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## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COURSE “ENGLISH FOR MARKETING SPECIALISTS”**

*The present paper presents the implementation process of ESP course design “English for Marketing Specialists” in Armenia. Due to the perceived needs of the target audience, specific topics have been chosen to match the students’ professional interests. The paper shows the whole process of the course implementation trying to provide recommendations for those trainers who are intended to design English courses for marketing specialists.*

**Key words:** *ESP (English for Specific Purposes), marketing, course implementation, English language course*

### **Introduction**

Language is the best way to build a bridge between people from different backgrounds. People learn English to communicate with different nationalities and promote their business all over the world. Without having sound knowledge of how to use language, people will not be able to promote their products to international customers. It is essential for students to know a language, and at the same time to focus on how to use it in a specific professional setting. According to Harding, ESP is teaching English to specific groups of students and syllabus is heavily dependent on their professional needs and interests. The prospering period of ESP was in the end of World War II in 1945. That time there was a significant growth in science, business and technology /Harding, 2007/. The usage of English as an international language for communication increased the number of students studying in English speaking countries, because they had to learn English to accomplish good commercial relationship in business /Rahman, 2015/. English for specific purposes has become an essential part for many professionals who want to act or work beyond the local market.

### **Information about the course**

Today much of the co-ordination between customer and marketer takes place in English. The aim of the course “English for marketing Specialists” is to determine needs of the target audience and to adjust the course accordingly. The target group consists of adults who have their business ideas and need to learn English to promote their business beyond the scope of local market. Based on the examined needs and students’ preferences, the teacher aims to create a professional course with stress-free business environment and integrate diverse methods into the teaching to make the process of learning close to real-life situations.

The focus of the course targets to combine second language and professional content knowledge to enable students perform productively in a professional setting. The course includes both productive and receptive skills and there is a focus on marketing related vocabulary.

The students touch upon the topics that match their academic needs such as the role of Marketing, Marketing ethics, SWOT analysis, New Product Development, Branding, The Role of Research, Digital Marketing. Projects, task-based approaches and creative teaching methods are the core of the target ESP course. Furthermore, the course aims at enhancing students' problem-solving and analytical thinking skills and targets to build business environment where the students are open to negotiations and discussions in a target language.

At the end of the course students are expected to use marketing related vocabulary during professional negotiations, express their ideas about the content they are going to cover. Students' will be able to make reasonable judgments about business situations and analyze them in a target language.

#### **Information about the students**

The number of students was eight. There were three males and five females. All of them are Armenians. The age range is from 22 to 35. All the students had the educational background in marketing and worked as marketing specialists in different companies. Some of them passed international exams /TOEFL, IELTS/. All of them attended language centres and had intermediate and upper-intermediate proficiency level in English.

Some students worked with international customers and used the target language at work. The students shared the same interests as all of them were marketing specialists. Some of the students have their own business; some of them are the head of the marketing departments of the leading companies in Armenia.

The students' main interests were connected with analyzing, solving, negotiating. The teacher took into consideration those factors while developing course materials.

The target audience was not acquainted with the latest methods of learning such as how to implement group work activities, how to work in pairs, how to give peer feedback. The students did not take "English for Marketing Specialists" course before, but some of them participated in many international conferences. In all conferences English was a medium of instruction.

#### **Needs and environment analysis of Armenian marketing specialists towards the course "English for Marketing Specialists"**

In order to conduct needs analysis, forty students and ten instructors were chosen from the Armenian State University of Economics and members from Armenian Marketing Club. Instruments: Close-ended surveys (see appendix A) and semi-structured interviews (see appendix B) were developed to collect data.

The teacher used data triangulation method to collect data. That is to say, forty survey questions were distributed to the participants to fill out. The sample size was 40 participants. After analyzing the survey questions, the teacher interviewed 10 people including

- People with experience and educational background in marketing
- People with educational background in marketing
- Startup founders ( people who have their own business)

According to the needs analysis most of the participants were interested in

1. Projects
2. Discussion clubs
3. Role plays
4. Intellectual clubs
5. Group work and pair work activities

**Students' perception towards homework:**

Participants were able to allocate 1-2 hours for completing the homework assignment.

Based on the survey results they would like to have all below mentioned as homework assignments.

1. Problem-solving tasks
2. Reflections
3. Presentation on specific topics
4. Searching for additional information about the specific topic
5. Comparing the international experience with the local one
6. Poster presentation

**List of topics the participants were interested in were as follows:**

1. The Role of Marketing
2. SWOT Analysis
3. Marketing Ethics
4. NDP and Branding
5. Product Launch and Promotion
6. Digital Marketing
7. Brainstorming
8. Brand Values
9. Customer Needs and Behavior
10. Customer Loyalty
11. Merchandising
12. Public Relations
13. Exhibitions and Events
14. Street Marketing

### **According to the interview results**

- Anything that is related to the customer should be included in the course.
- The course should include at least 3-4 promotional strategies.
- The whole process of the marketing chain should be covered in the course including not every aspect, but at least some sections. This will make the course meaningful.
- Specific structures, phrases and activities to put those structures and phrases into practice.

### **Course goals and objectives**

The teacher developed three main goals for the course. Each goal has three specific outcomes.

The first goal is related to the students' knowledge enhancement about the main topics in marketing. By the end of the course the students are expected to describe the function of marketing in business and as a whole. They will make analysis related to the key topics in marketing applying the skills to real life situations and recognize the steps of the marketing planning. These steps are of great importance for the specialists in marketing to implement diverse projects in their professions.

The second goal is linked to the language. By the end of the course the students will discuss the topics covered in the course using the words taught, examine the readings related to marketing and write promotional texts to grasp the attention of the target audience. All language skills are included in the course. Due to these goal and outcomes, the students are supposed to acquire target vocabulary and develop language skills using the vocabulary taught in the course.

The third goal is attributed to the students' problem-solving skills related to marketing. The outcomes of the third goal are as follows: analyze the situations related the marketing, build essential skills of segmenting markets and compare local and international experience. The third goal with its outcomes targets to boost the students' overall analytical thinking skills in the subject area.

### **Piloting results and the unexpected changes in needs**

The course was piloted at the American University of Armenia from December, 2016 to February, 2017. The classes were arranged once a week. The class duration was 3 hours. The teacher gave the students 15 minutes break during every class. The project lasted seven weeks and was organized within 21 hours of instruction. The lesson plans were written before each class.

The topics were as follows: The role of the Marketing, Marketing ethics, Marketing research, New product development and branding, Customer relationship management, Promotion strategies. The students covered these topics and vocabulary related to those topics.

In the initial stage the teacher asked the students to think of the topic for their final project. At the end of the course the students applied their skills into their final project using the criteria provided by the teacher.

The teacher made some changes in the scope and sequence considering the preferences of the students. The teacher reduced the number of the topics because of time limits. The teacher eliminated some topics such as Public relations, Advertisement, Media from the course. However, the teacher sent those materials to students as supplementary materials. The teacher included the topic “Customer relationship management” in the course according to the students’ requirement. Surprisingly, the latter was not chosen by the students during the process of needs analysis.

As the time was limited the teacher asked the students to choose two promotional strategies to be covered in the course. The students chose trade shows and digital marketing. The reason behind this choice was the cost effectiveness of these tools to be used in promotional strategies.

Another change was homework assignment. Initially, the teacher decided to give homework to students. They had to allocate from 2 to 3 hours to complete homework assignments. During the course, the teacher realized that the students were too exhausted after work and they were not able to allocate time to complete homework assignments. As a result, taking into consideration the students’ workload and their preferences related to homework, the teacher decided not to give homework assignments. The only assignment the students had to implement was connected with their final projects. That is to say, the students had to apply the obtained skills and knowledge gained from every lesson into their final projects. The students had to consider the application of the learned materials to their final project.

At the end of the course the students presented their projects using the criteria provided by the teacher.

### **Recommendations**

According to the teacher choosing the materials and topics to be included in the course was a very difficult and responsible task. The students were not ready to allocate time for their homework assignments and they missed the chance to cover other topics which were essential for them too. Based on the proposed limitations there are several recommendations and suggestions to be considered for the future.

- As the time was limited and the teacher had difficulties with covering the whole content within 21 hours, it would be better to expand the hours of the course to 40 hours.
- Since the students were not able to allocate enough time for homework, the teacher could tell each students to write five vital points they have learned during the previous lesson. In this way, the teacher can ensure that even without homework assignments the students still remember the material from the previous lesson. If the students do not remember, peer share will help

them revise the material. Another option is to post 10 minutes videos which could be discussed during the lesson as a homework assignment. This way the students will not spend a lot of time on their homework assignments.

- Since the students missed the chance to cover key topics in marketing such as promotional strategies, public relations, advertising etc., the teacher could provide them with supplementary material. Another option is to expand the hours of the course.
- Commercials play a pivotal role in marketing. It would be beneficial for the students to produce a video during the course. Because of time limits the students did not implement this assignment. The teacher could organize a workshop before the video production assignment to make sure that the students are aware of how to use technology. Afterwards, the teacher could split the students into groups to make it easier for the students to produce a commercial. The teacher could give the students 1.5 months to complete the project. This could be done in case of the long course.
- The teacher created many activities in which one group had to give feedback to other groups. This strategy worked really well. If the students had more time, the teacher would ask the students to send the final projects to each other for peer feedback. This would give the students a chance to learn from each other and apply the skills and obtained knowledge to their own projects.
- If the course was a bit longer the teacher would invite a guest speaker who would share with his experience in business.
- The students would benefit from field trips. In case of long course, the teacher would be able to find companies which would agree to cooperate. Field trips would help the students to exchange experience and write reports in a target language about the visit and impression of the companies' marketing campaign.

## Appendix A

### Survey questions

#### a) Your age:

1. 16-20
2. 21-25
3. 26-35
4. 35-45
5. 46-60

**b) Gender:**

1. Male
2. Female

**c) Your level of proficiency:**

1. Pre-Intermediate
2. Intermediate
3. Upper-intermediate
4. Advanced

**d) If you take the course “English for Marketing Specialists” what would you expect from the course? You can choose more than one answer.**

1. Group work and pair work activities
2. Role plays
3. Movie clubs
4. Projects
5. Discussion clubs
6. Intellectual clubs
7. Presentations

**e) How much time would you like to allocate for your homework assignment?**

1. 1 hour
2. 2 hours
3. 3 hours
4. 4 hours
5. 5 hours

**f) Which skill would you like to concentrate on during the course “English for Marketing Specialists”. You can choose more than one answer.**

1. Vocabulary learning (related to marketing)
2. Reading
3. Speaking
4. Writing
5. Grammar

**g) If you take the course “English for Marketing Specialists” what topics would you like to touch upon during the course? You can choose more than one answer.**

1. The Role of Marketing
2. Marketing Mix
3. SWOT Analysis

4. Marketing Ethics
5. International Customer Communications
6. New Product Development (NPD) and Branding
7. Product Launch and Promotion
8. Digital Marketing
9. Exhibitions and Events
10. Brainstorming
11. Brand Values
12. Customer Needs and Behaviour
13. Customer Loyalty
14. Motivation Marketing
15. Customer Relationship Management
16. Merchandising
17. Online Shopping and Mail Order
18. Media Strategy
19. TV and Radio
20. Public Relations
21. Event and Sport Sponsorship
22. Street Marketing
23. The Press
24. Outdoor Advertising
25. Corporate Blogging

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview questions**

1. Which topics are essential to be included in “English for Marketing Specialists” course?
2. How to deal with the differentiated classroom in terms of explaining the content?
3. What can the teacher do to make the learning process productive?
4. What type of tasks to give the students (for example games, role plays, presentations etc.).

## **REFERENCE**

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**Ա. ՔԵՌՅԱՆ – «Անգլերենը մարքեթինգի մասնագետների համար» դասընթացի իրականացումը.** – Հոդվածը ներկայացնում է անգլերենը մարքեթինգի մասնագետների համար դասընթացի իրականացման ընթացքը: Հաշվի առնելով թիրախային խմբի կարիքները, հատուկ թեմաներ են ընտրվել, որոնք համապատասխանում են ուսանողների մասնագիտական հետաքրքրություններին: Հոդվածի նպատակն է ներկայացնել ամբողջ դասընթացի իրականացումը՝ տրամադրելով առաջարկներ այն ուսուցիչների համար, ովքեր մտադրված են մշակել նմանատիպ անգլերենի դասընթացներ մարքեթինգի մասնագետների համար:

**Բանալի բառեր.** ESP (Անգլերենը հատուկ նպատակների համար), մարքեթինգ, դասընթացի իրականացում, անգլերեն լեզվի դասընթաց

**А. КЕРЯН – Реализации курса «Английский для специалистов по маркетингу».** – Статья представляет процесс внедрения курса ESP «Английский для специалистов по маркетингу» в Армении. Исходя из потребностей целевой аудитории был осуществлен отбор конкретных тем, соответствующих профессиональным интересам студентов.

Статья подробно описывает весь процесс реализации курса и дает рекомендации преподавателям, которые предназначены для разработки курсов английского языка для специалистов по маркетингу.

**Ключевые слова:** ESP (Английский язык для специальных целей), маркетинг, реализации курса, курс английского языка