

## BOOK REVIEW

***MIND YOUR STEP TO SUCCESS.*** English for Students of Cybernetics  
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The students' ever growing interest in the study of specialist terminologies for well defined purposes (documentation and first-hand access to the literature of any specific field, to name only extremely few of them) has exercised a positive impact on the making of new teaching materials provided by Romanian teachers of English. It is true, there has been at least a twenty-five-year-old tradition in the art and the practice of compiling textbooks of English for specific purposes, irrespective of the purpose in focus.

Initiators in the devising of such textbooks are a group of dedicated academics, including Andrei Bantaș from Bucharest University and Nicolae Bejan from Galați University who published *Limba engleză pentru știință și tehnică* as early as 1981. Ever since, Romanian methodologists have contributed to the field with more and more complex and useful such books (Blându, 1982)<sup>1</sup>.

After the turning year of 1989, when many universities came back to the academic world, the interest in creating useful and practical textbooks for non-philological learners of English has been incentive and challenging to the younger generation of academics facing a tremendous need for a particular group of teaching materials, i.e., those especially designed to be up to the learners needs. On the other hand, the Romanian vocabulary has been exposed to new transformations and adaptations to the requirements of the linguistic needs and, consequently, acquisitions have penetrated our native language via textbooks dealing with English for specific purposes.

It is against this foreground that the object of our book presentation should be placed and it is within these framework limits that it should be considered. By framework limits we actually mean landmarks bringing about tradition in textbook authoring and imposing certain standards on the part of the book provider. Thus, the field of economics actually preceded the birth of the methodological practice of English for science and technologies, with a three-volume offer to Romanian students attending the faculties of trade and commercial relationships, i.e., *Limba engleză*<sup>2</sup>, published under the aegis of the Romanian Foreign Office.

***MIND YOUR STEP TO SUCCESS***, the recently launched book (Gaudeamus International Book Fair, 25-29 November 2009) is a sequel to the concerns and preoccupations of the academics working at the Bucharest Academy of Economics, with an end to modernizing, updating and refreshing the collection of teaching and testing materials, whose tradition is fairly long. The book proves extremely helpful in the process of preparing graduates for a labour market whose boundaries tend to become less and less visible or restricting.

The book is a well-structured comprehensive English course in communication skills designed especially for students of Cybernetics but which can be used successfully when

teaching English to students of Economics, generally speaking. The course concentrates on the English language as means of international communication, taking intermediate learners to upper-intermediate and advanced level. It focuses on developing relevant skills through a wide range of stimulating exercises and challenging activities that consolidate, improve and enrich students' vocabulary and grammar. It is characterised by a flexible approach that allows both teachers and students to choose the appropriate balance of skills.

The course is very clearly organized into distinct sections containing vocabulary enrichment exercises, covering the essential business tasks starting from drawing up and improving a CV, writing letters, to specialized vocabulary from various economic fields. It integrates skills in realistic contemporary business context (Human Resources, Macroeconomics, Management, Marketing, Advertising, Accounting, etc.) focusing at the same time on writing, reading, speaking and listening as individual skills. The grammar revision is accomplished in clear and succinct boxes leading to rigorous and systematic grammar practice.

The two main parts were thus outlined as to cover the studying interval of a semester. Each part is organized in three thematically linked units that cover the essential aspects of the contemporary business environment (Part one includes Job Hunting, business etiquette and Economy matters; Part two considers Banking, Marketing Essentials and management). In addition, each part, which is actually a volume, ends with a glossary and the bibliographical information.

To consider things separately, the first part begins with topics of a high practical utility, in that learners may find a wide set of rules, examples, cases they may face when approaching the labour market. Topics that may stir the interest of any English learner such as career assessment, details about the European Language Portfolio, job searching techniques, interview strategies and related employment vocabulary are dealt with in *Job Hunting*. The second unit, *Business Etiquette* is dedicated to business communication focusing on the intercultural aspects, providing tips and presenting rules of how to behave in certain situations of great importance in the business environment, such as meeting someone for the first time for a dinner date, how to write a courtesy mail and so on. The third unit deals with *Economy Matters* - covering a wide range of business aspects from types of economies and companies, to starting a business and drawing up a business plan.

The second part includes another three units of great interest for future graduates. The first unit, *Banking* - presents types of banks and related financial vocabulary, provides details about business ethics and different types of letters. *Marketing Essentials* - is the unit dedicated to marketing strategies and techniques. The last unit, *Management* - contains among other types of exercises a test that assesses the students' emotional intelligence, presents theories and types of management, qualities of a good manager, managerial responsibilities and deals with aspects of great importance in the business environment like problem solving and decision making.

Each unit was built on an identical pattern: reading, speaking, writing and language in use. The first subsection in each unit, Reading speaks about the authors' creativity in that they have selected materials of the public domain and worked them so as to be used in triggering the learners' imagination and representing an open window to other worlds and other ways of living, working and behaving. Although there is no demarcation between one section or another, nor even a section delimitation, the book is very vivid, exercising a certain dynamism in the learning process, it is student-oriented in that it comes with a set of frequently asked questions, where young learners easily may find themselves when asked to consider the respective section. We highly appreciate the interest the authors show in the translation practice. Students are encouraged to enrich their language knowledge by performing translations regularly. In spite of the Romanian attitude of ignoring the internet surfing on account of its 'unreliability of sources', the authors frequently resort to such

sources (see, for instance, page 9, where textbook users are requested to find 'more information about levels and skills and/or download the Language Portfolio on [www.eaquals.org](http://www.eaquals.org) or [www.alte.org](http://www.alte.org)').

Each unit shows a particular feature with textbooks on English for specific purposes, a section of further study, which includes titles recommended for consideration, should the students need it. The further study section not only includes titles of specialist bibliography which complements the information given in the text, but it also encourages students to appeal to the internet resources.

The bulk of the textbook also includes various types of exercises that focus on essential business vocabulary, has samples of texts from the rich variety of fields tackled in the unit containing specialized vocabulary and specific grammar structures. Moreover each unit contains a fragment of a text in Romanian that should be rendered in English leading to discussing, applying and improving the translation practice techniques the students may have.

At the end of the course, several annexes were added, containing additional texts, other vocabulary enriching activities and also suggestions regarding the pronunciation, a glossary of specific terms presented in the units and some bibliographic references. Following the suggestions of English methodologists who agree that high-quality English books should also provide an answer key sheet, so that users may work independently as well.

The course also provides an answer key to exercises.

The authors of the course, due to their vast experience in teaching Business English provided a thoroughly researched material that was developed to meet the requirements of today's business English learner.

We nevertheless, would like to suggest the textbook authors to try and include in the next edition of this didactic project some sections where the taught material of each unit could be assessed as test issues which actually may be the starting point in the testing process students have to cope with, irrespective of the time interval devised for testing purposes.

To conclude, the book is more than welcomed on the Romanian market since it still lacks specialized dictionaries and courses of English for Special Purposes in general and Business English in particular. Business English students and people who need English in their day-to-day work or need to improve the knowledge they already have, may find this course a valuable instrument that could help them become more confident, fluent and accurate.

(Carmen Opriș-Maftei, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați)

## Sources

1. Blăndu, Mihaela, *Limba engleză pentru calculatoare*, București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică
2. Farca, E., Kolesnikova, N., Ungureanu, R., Turcu, F., 1973, *Limba engleză*, Cluj: Întreprinderea Poligrafică