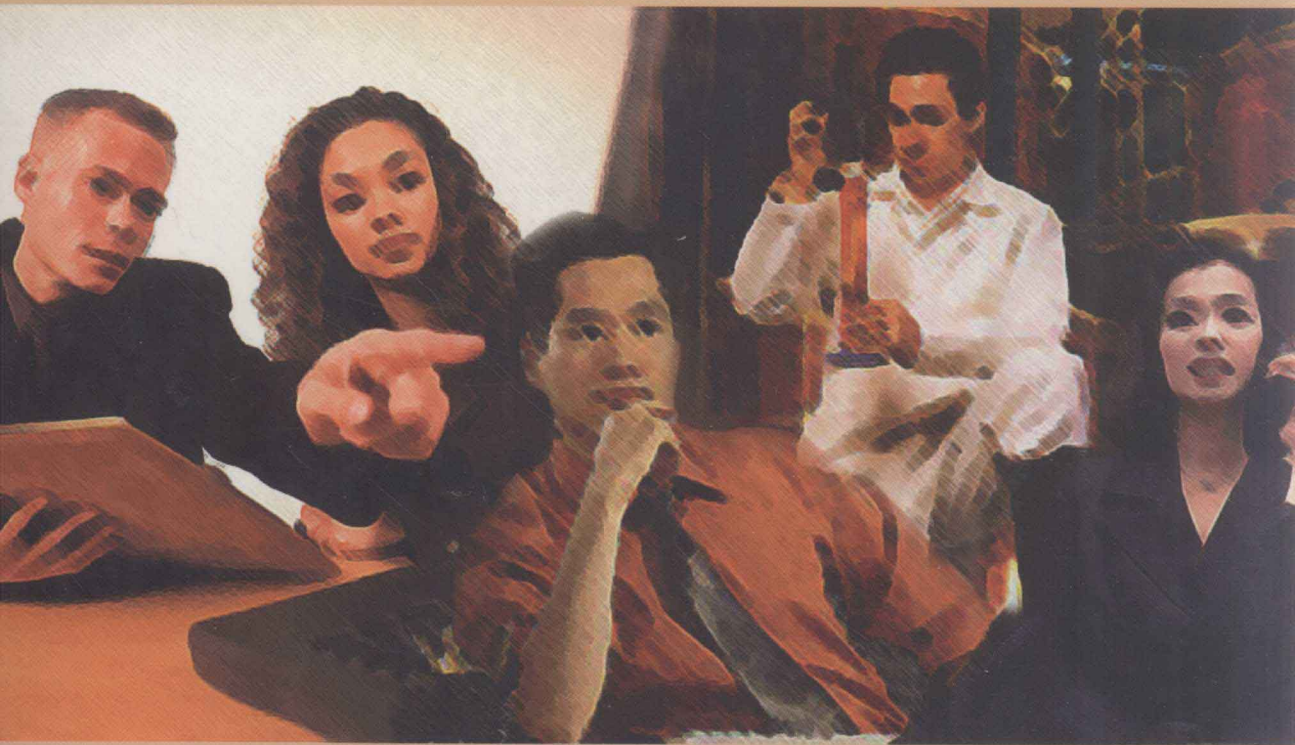
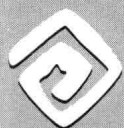


English for Specific Purposes



Edited by Thomas Orr

Case Studies in TESOL Practice Series
Jill Burton, Series Editor



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Case Studies in
Practice Series

Jill Burton, Series Editor



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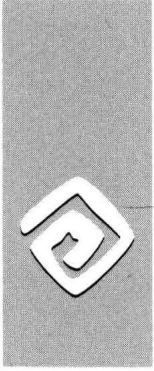
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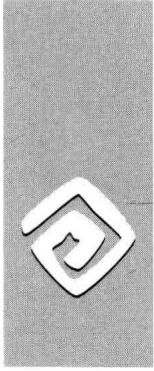
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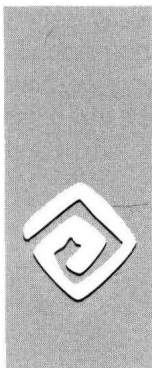
Dedication

To Sakurako, my wife and best friend, with love.



Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Jill Burton, Mark Freiermuth, Ellen Garshick, and Marilyn Kupetz for their kind assistance with this volume, as well as to the authors, whose hard work and infinite patience made this book possible.



Series Editor's Preface

The Case Studies in TESOL Practice series offers innovative and effective examples of practice from the point of view of the practitioner. The series brings together from around the world communities of practitioners who have reflected and written on particular aspects of their teaching. Each volume in the series will cover one specialized teaching focus.

◆ CASE STUDIES

Why a TESOL series focusing on case studies of teaching practice?

Much has been written about case studies and where they fit in a mainstream research tradition (e.g., Nunan, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Perhaps more importantly, case studies also constitute a public recognition of the value of teachers' reflection on their practice and constitute a new form of teacher research—or teacher valuing. Case studies support teachers in valuing the uniqueness of their classes, learning from them, and showing how their experience and knowledge can be made accessible to other practitioners in simple but disciplined ways. They are particularly suited to practitioners who want to understand and solve teaching problems in their own contexts.

These case studies are written by practitioners who are able to portray real experience by providing detailed descriptions of teaching practice. These qualities invest the cases with teacher credibility, and make them convincing and professionally interesting. The cases also represent multiple views and offer immediate solutions, thus providing perspective on the issues and examples of useful approaches. Informative by nature, they can provide an initial database for further, sustained research. Accessible to wider audiences than many traditional research reports, however, case studies have democratic appeal.

◆ HOW THIS SERIES CAN BE USED

The case studies lend themselves to pre- and in-service teacher education. Because the context of each case is described in detail, it is easy for readers to compare the cases with and evaluate them against their own circumstances. To respond to the wide range of language environments in which TESOL functions, cases have been selected from EFL, ESL, and bilingual education settings around the world.

The 12 or so case studies in each volume are easy to follow. Teacher writers describe their teaching context and analyze its distinctive features: the particular demands of their context, the issues they have encountered, how they have effectively addressed the issues, what they have learned. Each case study also offers readers practical suggestions—developed from teaching experience—to adapt and apply to their own teaching.

Already in published or in preparation are volumes on

- academic writing programs
- action research
- assessment practices
- bilingual education
- community partnerships
- content-based language instruction
- distance learning
- gender and TESOL
- grammar teaching in teacher education
- intensive English programs
- interaction and language learning
- international teaching assistants
- journal writing
- literature in language teaching and learning
- mainstreaming
- teacher education
- technology in the classroom
- teaching English as a foreign language in primary schools
- teaching English from a global perspective
- teaching English to the world

◆ THIS VOLUME

The range of contexts and content of the chapters in this volume truly illustrates that although effective English teaching is always purposeful, always specific, language use in a specific setting also always has general applications. Whatever one's teaching context, there is much to learn about curriculum and course planning, implementation, and evaluation from these case studies of TESOL in industrial, domestic, business, sport, tertiary, and professional settings.

Jill Burton
University of South Australia, Adelaide

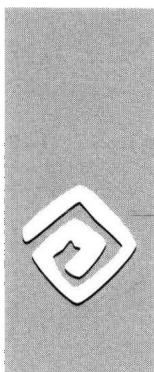


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ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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INTRODUCTION



The Nature of English for Specific Purposes

Thomas Orr

English for specific purposes (ESP) is an exciting movement in English language education that is opening up rich opportunities for English teachers and researchers in new professional domains. The growing demand for highly proficient speakers of specialized academic and workplace English is drawing increasingly large numbers of teachers into the ESP profession and awarding them higher salaries and prestige than were previously given to language instructors. Those who are interested in learning more about these developments, as well as those who would like to prepare for employment in this field, will find this volume in TESOL's Case Studies series an ideal place to begin.

◆ THE BASICS

ESP currently possesses three specific referents in the world of English language education:

1. specific subsets of the English language that are required to carry out specific tasks for specific purposes
2. a branch of language education that studies and teaches subsets of English to assist learners in successfully carrying out specific tasks for specific purposes
3. a movement that has popularized the ESP profession and its work with ESP discourse

The ESP that is primarily taught or researched consists of spoken and written discourse in academic and workplace settings, which is unfamiliar to most native and nonnative speakers and thus requires special training. Specific-purpose English includes not only knowledge of a specific part of the English language but also competency in the skills required to use this language, as well as sufficient understanding of the contexts within which it is situated. Although the name can be misleading, ESP does not refer to English or English language education for any specific purpose. All education exists for specific purposes, but only English education for highly specialized purposes, which require training beyond that normally received in Grades K–12 or the ESL/EFL classroom, interests ESP professionals.

English that is commonly known by the average native or nonnative speaker is called *English for general purposes* (EGP). General-purpose English comprises the common core of English that is shared by most of its speakers. Learning general-purpose English typically begins at home for native speakers and in the ESL/EFL classroom for nonnative speakers. When taught, EGP is presented as a linguistic system to a wide range of learners for application in the most general of potential circumstances, whereas ESP is taught as a tailor-made language package to specific communities of learners with highly specialized language needs. A simple comparison of some general and specific purposes that require general-purpose English and specific-purpose English illustrates the distinction between these two domains more clearly (see Table 1). Although the English needed for specific academic and career purposes frequently contains large portions of general-purpose English, the nature of these specialized purposes and the tasks that are necessary to achieve them may remain unusual enough that they require special training from qualified experts who understand the context and can provide appropriate instruction. This is the job of professionals in ESP.

◆ THE CASE STUDIES

The chapters in this volume exemplify research and teaching activities that fall within the ESP profession in university and workplace settings. They illustrate the nature of ESP as currently understood and practiced in a variety of different contexts and locations, with all of its admirable strengths and a few of its yet-to-be-resolved weaknesses.

The case studies in Part 1 exemplify ESP in university settings. Feak and Reinhart (chapter 1) introduce a program at the University of Michigan for students preparing to enter U.S. law schools; Hussin (chapter 2) details a program for nursing students at Flinders University in Australia; and Boyd (chapter 3) describes a program at Columbia University in the United States for students and working

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF GENERAL AND SPECIFIC PURPOSES

| <i>General English Purposes</i> | <i>Specific English Purposes</i> |
|--|---|
| To initiate conversation with a stranger | To negotiate a merger |
| To make a doctor's appointment | To produce software documentation |
| To order food at a restaurant | To engage in courtroom debate |
| To read a local newspaper | To announce an aircraft's position to the control tower |
| To report a crime to the police | To understand pesticide application instructions |
| To fill out a credit card application | To complete a grant proposal |
| To comprehend a TV news program | To read technical specifications |
| To address an envelope | To explain how to operate a crane |
| To shop via the Internet | To make a stock trade on the trading floor |
| To exchange letters with a friend | To write a medical prescription |

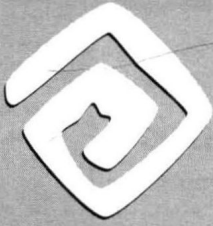
professionals in business. Magennis (chapter 4) continues the academic lineup with details on a program in Portugal at the Instituto Superior de Assistentes e Interpretes for students in tourism; López Torres and Perea Barberá (chapter 5) describe ESP work in Spain for students and shipbuilders at the University of Cádiz; and Papajohn, Alsberg, Bair, and Willenborg (chapter 6) conclude Part 1 with an outline of ESP training for international teaching assistants at the University of Illinois, in the United States.

In Part 2, on ESP in the workplace, Eggly (chapter 7) outlines a program for international medical graduates at a Detroit hospital, in the United States; Baxter, Boswood, and Peirson-Smith (chapter 8) describe an ESP consultancy for the horse-racing industry in Hong Kong; and Gordon (chapter 9) illustrates the work of ESP in a typical U.S. factory setting. In chapter 10, Garcia provides another perspective on ESP in industry with an overview of work at 25 factories in the Chicago area, in the United States; Orsi and Orsi (chapter 11) report on a special English training program they designed to prepare brewers in Argentina for professional training in Europe; and Noden (chapter 12) concludes the volume with details on a consultancy for a large home-cleaning service in the suburbs of Washington, DC, in the United States. All 12 chapters not only illustrate the fine work that has been done so far in ESP but also provide ideas and inspiration for the next generation of ESP programs that will evolve from these models.

Where will the ESP movement take us next? If systematic attention to actual needs continues to be its hallmark, ESP will clearly advance further in its study of specialized English discourse and in its development of effective methodologies to teach it. Fiercer competition in academe and the workplace will heighten the demand for competent speakers of specialized English, and ESP professionals who can teach this discourse will be needed in the future more than ever before. The fine programs featured in the chapters that follow are an excellent starting place for understanding the nature of ESP and suggest where fruitful professional activity might be found in the future.

◆ CONTRIBUTOR

Thomas Orr is professor in the Center for Language Research at the University of Aizu, in Japan, where he researches technical discourse in the fields of science, engineering, and information technology. He is founder of the Japan Conference on English for Specific Purposes, former chair of TESOL's ESP Interest Section, and associate editor for ESP submissions to *Transactions on Professional Communication*, published by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). He is also a founding board member and chair of the Professional English Research Consortium, advisor to the Institute for Professional English Communication, and content consultant for the Test of Professional English Communication. His work has been published by IEEE, Wiley-InterScience, TESOL, Shogakukan, and others.



PART

1

**ESP for
Language
Learners in the
University**

CHAPTER 1



An ESP Program for Students of Law

Christine Feak and Susan Reinhart

◆ INTRODUCTION

Preessional programs can be particularly valuable to nonnative English speakers entering rigorous graduate programs, such as those leading to a master of business or law, because the curricula of such programs tend to be regimented, leaving little opportunity to take supplemental language courses during the regular academic year. Though preessional English for academic purposes (EAP) programs and business English programs are well established throughout the United States, very few programs address the special needs of incoming law students. At present, the most institutions can do for students who are interested in preessional language study is to funnel them into existing EAP programs, most of which, in part because of their broad scope, are ill-equipped to address the very specific linguistic and cultural demands of law school.

In this chapter, we describe an ESP program developed at the University of Michigan, in the United States, for nonnative speakers of English who have been accepted into a competitive U.S. law school, usually in the master of law (LLM) program. We discuss the evolving framework and curriculum of the program, considerations in designing the program, the utilization of discorsal research, and directions for future research, and we offer advice for the implementation of similar programs elsewhere.

◆ CONTEXT

The 6½-week English for Legal Studies (ELS) program is offered each summer alongside the English for Business Studies program and the EAP program at the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan. The youngest and the smallest of the three programs, ELS was begun in 1995.

Before 1995, law students interested in attending or required to attend a preessional language program at the university were placed into the EAP program. The number of law students in the EAP program was small (on average, 2–4 of 30 students); nevertheless, each year at least some law students in the EAP program were there to satisfy law school language requirements. These students were attractive to the law school but were potentially risky admissions because of their low scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)—meaning 570–600 on

the paper-based test (230–253 on the computer-based test). A follow-up investigation on these law students, however, revealed that the EAP program was not adequately preparing them for their law programs, particularly in terms of reading and writing. Despite their high level of proficiency in English and their better-than-average success in the EAP program, students reported having difficulty managing legal case reading, writing seminar papers, and participating in seminar classes.

The Study of Law in the United States

The nature of the difficulties faced by our students and, most likely, by other nonnative-English-speaking law students becomes clearer with a general understanding of the study of law in the United States. Law school in the United States is a graduate program that generally requires 3 years of full-time study. Successful completion leads to a doctor of jurisprudence (JD) degree. JD students take approximately 85 credits of course work, including required core courses, electives, a writing and research class, and a senior research seminar. The LLM program, which nearly all of our students take, differs from the JD in length and curricular flexibility. It consists primarily of courses and seminars, which JD students may also attend, and affords students an opportunity to pursue individual research. Students in this program may freely select courses and seminars according to their interests, totaling 24 credits over the academic year. To obtain a degree, however, LLM students must generally complete a lengthy research paper on a topic of their choice as part of a seminar or a supervised independent research project.

Whereas British law school classes use textbooks that are “similar in format to . . . textbooks in other disciplines” (Howe, 1990, p. 8), U.S. law school courses other than legal writing or research classes generally do not use textbooks. For each core course, a law student has one basic text, called a *casebook*, which is a primary teaching tool “containing texts of leading appellate court decisions that in common law tradition often serve as precedent in a particular field of law, such as contracts or torts, sometimes together with commentary and other features that might be useful for class discussion and further understanding of a subject” (Black, 1991, p. 148).

A typical casebook contains an introduction to a short series of cases, the cases themselves, and a series of notes and questions for the cases. The cases are often abridged so as to highlight one or several points of law. In some courses, such as those in criminal or tax law, the casebook is accompanied by a book of statutes or regulations. Unlike most U.S. university textbooks, which highlight important information and suggest what students should learn, a casebook does not indicate what exactly is to be learned. Students must figure out on their own the main point or issue illuminated by the case and the aspects of the case relevant to the issue. Through this process, students develop cognitive skills and strategies for dealing with cases in ways that experienced legal professionals do—one of the key objectives of law school. In addition, after reading and understanding the cases, students are expected to have acquired knowledge of an entire area of law.

Thus, in law schools, students spend the vast majority of their time reading cases. During a year-long course, for example, it is not uncommon for students to read 125 cases ranging in length from 2 to 20 pages, along with a series of notecases, which are summaries of related cases. Although the amount of reading may actually be less than in other disciplines, for new students the time required to read even the

