RESEÑA

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: STUDIES FOR CLASSROOM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

(2007, EDS. ANA BOCANEGRA VALLE, Mª DEL CARMEN LARIO DE OÑATE, ELENA LÓPEZ TORRES)

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The work begins with a preface (pages 7-10) in which the editors provide a general overview and address some key issues of the teaching practice in the ESP context: the focus on learners' needs, the assumed prior knowledge of General English, and the diversity of language competence on the part of the students. The rest of the book is made up of twelve chapters and is divided into five sections.

Part I, Setting the Context, starts with a contribution by Lario de Oñate: "A Review of Business English Textbooks (1963-2006)" (pages 11-31). The author carries out a comprehensive study of the evolution of business English textbooks published between 1963 and 2006. The selected books specifically address the business domain but are not designed for exam preparation or the development of any skill in particular. The chapter explains in detail the main characteristics of these textbooks such as the language levels aimed at, the type of activities and their internal organisation, methodological aspects, use of authentic materials, etc. The analysis of the 65 textbooks confirms the variation in layout, content and approaches to teaching. The units have changed quite remarkably over the last 30 years, reflecting the different approach to business and also with much shorter texts for comprehension, more emphasis on communication with the presence of role-play activities and pronunciation, and the objective of developing cultural awareness, all of which follows the developing trends in language pedagogy. The second chapter, "Understanding Legal English: The Importance of Teaching Two Different Cultural Traditions to Spanish Lawyers" (pages 33-51) by Orts Llopis explores the domain of legal English. The author shows how law is the product of local convention, just as language itself, so the awareness of different cultural patterns is essential in order to teach English with Legal Purposes to Spanish students. The origins of the Continental legal system, based on codes, and the English Common Law system, based mainly on case law, are very different and influenced by the patterns of thinking of each civilization. The English and Spanish epistemological traditions and attitudes permeate into the syntax and discourse areas. Orts Llopis argues that one of the side-effects of English becoming the international language of law is that some legal concepts of other law traditions are starting to be translated and explained in this new *lingua franca*. The author clearly reveals how learning the complexity of this specialised vocabulary, present in both legal traditions, is not the only key for students to master legal English, but that an understanding of the cultural differences between countries is also of the upmost importance.

Part II, Teaching Language: Vocabulary, is the next section of the book and starts with the chapter "Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in the Context of ESP" (pages 53-72) by Perea Barberá. The author provides a thorough review of the literature relating to Language Learning Strategies (LLS) devised by the most renowned authors in the field and selects a framework considered to be suitable for the categorisation of the aspects related to the learning of specialised vocabulary. The final compiled list consists of 57 items organised around four categories: cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies. Perea Barberá also highlights the usefulness of visual imagery such as pictures in a specialised context, semantic maps, and vocabulary notebooks for vocabulary acquisition. The ultimate intention is to use this taxonomy to design a questionnaire which will assist with the compilation of synchronic and diachronic data in further research about the degree of effectiveness of the individual features. The next chapter, Bocanegra Valle's "On the Teachability of Nominal Compounds to Spanish Learners of English for Specific Purposes" (pages 73-93) presents a brief yet clear explanation of some of the differences between Spanish and English simple nominal compounds and, as a consequence, the difficulty that Spanish learners have in grasping the various structural realisations of these constructions. The author devised a series of tests (*pre-test*, *post-test* and *delayed post-test*) to check if instruction and dedicated learning could be the solution to the students' problem of acquisition. The results are analysed in depth and the conclusions presented are intriguing to say the least: instruction, although useful, does not seem to be a definite solution: some categories are harder to acquire than others and there is no great variation in the results when taking into account the degree of proficiency of the learners. On the positive side, context helps with comprehension and paraphrasing. The author confirms that further research, on a larger scale, will be needed to substantiate the claims of this revealing pilot study. The closing chapter of Part II, "Teaching English for Nurses: Vocabulary Learning" (pages 95-104) by Botella Rodríguez, draws attention to the need for promoting the implementation of vocabulary learning techniques in order to improve competence in ESP for nurses. There is a great opportunity to find work in the UK nowadays which should be taken into account when designing these specific courses. The author identifies several useful strategies for developing lexical knowledge such as contextualisation, reading practice, the use of dictionaries as a suitable type of incidental learning, and the application of the principles of word formation and derivation. Botella Rodríguez goes on to explain the importance of a needs' analysis of the required vocabulary for nurses to carry out their work, avoiding memorization and presenting it in a meaningful way, and offers a list of objectives for the design of vocabulary activities. These activities are divided into four levels of difficulty (easy, moderate, upper-moderate and difficult).

Part III, Teaching Skills: Writing, starts with the chapter "Developing Language Descriptors to Match the Writing Competence of Engineering Students" (pages 105-123), by Durán Escribano and Cuadrado Esclápez who explain that the European Language Portfolio is a very useful tool for autonomous learning but that it also needs to be combined with other instruments and materials. The chapter continues with a thorough description of the basic features of the Portfolio so as to explain the procedure followed by the research group DISCYT in order to adapt the general descriptors to the specific circumstances of their students. Consequently, writing descriptors for the Academic and Professional European Language Portfolio for engineering students at a

tertiary level (ACPEL) were developed. The features analysed were: levels of reference, environment and field of action, and language tasks related to written academic competence. The authors then explain how the ACPEL descriptors were redefined, created and broken up according to the standards provided by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR). These were arranged into five categories according to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic levels to assist teaching objectives and learning outcomes. Thematic areas, grammar, style and complexity were taken into account by the developers.

The following chapter, by Bosch Abarca and Montañés Brunet, "Some Approaches for Effective Business Writing" (pages 125-147) focuses on the use of genre as a pedagogical tool for the development of writing skills in professional and academic settings. The authors start by revising the concept of genre and its application to business writing with its positive and negative features. The development of the writing skill is difficult to achieve as each society has its own norms related to what is considered good writing. Genre has gained a great deal of attention as a pedagogical tool in the last decades but it has not been implemented yet in many aspects of the field of business writing. The authors present several examples of authentic and semi-authentic texts as models: a promotional flyer, a routine business request, an unsolicited sales letters, a cover letter for a job application; and their individual schematic structure, metadiscourse features, and the linguistic resources conveying pragmatic politeness and modality are analysed. The following and concluding chapter in this section, Palmer-Silveira and Ruiz-Garrido's "Annual Reports in the English for Business Communication Classroom: Methodological Perspectives" (pages 149-171) provides a similar perspective into the genre of the annual business report, and categorises it as one of the central documents in the discourse practices of business professionals. Corporate annual reports should be clear and structured in predefined sections. The authors explain how this type of written discourse should be regarded as persuasive because it tries to get something from the reader. Although these reports are mandatory by law, they may differ in different cultures as there are no set rules about their structure. The adaptation of the RECON (Relationships and Confidence) model presented as the guideline used as scaffolding for their own students seems to be particularly effective and it is a very appealing methodological suggestion for the teaching/learning of English for business.

Part IV, Learning through Corpora, starts with the chapter "A Corpus-Based Evaluation of Non-Native English Graduate Writing" (pages 173-192) by Curado Fuentes, and–moves into corpora applications in the ESP classroom. The design of a specialised corpus should be built to meet the research demands in the context of the learning situation and aim for the integration of bottom-up and top-down learning strategies. This corpus consists of three examples of genre, namely Research articles, Conference papers and Abstracts. Two graduate courses were analysed in the study. Both explored the corpus and ICT tools. The first group had manual access to the data while the second group had computerised access. Only six students were tested in each of the two groups. A larger sample would be necessary for further research to prove these interesting points. The results, especially after a second writing task, are very positive and Curado provides evidence that the use of corpus-based materials in the ESP classroom can enhance academic written performance. The closing chapter of this section, "Specialised Corpora and Corpus-Aided Learning: an Approach to Maritime Legislation" (pages 193-212), written by López Torres, points out the advantages of

using corpora for instructing ESP students. The corpus selected, SOLAS, is the 2002 CD-ROM version of the *International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea*. Although not very large, approximately 185,000 words, this corpus is regarded as the most important treaty concerning the safety of merchant ships. The author goes on to analyse the frequency distribution of terms to compare SOLAS with the Cobuild corpus and the behaviour of words in their context and draws some conclusions. The practical approach to the application to the classroom is then explained: most published materials for teaching maritime English are not based on authentic language and this is an important aspect that could be achieved by analysing the main features of a representative corpus. López Torres devised a set of steps for the use of the corpus in a classroom setting and the results appear to be very positive.

Part V, Learning through Multimedia Resources, starts with the chapter "Using the Internet as a Huge Language Learning Resource Tool" (pages 213-227), by López de Vergara y Méndez, who explains how a radical change in language teaching has taken place since the 1990s caused by the Internet, ICTs and the use of networked PCs. The author details the use of computers for teaching contextualised English, basing this partly on his own teaching experience. The students are divided into smaller groups and given a set of activities which need to be completed using the Web, which promotes autonomous learning. The activities can be of many types, including online listening to radio stations or video clips, reading comprehension of newspapers or magazines, etc. A series of steps is offered as an aid for a short course and explained further. This innovative proposal is very useful, especially for those specific areas in which legislation can be very restrictive in the use of resources due, for instance, to copy-right reasons, or where technology develops so rapidly that course materials become rapidly out of date. The last chapter of the volume, "English for the Field of Social Work: Content and Design of a CD-ROM" (pages 229-248), by Fernández Morales and Hewitt, present the development of a CD-ROM as an innovative approach to ESP learning for social work students. This specialised multimedia material has been created to cater for the needs of these students which had not been addressed by any published textbook. The CD-ROM allows students to carry out tasks from a different perspective as well as autonomous and home learning. The CD-ROM consists of 12 thematic units with 145 activities ranging from 6 to 15 per unit, and integrates vocabulary, reading comprehension, discourse order and grammar aspects. The tasks can be classified as close, quiz, match and mix. A total number of 399 files in different formats were created (Hot Potatoes Programme and HTML). The intention for the authors is to continue working with Hot Potatoes as it offers endless possibilities. The students who have worked with the CD-ROM have made very positive comments about its usefulness.

This publication shows an updated revision of issues in language education and pedagogy related to ESP language teaching which is representative of the work currently being undertaken in Spain. It is useful for the ESP classroom in many ways since, for example, it offers detailed practical strategies for vocabulary teaching writing skills development based on genre, and practical outcomes of the use of corpora and technology which promote life-long and autonomous learning. It also includes a remarkable balance between theory and practice and is full of inspiring and thought-provoking ideas. All the expected key concepts and issues when analyzing ESP, namely

those of context, needs' analysis, and cultural awareness, are present in the book either as part of some research analysis or suggestions for further research.