Dudley-Evans, 1997, Gatehouse, 2001). So then, how can teachers of Business English[1] courses effectively deliver them to students with an elementary or low-intermediate level of English and/or to students within mixed-level classes? The main purposes of this paper are to examine this particular question as well as to provide strategies that will help Business English teachers overcome the difficulties associated with the design, development, and implementation of ESP courses, and more specifically, Business English courses.

In order to address the issue of how best to provide Business English instruction to lower-level learners, we will first provide some background information on ESP, content-based instruction, needs analyses, syllabus design, and the relationships among them. Next, we will take a look at materials selection and development. Following that we discuss some of the key affective factors that ELLs face in the second language (L2) classroom and how to help them overcome these impediments to language acquisition. The final section of this paper will offer some practical suggestions on how to help lower-proficiency learners succeed in Business English courses, along with some examples of the types of activities that we have found to be successful.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes is somewhat self-defining in that ESP courses are designed to help learners acquire English language proficiency in a specific area or field, such as business, science, nursing, or computers (Basturkmen & Shackleford, 2015). In keeping with this highly results-oriented approach to teaching, instructors use a content-based approach, in which specialized content is chosen in concert with language learning goals, the result of which has learners striving to concurrently acquire both language ability and content knowledge in a particular area or field.

English for Business Purposes, or 'Business English', continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in ESP. As ever-increasing globalization and the development of new technologies create an even greater need for businesspeople to communicate through a common language, and with the general recognition and acceptance of English as the *lingua franca* of international business, this trend is likely to continue well into the future (Clark, 2012; Neeley, 2012).

Content-based Instruction

Content-based instruction (CBI) is the most common content-driven pedagogical approach. Simply stated, students learn language through the course's content. In most Japanese universities, however, where Business English courses have the dual objective of teaching both language and content, one can view CBI as the concurrent teaching of business language and content, through which ELLs can learn both the language of business and the actual business contexts in which it is used.

After gaining popularity among both academics and EFL instructors in the mid-1980s, CBI quickly became the preferred method of instruction within ESP. Since the majority of learners who enroll in Business English courses are majoring in business (and business-related fields) or working in the business world, they should have some familiarity with business language and practices. This background knowledge can help them to contextualize the content of Business English courses and better enable them to navigate unfamiliar concepts.

Needs Analyses

When designing a course for learners of Business English, there are several key elements to keep in mind. At the forefront is the needs analysis, through which teachers can gain important insights into what their learners hope to accomplish during the course. Administering needs analyses and then using their findings to inform course design has been strongly recommended by a number of researchers and practitioners (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Nelson, 2000; Chambers, 2002; West, 1994; Bacha & Bahous, 2008; Serafini et. al, 2015; Rahman, 2015).

Brieger (1997) suggests that needs analyses for Business English "set out to identify the range of general and specialist language knowledge required, together with general and professional communication skills" (p. 88-89). The usefulness of needs analyses, however, depends on several factors. For example, they generally yield more useful data when conducted among learners with similar backgrounds, goals, and interests, such as those from the same culture, whose majors are related (in the case of university students), and who are at a comparable stage in their academic or business careers. Heterogeneous groups of learners present much more of a challenge due to a greater divergence of goals and interests. In this respect, Business English teachers at Japanese universities should find needs analyses to be especially helpful. While it would be virtually impossible to design an ESP course that is 'all things to all people', instructors can use a needs analysis to gain clearer insights into their students' needs, objectives, interests, and preferences. For example, they can ascertain which types of content sources their students prefer (business videos, articles, case studies ...), ask about preferred learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic ...), and the types of activities their learners are interested in (role-play, problem solving, etc.). After the needs analysis has been administered and its results tabulated, the instructor is in a much stronger position to create a Business English course that better reflects the needs and interests of the students (Serafini et. al, 2015). However, conducting needs analyses is not always practical. While they can be effectively used for most classes, for instructors who are faced with pre-determined curriculum goals, students with limited language proficiency, or learners with highly divergent needs and interests, the resulting data would prove far less useful. In addition, creating a course based on student needs is not only time intensive (especially for newer Business English instructors), but the instructor may also have difficulty finding course content that is interesting, relevant, authentic, and level appropriate. This key challenge will be explored later in this paper.

Syllabus Design

Since the vast majority of ESP courses are taught using a content-based approach, it naturally follows that most Business English syllabi use a content-based syllabus as well. The content-based syllabus is created under a general framework that enables the instructor to teach business content and its accompanying language in tandem. Although the subject matter is of primary importance, the syllabus must also be designed in such a way that language learning occurs alongside the content; ideally in a way that facilitates both the understanding of the language and frames it in authentic business contexts. More specifically, these syllabi are generally created in one of two ways. They are either task-based, (i.e., based on specific business endeavors such as conducting a meeting, negotiating a sale, or making a presentation), or they are topically/thematically based, with units on various business functions (or ‘functional areas’), such as marketing, finance, and operations. Irrespective of which type of syllabus the instructor ultimately chooses, he should endeavor to embed the types of exercises and activities that enable learners to develop a language and knowledge base that corresponds with those pre-determined tasks or business functions.

Materials selection

The use of authentic materials is a vital component in Business English courses, as most students expect to be able to apply the language and content they learn in the classroom to future business situations. Authentic materials are those that are generally intended for native speakers of the language. These can be readily accessed from newspapers, magazines, television, radio, the Internet, and other sources. Examples of these materials could include (business) news articles, sales or vacation brochures, owner’s manuals, profit and loss statements, job advertisements, restaurant menus, podcasts, stock market charts, and so on. Despite this abundance of sources, since the business landscape is constantly changing, (i.e., companies being acquired and sold, merging, and going bankrupt, new products entering the market while others disappear, ever-changing stock markets, etc.), many Business English instructors find it necessary to regularly modify their materials to keep them up-to-date. As mentioned earlier, this is often necessary as most Business English students expect to learn language and use content that is current, valid, and applicable to their current and/or future business careers. However, maintaining a supply of these materials can demand a lot of time and effort from instructors.

The choice of content-based instructional materials can also present some key challenges to Business English teachers. To provide less experienced instructors with a general guideline for materials selection, the materials should be authentic and current, culturally accessible, interesting, level-appropriate, and taken from a variety of sources. While the selected materials need not meet all of these criteria, Business English instructors should do their best to choose materials that meet as many of them as possible.

With high-intermediate and advanced students, these source materials often prove to be highly successful, as students gain a sense of confidence and pride when they are able to decipher and digest the same content as native English speakers. This also provides learners with the satisfaction of being able to think beyond the EFL classroom and move toward the real world of business. What is an instructor to do, though, for students in a Business English class who have a lower level of proficiency, or when faced with a mixed-level class comprised of both higher and lower-level students? This difficult challenge is addressed later in the paper.

Affective Factors in Second Language Learning

Affective factors refer to the emotional state or mood that learners regularly experience while learning a second language[2] (L2), particularly those that can enhance or impede learning. In their research paper on individual learner differences, Oxford and Ehrman (1993) mention anxiety level, self-esteem, motivation, tolerance of ambiguity and (comfort with) risk-taking as some of the most important factors associated with success in second language acquisition (SLA). While each of the aforementioned affective factors can significantly impact L2 learning, the following review will be limited to two of the most researched affective factors; motivation and anxiety, and their influence in the L2 classroom.

Motivation

In Business English classes, teachers deal with varying levels of student motivation, which can sometimes present challenges for both the learner and instructor. Many researchers, such as Liuolienė and Metiūnienė (2006), Dörnyei (1998), and Gardner (2001), agree that motivation plays a key role in the language learning process, and more specifically, language acquisition and achievement. Gardner, (as cited in Dornyei, 1994) describes motivation as being either *instrumental* or *integrative* (although these can coexist). Students who possess instrumental motivation often enter Business English classes for reasons of utility. For example, they may want to gain an upper hand when job seeking, get a higher TOEIC score, or prepare for future interactions with colleagues in an English speaking business environment. Learners who possess integrative motivation would have a desire to learn a second language to communicate with members of the target culture (TC), get to know them better, and become a more accepted member of that community (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

Another aspect of motivation has to do with where it originates. If a learner's motivation to learn a language emanates from within, merely out of interest or from a sense of personal satisfaction, it is said to be *intrinsic*. However, if one's motives are more instrumental in nature, such as fulfilling a course requirement or getting job at a Western company, then the motivation is said to be *extrinsic*. Whether intrinsic or extrinsic, instrumental or integrative, most teachers and researchers believe that motivation plays a key role in SLA. Motivation generally drives a learner to put greater effort into acquiring the target language (TL), which in turn, leads to more successful language acquisition (Oxford & Ehrman, 1993; Dornyei, 1994).

Anxiety

Another factor that has a strong impact on a learner's ability to acquire the TL is anxiety (Trinder, 2013). Anxiety, which is generally understood as a vague, uncomfortable uneasiness, usually brought on by a particular situation, is one of the key affective factors associated with successful (or unsuccessful) language learning. Similar to motivation, a learner's level of anxiety will likely have a significant impact on his/her ability to acquire an L2 (Krashen, 1988; Oxford & Ehrman, 1993). Oxford and Ehrman (1993) differentiate between two different types of anxiety, *trait anxiety*, which indicates that a person is predisposed to frequent feelings of anxiety due to his/her character, and *state* (or situational) anxiety which manifests through a specific event or situation.

Anxiety can also be separated into positive (facilitating) and negative (debilitating) forms. It is believed that facilitative anxiety can help learners by forcing them to stay alert, or motivate them to study. Debilitative anxiety, however, hampers performance by causing learners to worry excessively, doubt themselves, or participate less frequently in discourse. Excessive anxiety may even result in language avoidance (Oxford & Ehrman, 1993).

Some students experience anxiety in the L2 classroom when they have to perform a productive task such as speaking, when their mistakes are corrected in front of others, or when they are unable to grasp a language point. This anxiety can sometimes act as a blocking mechanism, preventing language from being processed in the learner's mind (Krashen, 1988).

As can be reasonably inferred from this brief review of learner motivation and anxiety, most of the research supports the assumption that learners who have a high level of motivation and/or a reasonably low level of anxiety will acquire an L2 much more readily than learners who are unmotivated (or demotivated) and under a higher degree of anxiety.

Overcoming Challenges in the Business English Classroom

Increasing Learner Motivation and Reducing Anxiety

How to increase learner motivation has become a common topic among both EFL and Business English instructors. One of the simplest and most effective ways to increase motivation revolves around learner goals. While some students may only aspire to receive a passing grade, most will be able to envision a future application of the language skills they wish to acquire in their Business English course. During the first class, we recommend asking students to write down their goals. Next, have them share their goals within small groups. By putting students in groups, they can also learn about the goals of their peers and some additional benefits of acquiring Business English.

A second way to increase motivation is to find or make activities and exercises that are interesting and relevant to the majority of the students. Instead of a marketing activity that focuses on ‘widgets’, perhaps the instructor can provide brochures on the latest smart phone or concert promotion. Above all, challenge learners in ways that tap into their creativity and imagination, and strive to provide content that is both linguistically and cognitively accessible.

Since the acquisition and creation of appropriate content can be somewhat challenging, this process will be examined in the next section of this paper.

When it comes to anxiety, two of the most common types are social anxiety and task, or performance-based, anxiety. With respect to the former, there are a number of methods that teachers can employ to help reduce this. One way relates to the physical classroom. In a typical teacher-centered classroom, the desks are arranged in several rows, with each desk (and student) facing the teacher. This arrangement discourages interaction between students and creates a sense of individuals working alone to complete tasks. In lecture halls, the physical arrangement of desks may be unchangeable, but in most language classrooms, desks are movable, so teachers can arrange them in ‘pods’ or small groups to create a group dynamic. Another way to reduce social anxiety is for students to become familiar with as many members of class as possible, which will help them develop more relationships and feel more comfortable when performing pair and group activities. In the university environment, groups of friends often sit together, so when assigning student pairs and groups, it is advisable for the teacher to match students from different parts of the classroom, to continually change these pairings and groupings, and make an effort to match students of both similar and different language proficiency levels. One way to do this is to number students and to mentally keep track of recent pairings or keep written reminders.

We previously mentioned the importance of using accessible, interesting, and level-appropriate materials and activities in the classroom. Research has shown that the majority of students enjoy challenging activities that are dynamic in nature, if they are level-appropriate and have clear learning outcomes (Looi et al., 2005). In addition, if learners work together toward achievable and clearly defined goals in a stimulating atmosphere, they are likely to experience increased interest and feel less anxiety.

As noted earlier, some students feel anxious when being forced to speak before others, when their mistakes are corrected in front of their peers, or when they cannot grasp language points (Krashen, 1988). There are several ways that teachers can respond to these types of performance anxiety. For example, instead of singling out students to respond to questions or provide information, teachers should first ask for volunteers. Teachers can also put students in pairs or small groups to work on tasks and then solicit answers from those pairs or groups. Allowing a member of a pair or group to respond instead of the individual helps to reduce performance anxiety. Teachers should also correct students gently and only when appropriate, do their best to provide attainable, accessible, and level-appropriate materials, clarify any ambiguities, and provide additional explanation and support when necessary. While most of these teaching strategies can be acquired quite readily, the challenge of creating level-appropriate, intellectually stimulating, and accessible materials is not always easy. This challenge will be addressed in the next section.

Choosing and Adapting Classroom Materials

Belcher (2004), described some of the difficulties faced by ESP instructors, noting that "ESP pedagogy places heavy demands on its practitioners ... to create or adapt materials to meet the specific needs identified, and to cope with often unfamiliar subject matter and even language use" (p. 166). One of the biggest challenges associated with teaching Business English courses is the selection and development of course materials: how to choose or create materials that best help students achieve both the linguistic and content objectives of the course. Depending on the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the class, the similarity or difference between students' levels of language proficiency, and their language (and content) needs and objectives, instructors may have a very difficult time creating a Business English course that is appealing and accessible to all students. Depending on the level of disparity among students, syllabus design and materials selection can become quite challenging. In a 'typical' Japanese university setting, classes are comprised mostly of Japanese students with a handful of students from other Asian or, to a lesser extent, non-Asian countries. In mixed-level classes, if teachers select materials that are geared toward the upper end of the class, they may have to provide additional simplified materials to lower-level students as well. While this may reduce the authenticity of the materials, it is our opinion that these 'adapted materials' are still superior to those from Business English textbooks. Given that students who enter the international business arena will be exposed to written and spoken texts that are created by writers and businesspeople in their field, this system of adaptation may provide a bridge between typical language-oriented texts and those truly authentic texts that students will encounter later in their business careers.

This raises the question of how best to adapt and simplify these authentic materials. One way to do this is to pre-select a number of complex, low-frequency words and phrases from the source materials and substitute them (where appropriate) with higher frequency, simpler lexical units that students can more easily access and learn. It is advised to do this in line with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1988), which recommends that learners be provided with input–audio, visual, textual, or other–that is slightly beyond their current language level. An optional word bank below the text, which includes the original lexical items, might also prove useful for more diligent students who are motivated to learn advanced terminology. The teacher could also utilize the word bank for vocabulary building exercises at a later point in the course after students have attained a firm grasp of the simplified version of the material.

An additional way that teachers can accommodate lower-level students is to find materials that are not overly complex. For example, in a unit on job interviews, one might seek out and use actual job application forms and interview questions, since these will be within most students' language range. For a unit on advertising, television commercials can be utilized, as most are quite short and use little spoken language. Print advertising could also be used, since it tends to comprise a limited amount of text and is usually visually contextualized. These examples of authentic texts would be accessible to lower-proficiency learners. While a reasonable number of unknown terms and phrases are acceptable–and to be expected, texts that are overly confusing or frustrating to learners would serve to decrease learner confidence and increase anxiety.

In situations where Business English instructors are faced with students who have very limited English proficiency, they may have to drastically modify materials to make them accessible to their students. While this tactic does reduce the authenticity of the materials, in our opinion, these adapted materials are still quite useful since they remain somewhat reflective of actual business contexts. Given that students who enter the international business arena will be exposed to more complex spoken and written discourse and texts, this system of adaptation often provides the necessary bridge between typical learner-oriented business textbooks and the more sophisticated business language that they will encounter throughout their careers.

Some researcher-practitioners have argued that learners must be exposed to highly authentic texts so that they can develop the skills necessary to disseminate those types of materials when they encounter them in the real world (see Phillips & Shettlesworth, 1978) and that texts that have been simplified or modified by ESP teachers may be misleading and the language unnatural. Others, however, suggest that it is more important to match course content with the learning goals set forth by teachers and that text authenticity is of secondary concern (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Generally speaking, instructors should aim for the best balance of both, since most ESP research suggests that the most suitable learning materials for Business English courses are those that are as authentic as possible, yet lie within most learners' cognitive and lexical capacity.

How then is an instructor to find the right balance between authenticity and comprehensibility? This is a difficult question, for which there is no perfect answer. There are, however, some recommendations that instructors should consider while approaching this task:

(1) Informed by a needs analysis, the instructor should keep in mind the key learning objectives of the students, including their learning styles, content needs and interests, preferred methods of learning, and other factors that they have indicated as being important.
(2) Through diagnostic exercises and activities, the instructor should pre-assess or otherwise gain a clear understanding of his students' general language ability–both productive and receptive–prior to selecting course materials.

Students with a Lack of Business Knowledge

Although it is good to stimulate learners' minds both cognitively and linguistically, instructors must be careful not to overwhelm them with new business concepts, topics, or situations. If this happens, it takes great effort on the part of students to decipher and digest the content. By starting with simpler business concepts that most students have familiarity with or find easier to comprehend, the Business English teacher can help learners gain confidence and reduce anxiety. In addition, we have found that doing classroom activities that contextualize jargon within real business situations helps learners to acquire the language. (See appendix for examples.)

When business concepts or language proves to be beyond students' comprehension, it is advisable to provide them with simple analogies to relate these abstract concepts to their everyday lives. In addition, a glossary, which includes simple example sentences, can contextualize the more sophisticated lexical and syntactic items. In cases where the source materials are simply too complex or jargon laden, thus rendering them beyond the comprehension of the learners, it becomes necessary to simplify the texts to make them accessible. Of course, it is ultimately the responsibility of the instructor to find an appropriate balance between the authenticity of the source materials and students' level of English language comprehension and to choose whether to provide texts in their entirety or to adapt them to the students' level. In our experience, even when modifying the texts became necessary, students still felt a sense of accomplishment, since, in the end, they were essentially engaging with the same types of spoken and written content as their native English-speaking counterparts.

Dealing with Multi-level Classes and Lower-level Learners

With respect to teaching Business English to classes of mixed-proficiency students, Gatehouse (2001) argued that, "variations in language level ... can be accommodated only to a certain extent. Minimum entrance standards must be established in the area of language level. Most importantly, these standards must be strictly enforced at the time of placement" (p. 9).

Within large universities or other learning institutions where multiple Business English courses are taught, it may well be possible to use language benchmarks and restrict course enrollment based on a minimum language standard. With a large enough base of students to draw from, classes could be organized so that level disparity among students is minimized. Having these options in place is highly desirable for both Business English instructors and students. However, considering the enrollment numbers in Business English courses at many Japanese universities, instructors will find that it is somewhat uncommon to have a class of students with uniform proficiency, especially at a higher level of English. Business English classes with students of lower-proficiency and multi-level classes are much more common. Earlier in this paper, some strategies for overcoming the challenges faced by lower-level students were suggested. How then, can instructors best handle multi-level Business English classes where student motivation may be impacted, as the highest proficiency students feel unchallenged by the very same concepts and language that the lowest-proficiency students struggle to understand? In extreme cases, the only solution may be to design two versions of the same exercise or activity and give students the option of which exercise/activity to attempt. While this approach usually yields positive results, it can be very time intensive, especially for newer instructors. Another way of dealing with mixed-level classes is to group higher and lower proficiency students together, having the higher-proficiency students take on the role of mentor. This method is especially well-suited to business topics such as management or job training, when practicing language functions such as giving instructions, or with repetition and clarification requests.

Conclusion

Business English continues to be an important area of study, as both globalization and the acceptance of English as the *lingua franca* of international business continue to grow. That being so, the study and acquisition of Business English language and content can present significant challenges for both learners and teachers. For the former, some of these challenges are found in the linguistic and cognitive complexity of Business English course materials. Learners also struggle to overcome some of the affective factors that are inherent in studying an L2, which can become even more pronounced when faced with the difficulties associated with this particular field of study.

Some of the challenges instructors face include finding appropriate authentic materials and then helping learners–some of whom have low English proficiency–to understand and acquire the language and content contained within them. Fortunately, there are a variety of tools that can be utilized to create more effective Business English courses. With respect to course creation, instructors can employ needs analyses, a content-based syllabus design, and dynamic materials, among other things. There are also a variety of ways to help mitigate the affective factors that learners experience in the classroom.

We hope that this paper has shed some light on the above-mentioned challenges, presented some useful background information on the creation of Business English courses, and provided some practical strategies to help teachers make it easier for their students to acquire the specialized language and content found within these courses.

Notes

[1] There are a variety of terms that denote the teaching of business content in an ESL environment, including 'Business English', 'English for Business Purposes', and 'Business Communication'. For the purposes of this paper, the term 'Business English' will be used to represent all of these variations.

[2] The term 'second language' will refer to a learner's second *or* additional language.

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Appendix

Sample Activities

Entrepreneurship Activity

Social interaction with peers encourages learners to more readily accept challenging tasks (Mihaescu, 2013). The following activity embraces this concept, while requiring students to activate prior knowledge and challenging them to utilize both their cognitive and creative abilities.

First, the instructor explains the concept of entrepreneurship and then briefly describes the activity. Next, the teacher elicits start-up business ideas from students and then writes them on the board. Following that, students form pairs, choose one of the ideas, and begin to develop their business plan:

1. Provide a description of the company.
   - Product
   - Catchy name for the company
   - Target market(s)
   - Price(s)
   - Method of sales (store, Internet, etc.)
   - Work hours
   - Marketing (how to attract customers)
   - Competition
   - Location(s)
   - Number of employees
   - Estimated revenue/costs per month
2. Student pairs then write a presentation and submit it to the instructor for review/revision.
3. Each pair presents to the class, with a Q & A session to follow.
4. As a follow-up exercise, pairs make a handout with specific vocabulary and expressions they used, and then present this to their classmates, to utilize for future use.
5. This activity is designed to take three class periods. In the first class, the teacher explains the activity, and the student-pairs start working on the project. In the next class, the instructor checks and revises the students' work. And the last class is reserved for presentation.

Presentation Activity Using Case Studies

While television and radio can provide an abundance of stimulating business and business related content, one can spend countless hours developing supplementary and/or supporting materials based on these sources. It is therefore recommended that Business English instructors consider taking advantage of some of the many course materials that are readily available on the Internet. From marketing to balance sheets to workplace communication, the amount of business content available to teachers through this medium is truly staggering.

One particularly useful resource is the website 'http://www.thetimes100.co.uk'. The core materials on this site consist of dozens of business case studies of highly recognizable American and British companies, such as McDonalds Restaurants, Kellogg's, HMV, Rolls-Royce, Nestle, and The BBC. These downloadable business case studies are geared toward English and American high school students who are taking business courses, as well as to the teachers of those courses. Although Business English instructors can use this resource in a variety of ways, we chose to use the case studies as part of a unit on group presentations. After choosing a dozen or so case studies that we thought would be most interesting and relevant to students, we imported them into an MS Word document. Leaving the key content of the case study intact, we substituted simpler synonyms for some of the sophisticated words that we felt were unnecessary for the students to learn at that point in their language studies and simplified the definitions for the business terms found in the glossary at the end of each case study. The students then signed up for the case study of greatest interest to them, read their study, tried to digest the business concepts and content, and then negotiated the meanings and concepts with other students who had signed up for the same case study. Although this took the better part of that lesson, we thought it better to have students struggle a little over the language and challenge their intellect than to have them take the case studies home and use bilingual dictionaries to translate the difficult jargon and terminology.

In the next lesson, the student groups selected the more salient elements from their case studies and, drawing upon the presentation language and techniques they had learned, began to create group presentations. Each group presented its case study to the class the following week.

Idiom Activity

Gatehouse (2001, p. 6) states that, "The first ability required in order to successfully communicate in an occupational setting is the ability to use the particular jargon that is characteristic of that specific occupational context." With that in mind, the following idiom activity can help learners increase their business lexicon in an interesting way.

A list of idioms is written on the board, such as 'broke', 'in the red/black', 'cash cow', 'blue/white collar', and 'corner the market'. The instructor then elicits their meaning from students. This serves to not only activate students' background knowledge, but also to get them to think creatively and take small risks through guessing. After students have been given a chance to guess the meanings, they are told that the list actually consists of business idioms, which have a secondary meaning. After a second attempt at guessing the meanings, students engage in note-taking while the teacher explains the meanings and gives easy sample sentences. Students then form pairs and write their own sample sentences, underlining the idiom(s) in each. The pairs then read their examples to the class, but omit the underlined idioms. The class then tries to guess which idiom is most appropriate for each sentence. As a follow-up activity, a creative homework exercise is assigned. Each student is tasked with writing a creative paragraph using five of the idioms. During the next class, the paragraphs are peer reviewed for mistakes. Then the instructor gives final corrective feedback and students read their paragraphs to the class.

〈要旨〉

第二言語の習得は学生にいくつかの課題を引き起こすが，ESP（特殊な目的のための英語）の学習は，特に英語学力低位の学習者にとっては，さらに言語的，内容的な問題が加わる。本論文では，まず，ESP に関する背景を述べ，ビジネス・イングリッシュ・コースにおいて教師が考慮すべきいくつかの主要な要因を示唆する。続いて，学習者がビジネス・イングリッシュを習得する過程で遭遇する，情意要因やビジネスの専門用語と内容などの課題について述べる。その上で，そうした情意要因を学習者が乗り越えるのにどのような支援が可能か，また，ビジネス・イングリッシュ・コースの教材を教師がどのように選択し作成したらよいかに関して，何点か示唆したい。最後に，教師が英語学力低位の学習者や英語学力レベル混合型クラスの学習者にビジネス・イングリッシュを教えるための具体案をいくつか提案する。付録として，ビジネス・イングリッシュの授業で効果的だと判明した活動を添付する。