

English for Specific Purposes in Theory and Practice

Diane Belcher (ed).

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This volume belongs to one of the richest areas of second language research and practice, the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP henceforth). As its title suggests, the book examines this flourishing field by offering new research in theory and practice and is aimed at both teachers and researchers in this area. The editor's experience and teaching resources are amply illustrated in the introduction.

The volume explores ESP from academic (secondary and tertiary), occupational (business, medical, and legal), and socio-cultural perspectives, and addresses two major questions: (i) How can ESP instructors meet their own teacher knowledge needs? and (ii) How have ESP practitioners succeeded in gaining control of the knowledge they need to address their students' needs?

English for Specific Purposes in Theory and Practice comprises an introduction made by the editor, three main parts, an afterword written by Brian Paltridge and an index. In the introduction, Diane Belcher sets out the aims of ESP as well as the enormous range of domains that ESP specialists enter into and the knowledge practitioners need to address their students' needs. The author remarks that ESP practitioners may not really need as much specialist knowledge as has been assumed but knowledge of how language is used in different situations. For instance, Business students do not expect a Business English teacher to know how to run a business. They expect knowledge of the skills and the vocabulary used in Business.

Part 1 "English for Academic Purposes" concentrates on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and consists of four chapters. In chapter 1 KEN CRUICKSHANK provides detail on the recent developments in secondary school EAP, through programs focused on teaching the discourse and genres of a range of disciplines. Next, ANN M. JOHNS argues that the principal purposes of EAP instruction in the first years of tertiary education should be to prepare students to be rhetorically flexible, to empower them to develop an awareness of, and sensitivity to, whatever contexts, texts, and

tasks their courses present. In the third chapter, CHRISTINE FEAK contributes to the discussion of how to best help students develop strategies for responding to texts in a critical manner. In so doing, she explores current perspectives regarding the difficulties students face when evaluating the scholarship of their field and provides examples of student approaches to writing critically. This first part ends with KEN HYLAND's paper in which he highlights the importance of English for Professional Academic Purposes (EPAP) as a growing area and the demand that EAP practitioners have to assist junior academic staff with the academic literacy skills demanded by publication and conference presentation in a foreign language.

Part 2 contains seven chapters and focuses on "English for Occupational Purposes". In this regard, BRIGITTE PLANKEN and CATHERINE NICKERSON show recent studies in the field of business discourse, in particular involving Business English as a Lingua Franca, and highlight that those findings can help for the development of materials for the teaching of English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP) and might serve to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In line with this, the same authors show in the following chapter a number of important influences on the research on written Business English. They highlight four publications that show evidence of the influence of research in the generation of teaching materials and provide examples of teaching materials concerning ESBP, where the mark of research findings has been integrated into the materials. In the next chapter, JANE LOCKWOOD, GAIL FOREY and NEIL ELIAS examine the language communication problems that non-English speaking outsourcing call center companies face when talking to native speakers customers in the U.S. Next, JILL NORTHCOTT provides an overview of Legal English from a mainly pedagogical perspective. She draws a clear distinction between the various categories of learners grouped according to their academic purposes and legal language use, and stresses a clear need to function in academic and professional legal contexts requiring the use of English. In line with this, the study of VIJAY K. BHATIA brings into focus the most important intertextual patterns: intertextuality in legislative provisions, legal cases and legal textbooks, highlighting the key role that they play in the construction and interpretation of legal genres. The author remarks the problems of inaccessibility of legal genres as well as the problems of interpretation for both the specialists and non-specialists due to the complex range of intertextual relationships that legal discourse offers. LING SHI, based on English for Medical Purposes, suggests that the description of characteristic linguistic features of medical texts can help

develop genre-related teaching materials and activities for the classroom whereas analysis of interactions between doctors/nurses and patients can help these practitioners improve their communication skills. This second section ends with DIANE BELCHER's paper in which she highlights the similarities between the developments in language and nursing education, although at first appearing to have little in common, and justifies the adoption of the problem-based learning approach for the development of courses dealing with English for academic and medical purposes.

Part 3 "English for sociocultural purposes" is made up of two chapters. First, HELEN DE SILVA JOYCE and SUSAN HOOD address one of the great challenges of ESCP: How to help immigrant learners meet immediate survival needs and yet be prepared for less easily defined future possibilities. In particular, they explore one response to the tension that provokes the design of English language programs for enabling community membership, report the opportunities offered by the programs that focus on English for community membership, and analyze the needs of individuals or groups of refugees and immigrant students. Second, BRIAN MORGAN and DOUGLAS FLEMING explore and advance a notion of complementarity between the two areas of ELT, particularly in respect to promoting a notion of critical citizenship in ESP and ESL classrooms. In their chapter, they suggest a number of exemplary resources, including textbooks, classrooms approaches, and two case studies.

The afterword puts an end to this collection of chapters. Here, BRIAN PALTRIDGE reflects on the development of ESP, the changes faced from its earliest days, the achievements spread throughout different sites of ESP teaching and the challenges ahead for what he calls "the community of practice".

The reading of the book *English for Specific Purposes in Theory and Practice* is highly recommended to ESP teachers, students and researchers alike since it delves into this area from different perspectives (academic, occupational and sociocultural) with a direct style and academic rigor. Likewise, the aims that the editor pursued are highly achieved through the different sections and chapters from specialists in the area.

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