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Review: English for Business and Economic Studies 2

Mateja Dostal, Alenka Umek and Danica Čerče. Ljubljana: Ekonomska fakulteta, 2012. ISBN 978-961-240-242-6.

English for Business and Economic Studies 2 is an undergraduate university degree programme textbook for 60 hours of teaching/learning English for specific purposes (ESP). The textbook has been designed for students of business and economics; however, it would also be of interest to any students trying to enhance their communicative competence in business English as part of ESP.

It is evident from the beginning that the authors - teachers of business English at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana in Slovenia - have been committed to working interactively with economics students. The language content of the textbook offers not only work on language structures, but also a logical treatment of the language skills and language functions in each unit. The core of the language skills' work revolves around reading, speaking and writing activities, whereas vocabulary sections are intended to develop the requisite professional economics terminology.

The textbook takes the reader through a variety of carefully selected topics, from economics issues to business ethics, from production, distribution and consumption to managing people and business meetings, from corporate growth to the stock exchange, risk management and banking and finance.

The textbook comprises an introduction, a contents section, a sample test paper, a key, a glossary, a bibliography and the following ten thematic units as its main part:

- Unit 1: Economic Issues
- Unit 2: Business Meetings
- Unit 3: Managing People
- Unit 4: Banking and Finance
- Unit 5: The Stock Exchange
- Unit 6: Corporate Growth
- Unit 7: Production, Distribution & Consumption
- Unit 8: Risk Management
- Unit 9: Business Ethics

Unit 10: Writing

Clearly, each of the above thematic units reflects the relevancy of the topic for the pre-experience economics students of business English. As is often the case with pre-experience learners, economics students are still without any real business experience, their economics knowledge being theoretical, not practical. Consequently, the topics in the textbook have been chosen with a view to allowing the transfer of the relevant economics knowledge taught in a mother-tongue into a foreign language.

The first nine units each explore a different international business topic, whereas the final provides essential information on writing essays and summaries. Each thematic unit in the textbook is further subdivided into a standard pattern consisting of subheadings: Lead in, Reading, Key vocabulary, Language practice, Discussion, Translation and Writing.

As expected, lead-in questions are intended as an introduction to a chosen topic, whereas the authentic reading texts serve the purpose of outlining the topic using the background of significant business terminology, thus creating an appropriate business context for language work and discussion later in the unit.

Reading texts are followed by vocabulary tasks, activities and exercises, intended to build and revise key business English vocabulary and professional terminology as well as develop grammatical structures. Essentially, key vocabulary sections reinforce the language introduced in each thematic unit through word formation, contrastive analysis, metaphors, idioms, typical lexical and grammatical collocations, synonyms, antonyms, etc. In addition, to enable better memorization and recollection, key vocabulary is featured in bold type, and subsequently recycled alphabetically in glossaries for each thematic unit.

The discussion exercises with prompts for role-play and discussion are intended to promote a speaking skill in a foreign language. At the same time, they ensure that the students relate to the topic of the unit and engage with the language while interacting with each other.

On the other hand, the translation sections have been devised with a view to reviewing key vocabulary, either from English into the students' mother tongue (Slovenian or others) or vice versa. In other words, other non-native speakers of English, not just Slovenian students, are integrated into business English classes via thoughtful instructions »Translate to your mother tongue«. Despite the significant number of translation exercises in the textbook, such instructions prevent exchange students from feeling excluded. Even when the exercise type is a translation from Slovenian to English, exchange students are not left out as Slovenian students then become a link between Slovenian and other foreign languages via English.

Finally, while language practice sections further reiterate the specific language dealt with in the unit, the writing tasks conclude the unit with a variety of tasks that can be done as homework.

Although the second unit (Business meetings) follows the same pattern, its goal is slightly different. Namely, with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of the economics students in the EU labour market, this unit is set on preparing them for productive participation in business meetings, not just to pass the exam (General guidelines for meetings; The language for chairing and participating in meetings; Sample meeting situation; Assessment criteria).

With a view to moving away from commercial listening materials designed for use in ESP classes towards authentic listening, as argued in English-as-a-foreign-language listening pedagogy, the authors decided to adopt a different approach: the students are to be exposed to authentic listening situations in each unit based on the foreign language teachers' selection of listening materials from a vast array of authentic listening materials on the world wide web, and not prescribed in the textbook. In doing so, the teachers will relate to the topic of each unit as well as the students' areas of study or interest.

To recap, the most prominent advantages of the textbook *English for Business and Economic Studies 2* are all in line with the requirements of contemporary tertiary textbook design. More precisely, the uniqueness of the textbook lies in the following areas:

Firstly, the textbook succeeds in promoting the economics students' learner autonomy and their individual study of business English (e.g., citing online sources at the end of each unit; instructions for all non-native speakers of English); moreover, via integration of the students' mother tongues it succeeds in encouraging team work and dealing with the cultural diversity of the economics students in foreign language classes in tertiary educational settings.

Secondly, the composition of each unit as a whole enables flexible treatment, both for business language teachers in class and foreign language students at home (e.g., the last unit, Writing, can be dealt with as the first unit or as a part of the ten units since work on a writing skill is required in all units); furthermore, there is a consistent reliance of the textbook on the students' existing foreign language knowledge, their interlanguage and perceived needs of the students of economics as a target user group.

Next, the textbook represents a reliable source of professional terminology, having been approved of by experts from various areas of economics as teachers of other subjects. In addition, one of the main competitive advantages of the textbook is the fact that the language activities aim to treat real, long-lasting language problems typical for the students of (business) English which would otherwise not be possible had the authors not sourced their rich pedagogical and didactical teaching experience.

To conclude, the review of the textbook *English for Business and Economic Studies 2* has revealed its irrefutable pedagogical value in the area of the textbooks for business and economic studies.

It is not just conceptualized based on modern didactical and language teaching/learning premises, but it also successfully emphasises the mobility-of-students component of the Bologna process. Due to that, the textbook is an important novelty on the international market of textbooks for ESP as it may be used for the development of ESP at other tertiary institutions, not just exclusively in Slovenia.

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