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ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

特殊用途英语

Tom Hutchinson
& Alan Waters

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English for Specific Purposes

A learning-centred
approach

*Tom Hutchinson and
Alan Waters*

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总 序

近年来随着国内和国际形势的发展,我国对外语人才的需求日益增加,有志于学习外语的学生和社会群体的人数急剧上升,从而使我国外语教学事业蓬勃发展。在这种形势下,外语师资培训和自身建设的重要性与日俱增。在这两方面,当务之急是要了解当今国外外语教学的发展情况,要借鉴国外的最新经验,结合我国的具体情况,大力提高外语师资的水平,使我们的外语教学事业更上一层楼。

有鉴于此,上海外语教育出版社为广大外语教师提供了一套由国外引进的外语教学法丛书。这套丛书所涉及的方面广、种类多,包括外语教学技巧和原则、语法教学、语音教学、阅读教学、写作教学、教学管理、测试、教材选择、第一语言和第二语言习得、儿童英语教学等等。其中绝大多数专著是上世纪九十年代和本世纪所出版。它们反映了当今国外外语教学法研究及相关学科的现状。

这套丛书的最大共同特点,也是与传统教学法类专著的最大不同点在于特别强调理论与实践相结合;更是以实践为主,再以理论去分析评述各种实践活动的优缺点。我们所熟悉的传统教学法类专著,一般都是强调教学原则、教学理论,把各种方法的来龙去脉讲得很详尽;然而如何到课堂上去进行具体教学活动,如何在教学活动中去体现教学原则却不多见。这套丛书则几乎全部是从实践活动着手,以说明对理论和原则的应用。

试举两个例证:

一、斯克里温纳:《学习教学:英语教师指南》,麦克米伦海涅曼出版社,1994。(Jim Scrivener: *Learning Teaching: A Guidebook for English Language Teachers*. Macmillan Heinemann, 1994)

作者前言:“本书旨在帮助你去学习如何更有效地进行教学。它

并不给你某一种正确的教学方法。实际上没有任何科学根据可以让我们去描述一种理想的教学方法。我们只能观察教师和学生进行活动的实际,并注意哪些策略和原则更有利于教学。我们没有必要去照搬那些策略和原则,但是要意识到有哪些可能性。”“因此本书并不是告诉你‘就用这种方法’,而代之以‘这几种方法似乎都可行。’主要是由你自己决定用哪一种方法。”

本书共十二章,涉及教与学的关系、教学安排、课堂活动、语言技能等等方面,绝大部分章节都是先介绍该章内容,然后列出各种具体教学活动(tasks),其后是对各项活动的分析评述。例如第六章“说的技能”共有四小节,即1)为什么要说;2)交际性活动;3)语言交际与流利;4)演戏和角色扮演,每节都提供各种相应的具体活动和作者对各项活动的评述。教师可以根据自己的实际情况选择其中某些活动进行课堂教学。

二、努南:《语言学习研究方法》,剑桥大学出版社,1992。
(David Nunan: *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press, 1992)

作者前言:“传统的语言教学研究方法是教老师怎样去进行教学的。作者主观愿望就是对教学作出种种硬性规定。这种教学科研基于逻辑推理,并要求教学人员接受采纳。上世纪八十年代以来情况有了变化,如今教学人员对自身进行科研。他们用实验方法对教学进行探索。这种科研由于教学背景不同而不同。教学人员不再依赖已有科研成果,而是对自己的课堂教学采取一种科研态度。本书目的在于1.促使教学人员认识对自身进行科研的必要性。2.帮助教学人员进行教学方面的科研。”

本书共十章,介绍科研方法的历史背景、实验性科研方法、个案研究、课堂现场观察和科研、自省方法、语言交流分析等等。试以第六章“自省方法”为例。所谓“自省”,就是不仅仅着眼于课堂上的教学实践,而要更进一步去思考教学步骤。教学人员一方面审视自己的教学,一方面回顾课堂教学的具体步骤并提出问题进行研究。这种科研的基础就是教学人员本人的日记、教学日记和其他种种有关记录,以这些资料为依据进行分析研究,得出结论。

以上两书的内容安排大体上可以概括整套丛书的全貌。换言之,各书的最大特点就是以实践为主,而实践都来自相应的理论与理论密切结合;其实用性强,可操作性强。有大量的实践举例,还有不少个案研究(case study),在其后多数有分析评述。这些例证分析、评述给予教师很大的空间去进行思考、探索。各种例证并不是仅仅给教师提供方便,让教师有所参考。更重要的是促使教师结合自己的具体教学情况,通过思考和探索有所发展,制订出切合自己需要并切实可行的教学方法去进行教学。

我相信这套丛书能为促进我国外语教学事业的进一步发展作出巨大的贡献。

李观仪

2002年6月

出版前言

随着我国改革开放的深入和进入世界贸易组织的需要,英语教学在国内有了进一步的发展,对英语教师的需求量日益增大。为了培养一大批高素质的英语教师,必须有组织地开展师资培训工作。在职的英语教师也必须继续充电,通过种种途径进一步提高业务水平。然而,许久以来,系统介绍英语教学法的专著极为匮乏。因此,上海外语教育出版社特地从国外知名出版社,如牛津大学出版社、剑桥大学出版社和麦克伦伦出版社引进一批有关外语教学法和第二语言习得研究的学术专著,出版了外语教学法丛书。《特殊用途英语》(*English for Specific Purposes*)就是其中的一本。

本书是探讨特殊用途英语教学的一部实用性著作。作者赫钦森(T. Hutchinson)与沃特斯(A. Waters)为兰开斯特大学英语学院和语言学系教授。本书的最大特点是从事特殊用途英语教学的工作者提供了一个新的研究视角,把特殊用途英语教学的重点置于学习过程中,提出了以学习者为中心的特殊用途英语教学,探讨了如何提高特殊用途英语教学的效率的问题。

全书共分为四部分。第一部分回顾了特殊用途英语教学的起源及其发展过程,指出了特殊用途英语在整个英语教学中的位置。第二部分论述了在特殊用途英语教学的课程设置中必须注意的方面,从语言理论、语言教学理论、学习者的需求分析和教学方法等方面阐述了课程设置的基本原则。第三部分就教学大纲、教学材料的分析、选取和编写、教学技巧和学习效果评估等方面阐述了实施特殊用途英语教学中必然会出现的主要问题。第四部分探讨了特殊用途英语教学中教师的作用、从事特殊用途英语教学的教师与从事一般英语教学的教师在面临的任务方面的区别、以及如何成为一个称职的特殊用途英语教师的有关问题。

本书指出了目前对特殊用途英语教学研究的不足之处,提出了特殊用途英语的教学研究的新方向,实用性强,内容丰富,资料详实,语言生动风趣,适用于所有从事特殊用途英语教学的老师,也可以用作培训特殊用途英语教师的教材。对于我国广大非英语专业的大学英语教学人员来说,本书也是一本不可多得的参考书。

Thanks

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who have, knowingly or otherwise, helped to shape the ideas that have gone into this book. First of all, we would like to thank our colleagues at the University of Lancaster, both in the Institute for English Language Education and in the Department of Linguistics, and all the students and teachers who have attended our courses there. We are also grateful to the staff and students of the many institutions and projects with whom we have been associated around the world. In particular, we would like to mention the Brazilian National ESP Project; King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Thonburi, Thailand; the Sri Lankan Ministry of Higher Education ESP Project; Kuwait University Language Centre; De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines; the University of the Philippines; the French ESP Group; the Technical Education Advisers' Project, Indonesia; the Ministries of Education in Croatia and Slovenia, Yugoslavia. We would also like to express our gratitude to the British Council, whose support has made many of our contacts with these institutions and projects possible. Finally, we would like to acknowledge our debt to all those ESP practitioners around the world, without whom this book would have no purpose.

Tom Hutchinson & Alan Waters
Lancaster, 1986

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Introduction

To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

(Robert Louis Stevenson)

The City of ELT

Once upon a time there was a city called ELT. The people of ELT led a comfortable, if not extravagant, life, pursuing the noble goals of literature and grammar. There were differences, of course: some people preferred to call themselves EFL people, while others belonged to a group known as ESL. But the two groups lived in easy tolerance of each other, more united than disunited.

Now it happened that the city was surrounded by high mountains and legend had it that the land beyond the mountains was inhabited by illiterate and savage tribes called Scientists, Businessmen and Engineers. Few people from ELT had ever ventured into that land. Then things began to change. Some of the people in ELT became restless. The old city could not support its growing population and eventually some brave souls set off to seek their fortune in the land beyond the mountains. Many in ELT were shocked at the prospect. It was surely no place for people brought up in the gentle landscape of English literature and language.

But, as it turned out, the adventurers found a rich and fertile land. They were welcomed by the local inhabitants and they founded a new city, which they called ESP. The city flourished and prospered as more and more settlers came. Soon there were whole new settlements in this previously uncharted land. EST and EBE were quickly followed by EAP and EOP (the latter confusingly also known as EVP and VESL). Other smaller groups took on the names of the local tribes to found a host of new towns called English for Hotel Staff, English for Marine Engineers, English for Medical Science and so on. A future of limitless expansion and prosperity looked assured.

But as with all things the reality proved less rosy. A number of people at the frontiers were forced to abandon their settlements and return to the larger cities. Many settlers, who had come to the newly developed land because ELT could no longer provide them with a living, longed for the comforts and certainties of the old city. Others were confused as to where their loyalties lay: were they still citizens of ELT? Was EAP an independent city or a suburb of ESP? Did the people of English for Medical Science owe allegiance to EAP, EOP or ESP? Worst of all, there were even examples of groups from ELT being transported against their will to the new territories. Added to all this, the Scientists, Businessmen and other tribes were becoming more demanding. Some began to resent the interference of the settlers in their area; others complained that the promised benefits had not materialised. The future in short began to look, if not gloomy, then a little confused and uncertain for the brave new world of ESP.

Which brings us to this book. It will, we hope, serve as a guide to all present and future inhabitants of ESP, revealing both the challenges and pleasures to be enjoyed there and the pitfalls to be avoided. But first let us take a moment to explain the title we have given to the book, for in doing so, we will not only explain our reasons for writing it, but will also be able to present a plan of the itinerary we shall follow. What, then, is a learning-centred approach to ESP?

ESP, like any form of language teaching, is primarily concerned with learning. But it is our view that in its development up to now, ESP has paid scant attention to the question of *how* people learn, focussing instead on the question of *what* people learn. It has, in other words, been language-centred in its approach. We would not wish to dismiss this language-centred approach. It has provided some very important insights into the nature of specific language needs. However, we feel that, if it is to have any real and lasting value, ESP must be founded in the first instance on sound principles of learning, and it is with this purpose in view that we have proposed a learning-centred approach to ESP. In the following pages we shall explain what this shift in focus entails for the ESP practitioner.

The book is divided into four sections (see figure 1).

Section 1 is an overview of the origins and development of ESP and considers the question of how ESP fits into the general landscape of English Language Teaching.

Section 2 looks at basic principles and techniques in course design. How, in other words, do you create a course to fit the needs of a particular group of learners?

Section 3 is concerned with the practical applications of the course design in the form of a syllabus, materials, methodology and assessment. Put briefly, having completed your course design, what do you do with it?

Section 4 considers the role of the ESP teacher and provides information about resources to help the teacher.

The book is intended to be very much a practical guide, and to this end we have supplied a number of Tasks at the end of each chapter. These are to get you thinking about the issues that are raised in that section and, in particular, to help you relate our necessarily general points to your own specific situation. If you are concerned with teacher-training, these tasks may also be useful as workshop or seminar activities. Although they are placed at the end of the chapter, they can often be more valuable if done before reading the chapter itself.

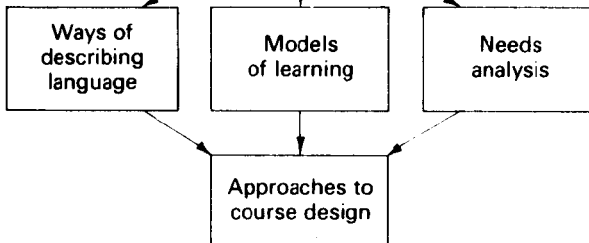
Your guide, route and mode of travel presented, it remains only to wish you an interesting and enjoyable journey.

**SECTION 1:
WHAT IS ESP?**

ESP is
based on designing
courses to meet
learners' needs

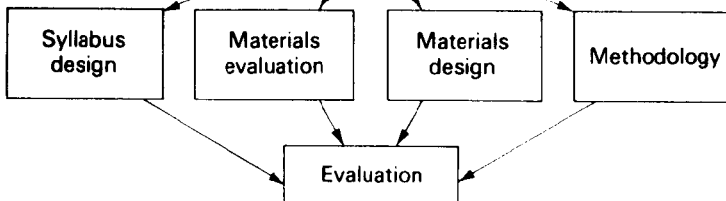
**SECTION 2:
COURSE DESIGN**

What does course
design involve?



**SECTION 3:
APPLICATION**

How do you use
a course design?



**SECTION 4:
THE TEACHER**

What is the role
of the ESP
teacher?



Figure 1: Outline of 'A learning-centred approach to ESP'

Section 1 What is ESP?

Particulars are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed.

(Dr Samuel Johnson: *Preface to Shakespeare*)

Our concern in this section is to arrive at a workable definition of ESP. But rather than give a straight answer now to the question 'What is ESP?', we would prefer to let it gradually emerge as we work through the section. Let us begin instead with a simpler question: 'Why ESP?' After all, the English Language world got along well enough without it for many years, so why has ESP become such an important (some might say the most important) part of English language teaching? In the following three chapters we shall briefly survey the factors which led to the emergence of ESP in the late 1960s and the forces, both theoretical and practical, which have shaped its subsequent development. In Section 2 we shall look in greater detail at the elements we outline in this section.*

* It is our intention here only to establish the background for the concepts and procedures we wish to present in this book. For a thorough and detailed explanation of the development of ideas and practices in ESP, we would recommend *Episodes in ESP* by John Swales (Pergamon, 1985).

1 The origins of ESP

We will now discuss in a little more detail the struggle for existence.

(Charles Darwin: *The Origin of Species*)

As with most developments in human activity, ESP was not a planned and coherent movement, but rather a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends. These trends have operated in a variety of ways around the world, but we can identify three main reasons common to the emergence of all ESP.

1 The demands of a Brave New World

The end of the Second World War in 1945 heralded an age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale. This expansion created a world unified and dominated by two forces – technology and commerce – which in their relentless progress soon generated a demand for an international language. For various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the post-war world, this role fell to English.

The effect was to create a whole new mass of people wanting to learn English, not for the pleasure or prestige of knowing the language, but because English was the key to the international currencies of technology and commerce. Previously the reasons for learning English (or any other language) had not been well defined. A knowledge of a foreign language had been generally regarded as a sign of a well-rounded education, but few had really questioned why it was necessary. Learning a language was, so to speak, its own justification. But as English became the accepted international language of technology and commerce, it created a new generation of learners who knew specifically why they were learning a language – businessmen and -women who wanted to sell their products, mechanics who had to read instruction manuals, doctors who needed to keep up with developments in their field and a whole range of students whose course of study included textbooks and journals only available in English. All these and many others needed English and, most importantly, they knew why they needed it.

This development was accelerated by the Oil Crises of the early 1970s, which resulted in a massive flow of funds and Western expertise into the oil-rich countries. English suddenly became big business and commercial pressures began to exert an influence. Time and money constraints created a need for cost-effective courses with clearly defined goals.

The general effect of all this development was to exert pressure on the language teaching profession to deliver the required goods. Whereas English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers. English had become accountable to the scrutiny of the wider world and the traditional leisurely and purpose-free stroll through the landscape of the English language seemed no longer appropriate in the harsher realities of the market place.

2 A revolution in linguistics

At the same time as the demand was growing for English courses tailored to specific needs, influential new ideas began to emerge in the study of language. Traditionally the aim of linguistics had been to describe the rules of English usage, that is, the grammar. However the new studies shifted attention away from defining the formal features of language usage to discovering the ways in which language is actually used in real communication (Widdowson, 1978). One finding of this research was that the language we speak and write varies considerably, and in a number of different ways, from one context to another. In English language teaching this gave rise to the view that there are important differences between, say, the English of commerce and that of engineering. These ideas married up naturally with the development of English courses for specific groups of learners. The idea was simple: if language varies from one situation of use to another, it should be possible to determine the features of specific situations and then make these features the basis of the learners' course.

Swales (1985) presents an article by C. L. Barber on the nature of Scientific English which was published as early as 1962. But it was the late 1960s and early 1970s which saw the greatest expansion of research into the nature of particular varieties of English – for example, descriptions of written scientific and technical English by Ewer and Latorre (1969), Swales (1971), Selinker and Trimble (1976) and others. Most of the work at this time was in the area of English for Science and Technology (EST) and for a time ESP and EST were regarded as almost synonymous. But there were studies in other fields too, such as the

What is ESP?

analysis of doctor-patient communication by Candlin, Bruton and Leather (1976).

In short, the view gained ground that the English needed by a particular group of learners could be identified by analysing the linguistic characteristics of their specialist area of work or study. 'Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need' became the guiding principle of ESP.

3 Focus on the learner

New developments in educational psychology also contributed to the rise of ESP, by emphasising the central importance of the learners and their attitudes to learning (e.g. Rodgers, 1969). Learners were seen to have different needs and interests, which would have an important influence on their motivation to learn and therefore on the effectiveness of their learning. This lent support to the development of courses in which 'relevance' to the learners' needs and interests was paramount. The standard way of achieving this was to take texts from the learners' specialist area – texts about Biology for Biology students etc. The assumption underlying this approach was that the clear relevance of the English course to their needs would improve the learners' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster.

The growth of ESP, then, was brought about by a combination of three important factors: the expansion of demand for English to suit particular needs and developments in the fields of linguistics and educational psychology. All three factors seemed to point towards the need for increased specialisation in language learning.

Tasks

- 1 Why was ESP introduced in your country or teaching institution? What kinds of ESP are taught?
- 2 'Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need' (p. 8). How justifiable do you think this claim is for ESP?
- 3 'The clear relevance of the English course to their needs would improve the learners' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster' (p. 8).
 - a) Give three ways in which 'relevance' can be achieved.
 - b) In what ways can motivation affect language learning?