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Introducing English for Specific Purposes

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Author:	Laurence Anthony (2018)		
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Introduction

Laurence Anthony's (2018) *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* is a user-friendly book which introduces the following core aspects of English for Specific Purposes (ESP): needs analyses, learning objectives, methods and materials, and evaluation. With a focus on these key features of ESP, the book is well-aligned with its intended audience: students and practitioners who are new to the field. The author makes three assumptions about the audience. The first is that readers welcome uncomplicated and understandable language. The second assumption is that readers have no to minimal teaching experience, and the third is that readers are using the book in a class or for professional development. These assumptions drive the book and introduce the readers to the central components of ESP.

Summary

The book is divided into ten chapters. Each chapter is organized similarly, with an introduction, opening reflection and commentary, several tasks intended to engage learners, research ideas, a closing reflection, and additional resources. Section 1 (Chapters 1-3), Contextualizing ESP, provides a general but comprehensive overview of ESP. Chapter 1 discusses the two branches of ESP: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), and their corresponding sub-branches, such as English for nursing and English for tour guides. However, the author is careful to note that realistically, EAP and EOP exist on "a continuum of needs that are weighted more strongly in one area or

setting than another" (p. 15) and are thus difficult to divide into sub-branches. The chapter also connects ESP to the larger field of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and the different pedagogical approaches used in ESL and EFL classrooms. Chapter 2 introduces English as a lingua franca and

explains its importance in academic and occupational settings with examples from English for Business Purposes in Asia, English for Tourism worldwide, and English for Academic Purposes in North America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Chapter 3 is an overview of what the author has termed the "four pillars of ESP" (p. 44), the central components of the field which include needs analyses, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation. This chapter serves as a general introduction to these concepts which are discussed in more depth in the following section.

Section 2, Understanding the four pillars of ESP (Chapters 4-7), is the core of the book and explains needs analyses, learning objectives, methods and materials, and evaluation. Drawing heavily on Brown (2016) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Chapter 4 focuses on the first pillar by defining the term "needs" and outlining the diagnostic, discrepancy, democratic, and analytic viewpoints (Brown, 2016) which can be used to conduct a needs analysis. The role of the different stakeholders in a needs analysis is also considered. Chapter 5 discusses learning objectives, the second pillar of ESP, by briefly introducing register analysis, rhetorical analysis, and genre analysis. The author explains how these analyses and their results can inform how language is used in different contexts and how the learning objectives in an ESP course could be appropriately sequenced. Chapter 6 discusses the third pillar of ESP: methods and materials. The chapter outlines the purpose of pedagogical materials within ESP, suggests guiding questions for evaluating published materials, and provides a five-step approach to creating custom materials. The chapter concludes with a brief overview on using technology to adapt and create materials, discussing tools for corpus analyses like AntConc (Anthony, 2018) and ProtAnt (Anthony & Baker, 2017). Chapter 7 introduces the fourth pillar of ESP, which is evaluation. Using Brown's (1989) three characteristics of successful evaluation (reliability, validity, and practicality), the author discusses how to evaluate learners, instructors, courses, and programs in different ESP contexts.

Section 3, Applying ESP in real-world settings (Chapters 8-10), discusses the application of the concepts explained in the previous section. Chapter 8 outlines the strengths and weaknesses of ESP courses in different situations, including: "ideal settings" (p. 150) in which both instructors and administrators work through the four pillars to create courses; "opportunistic settings" (p. 153) in which instructors are assigned to a pre-designed course; and "just-in-time settings" (p. 154) in which instructors might only have a few days to prepare. The chapter also examines the different roles of instructors and administrators in these contexts and ends with a discussion of the decision to focus more broadly on language skills (a wide-angled approach) or on language skills specific to a discipline or career (a narrow-angled approach). Chapter 9 outlines the challenges faced with needs analyses, learning objectives, methods and materials, evaluation, and programmatic change in ESP

contexts. Chapter 10 concludes the book by looking to the future of ESP curriculum, methods and materials, research, and the role of technology in the ESP classroom.

Evaluation

Considering the audience identified at the beginning of the text, *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* is successful in providing a broad introduction to the field. The book begins with a clear definition of ESP and provides a useful overview of its key components (needs analyses, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation). While students will likely encounter these concepts in other courses during their program of study and practitioners in their teaching contexts, this book reinforces these foundational principles and makes an explicit connection between language teaching and ESP. Additionally, the book's organization, including explicit objectives for each chapter, interactive tasks, research ideas, a closing reflection, and additional resources, provides learners with the opportunity to engage meaningfully with the content.

Even though the book offers a valuable introduction to the field, it is somewhat limited in its inclusion of examples of diverse ESP educational and geographical contexts. While Chapter 2 provides some discussion of different ESP contexts and Chapter 3 briefly discusses applying the four pillars to call centers, Chapters 4-10 are missing a connection between the pillars and the specific educational and geographical contexts in which ESP is taught. Basturkmen (2010) has argued that decontextualized accounts of ESP might not demonstrate "how courses are developed in response to a given situation and in light of the particular characteristics of the learners" (p. 71). Given readers' presumed limited knowledge of ESP, they might wonder how needs analyses, learning objectives, methods and materials, and evaluations take place in different ESP contexts (e.g., English for engineering students at an English-medium Turkish university, English for immigrants working in service jobs in the hotel industry in the U.S., or English for airline pilots in Brazil). Integrating examples into the explanation of each pillar would allow readers to apply their developing knowledge to various and real ESP contexts.

Despite this limitation, *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* is an accessible and comprehensive introduction to ESP, balancing both pedagogy and research. The text's candid and friendly prose will be useful in introducing truly novice readers to the field of ESP, particularly undergraduates and pre-service teachers studying in a TESL/TEFL program. For a more comprehensive overview and discussion of different ESP contexts, pedagogy, and research, instructors will likely need to supplement this book with additional readings. However, this book provides a foundation for ESP and can inspire students and new professionals to further investigate the field of ESP so that they can see the depth and breadth of ESP pedagogy and research.

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