

MASS MEDIA ESP COURSE IN NaUKMA

This article is devoted to description of a new ESP course which has been designed and developed at the English language department recently.

Thin is an upper-Intermediate/ advanced level course for students whose native language is not English. The course has been created on the basis of the learner-centered approach, which means it takes into consideration student's needs and aspirations. So, it can be described as an occupational pre-experience course of English for those who would like to further develop their basic skills in a foreign language (speaking, listening, reading and writing), and to apply these skills working for Mass Media.

How to become a good journalist?

Is there a universal method of teaching practical journalistic skills?

Are there any recommendations for acquisition of those skills?

We must admit that neither of these questions can be answered, because there does not exist any universal recipe in the profession of a journalist. However, one can become a good reporter or a "thinking editor" without a diploma in journalism. What is important in this profession is profound knowledge of some fundamentals, of some writing + interviewing techniques which are universal, and also observance of certain ethical rules.

The urgent need for creation of such a course was dictated by the present period of history when we are witnessing the birth of free, independent press in a free, independent state of Ukraine, and the development of our international contacts. Journalists must know foreign languages and be able to write professionally both in their native language and in at least one foreign language. The course objectives are the following: at the end of the course students will demonstrate the ability to use the skills listed below:

1. To listen for specific information and for detail, to identify the main points while interviewing.

2. To devise and put questions, to use different interviewing techniques.

3. To use discussion techniques; interruption, keeping the floor, changing the floor, agreeing, disagreeing, etc.

4. To tackle English newspapers with confidence and find their way around them through obscure headlines, references, unfamiliar personalities, cultural and sporting events.

5. To understand the structure and organization of newspaper texts.

6. To learn the art of writing headlines.

7. To write articles in the style of different newspaper classes: tabloids, quality and middle-brow papers.

8. To write gender-, age- class- and politically oriented articles.

9. To write news stories, features and gossip columns.

10. To edit materials written by classmates.

Do the media have any impact on our lives?

We shall see that certain aspects of real life experience are used by communicators to form Constructed Mediated Reality (CMR) in the form of TV shows, magazines and other media messages. CMR is reflection of real life, but only "blown up", it is always funnier, sexier, more colorful and more violent than real life, it is "larger than life". It is then transmitted to the audience. The audience's perception of CMR is called Perceived Mediated Reality (PMR), it is a highly selective process. We perceive by choosing the medium (TV, radio, or a newspaper), we can concentrate on it or disregard it. The problem in the relationship between real life and PMR is that we often take information which is actually PMR and apply it to our real life. Real life cannot compete with the more glamorous and intense world of mediated reality. The confusion between them may lead to serious consequences.

Taking into consideration that we must approach the Media with a critical eye and remember that what we perceive is not real life, we also hold certain expectation of them, the "rules" we expect them to follow. These expectations focus on the functions of the media in society. According to Professor Schramm, the media perform the following functions in the society:

1) the watcher — the public information function;

2) the teacher — the education function;

3) the forum — the persuasion function designed to support the status quo or to transform new ideas into society.

Another function can be added to the list given by professor Schramm:

4) the entertainment — providing enjoyment at leisure time.

There are basic patterns in journalism that can be applied to all media: radio, television, and press. These patterns are part of the necessary knowledge, the so-called mental equipment in journalistic career.

These patterns are:

1. Simplicity;
2. Synthesis;
3. Judgement;
4. Abstraction level;
5. Evidential rules;
6. Accuracy;
7. Completeness.

Simplicity

Novice reporters often try their best to display their knowledge of the language and impress with erudition. A simple direct style that forces the authors to define clearly what they mean is rather difficult to achieve. An advantage of the plain style is that it improves the flow of your speech or writing.

As George Orwell once said, "Let the meaning choose the word and not the other way about".

Long pretentious literary words that serve no function, adverbs that carry the same meaning as verbs, these are things that should be avoided in a good style. A good test for simplicity would be to ask yourself whether you could tell it to your friend, cutting every sentence down to its clearest components.

Synthesis

Synthesis means that a reporter should understand the subject as a whole, fully absorb, digest it and then present it with his/her own words rather than give bits of information in the source's language. Novice reporters often think they are being most fair to the sources when they quote them directly. And this is true but what is important is understanding the whole and producing a mental synthesis of the original, doing justice to it, but selecting carefully the essence.

Judgement

A lot of things are happening around us every minute. In our explosive world journalists are the first to see what is happening. But what they see depends on many things: on their own values, their

location, and finally, on the judgement they make about what should be reported. All journalists must make decisions, and right decisions demand the best qualities of mind and knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals. Along with other people who watch TV, listen to the radio and read newspapers we tend to accept the journalistic judgements. We take for granted their decisions to tell us about what they think is significant, interesting and new. (S-I-N formula).

The reporter must be able to defend his judgement if the editor disagrees with it. There are certain criteria about what is newsworthy.

Abstraction Level

We can classify statements as shown on the scale below:



While some level of inference is inevitable in any communication, young journalists must remember to keep the abstraction level down and tell about what they perceived, not about what they thought about what they perceived.

Evidential Rules. Objectivity

It is best to learn from the very start to respect evidential rules, to accept things critically. Reporters must find the courage to ask constant questions. Before editors ask you these questions, you'd better ask yourself first:

Is this statement verified and consistent or are there any assumptions that have no grounds?

Was the source qualified enough or would a documentary source be more reliable?

How did I come to this conclusion? What evidence can I give?

It does not mean that a reporter must doubt and challenge every statement made by the source, but just keep in mind that any statement can be based on false assumptions.

Objectivity

The concept of objectivity raises much confusion and controversy. On the one hand we expect the media to give a fair report on the event. On the other hand perfect objectivity is impossible to achieve because what a journalist perceives is shaped by his values, education, cultural conditions, by the language and even by the location at the moment of the event. (A photo, taken during a clash between the police and the strikers: if the cameraman is located behind the police line it looks like the police is attacking the strikers. A photo taken from behind the strikers shows the

police being attacked. The two photos give two different slants to the reported event).

No matter how hard reporters may try to remain objective, personal bias play an important role in the way they present the event, whether they are aware of it or not.

Other people also add their personal bias to the story. Information undergoes various processes before it reaches the public. News editors, layout editors, copy editors, photographers — all of them are "gatekeepers" influencing the information.

That however does not mean that a journalist cannot strive for maximum objectivity. Even though perfect objectivity is impossible, *how can maximum objectivity be achieved?* The following guidelines may help you:

- be fair, give equal time and space to different points of view;
- remain neutral, use unloaded language, avoid partisan writing;
- be willing to find the truth;
- intensify your research trying to get to know as much as possible.

Accuracy

A printed error harms the paper's credibility. A reporter making a mistake does not mean to get a name or fact wrong. But good intentions are not enough. Journalists must fully realize how important accuracy is. *But how can it be reached?*

Rule № 1 is: never assume that a name is spelled as it sounds.

Rule № 2: apply a system of double-checks, especially in terminology, shades of meaning, geographical names.

Accuracy demands sophisticated understanding how errors arise in communication.

The Associated Press Managing Editors (APME) organization compiled a list of errors in spelling, grammar and word usage which young reporters can consult to be more accurate. Here are some examples from the list:

affect / effect

affect — verb — to change

effect — noun — the result, verb — to bring about

aid / aide

aid — help

aide — an assistant

afterward / afterwards

(**afterward** is preferable, the same applies to **toward / towards**. Use **toward**)

all right / alright

use all right

alright is not acceptable in standard usage

allude / elude

to allude — to mention, to make reference to

to elude — to escape (a pursuer)

among / between

among — for several items

between — for two items

anxious / eager

anxious — concerned

eager — anticipating with enthusiasm

averse / adverse

to averse — to dislike, to be opposed to something

adverse (adj.) — bad (about weather, conditions)

bloc / block

bloc — coalition, group of people with the same purpose or goal

block — has many different meanings, but is not used to denote a group of people

burglary / robbery

burglary — implies breaking into a building to steal

robbery — a more general word implying different ways to steal in the street

censor / censure

to censor — to limit free speech

to censure — to criticize

compose / comprise

you **compose** things by putting them together once the parts are put together, the object **comprises** (includes, embraces) all the parts

contagious / infectious

contagious — (disease) communicated by touch

infectious — (disease) communicated by air or water

continual / continuous

continual — repeated

continuous — without interruption

counsel / council

counsel — advice or legal adviser

council — an assembly, a body of persons, specially selected to act in an advisory, administrative or legislative capacity (city council)

credible / credulous

credible — believable, worthy of belief

credulous — believing, trustful, unsuspecting

defuse / diffuse

defuse — to remove the fuse (the protective device) from a bomb

diffuse — spread widely

discreet / discrete

discreet — maintaining silence about something of a delicate nature

discrete — separate, distinct, detached from others

disinterested / uninterested

disinterested — balanced, neutral uninterested — not interested

ecology / environment

ecology — the study of the relationship between organisms and their environment

environment — surrounding things, conditions, influences

either / each

either — one or the other, not both

each — both, one by one

enormousness / enormity

enormousness — great size

enormity — wickedness, atrociousness, outrageous character

ensure/insure

ensure — to make sure

insure — to buy insurance

flair / flare

flair — an ability for something

flare — a torch, or flame, or widening "skirt flared from the hips"

flout/flaunt

flout — to scorn, to mock

flaunt — to show off, to parade

forego / forgo

forego — to go before

forgo — to do without

imply / infer

imply — to suggest by what you say

infer — to take from what someone else says the speaker **implies** the hearer **infers**

loathe / loath

loathe — to hate, to despise

loath — to be reluctant

Marshall / marshal

Marshall — proper name (John Marshall)

Marshal — 1) a title (Field Marshal Peter Brown)

marshal 2) a verb — to arrange, to usher, to lead

oral / verbal

oral — when use of the mouth is central to the thought, spoken

verbal — spoken or written words

persuade / convince

persuade — to influence someone's actions, to urge

convince — to influence someone's thoughts, to change someone's belief or state of mind

principle / principal

principle — 1) standard, 2) fundamental truth or law, or basis

principal — noun — a person, directly responsible for something, a chief, or head

adj. — first or highest in rank, importance, value

reluctant / reticent

reluctant — the one who does not want to act

reticent — the one who does not want to speak

reject / refute

reject — to turn back

refute — to counter an argument successfully.

Completeness

One editor once said: "Don't love what you do in journalism. Love doing it". He meant that a reporter must never get tired of looking critically at his own work, completing and improving it if necessary. When you think you have finished, ask yourself:

- *Is it all there?*
- *Are there any questions unanswered or key points overlooked?*
- *Have I used the best sources?*
- *Should I keep it for some time and obtain more information?*

Only if you and then your editor can answer these questions in the affirmative the story is ready for the public.

In conclusion it should be emphasized that this course may be helpful for young reporters not as a set of strict rules to be followed but rather as a set of tips to be used in the right place at the right time. Studying these guidelines will also help to master English for specific, professional purposes.

1. *Gumming C, McKercher C.* The Canadian Reporter. — Canada. Harcourt Brace.—461 p.
2. *Kisslinger E., Barnard R.* Good News, Bad News. — USA.— 150 p.
3. *Levine D, R., Adeirnan M. B.* Beyond Language.— USA. — 230 p.
4. *Bishop K. K.* Under The Lens. — USA. — 180 p.
5. *Dennis E. E., Menill J. C.*— Media Debates.— Longman USA. —236 p.

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КУРС АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ДЛЯ ЗАСОБІВ МАСОВОЇ ІНФОРМАЦІЇ У НАУКМА

Статтю присвячено новому авторському курсу «Англійська мова для засобів масової інформації», що був створений на кафедрі англійської мови НАУКМА. Курс зорієнтовано на потреби сучасного суспільства у висококваліфікованих і освічених журналістах, які добре володіють іноземними мовами.