ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES AND THE ROLES OF AN ESP TEACHER

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Content

- Emergence of English for Specific Purposes
- ESP vs. General English
- Roles of an ESP Teacher \( \Rightarrow \) who, what, how?
- Wrap up
The Emergence of ESP

- 1960s → a shift in traditional understanding of linguistics

- different situations/learners’ needs → “different, specific” language and teaching approaches

- The emergence of English for Specific Purposes to meet specific needs of a learner
ESP vs. General English

Differences between ESP and GE (Dudley-Evans):
- meet specific needs
- it serves a particular discipline
- intermediate/advanced level (→ authentic materials are easily feasible)
- (Carter) “turning learners into users” → “self-directed” learning
- ESP stems from GE, it’s “[...] an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning” (Hutchinson).
Major differences? Not really.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESP ENGLISH</th>
<th>GENERAL ENGLISH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>specialized lexis</td>
<td>free-time activity, time for games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivation related to job</td>
<td>more freedom, relaxed atmosphere</td>
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<tr>
<td>teach negotiation and presentation</td>
<td>songs and literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>techniques</td>
<td>general writing skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>goal-oriented students</td>
<td>social event</td>
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<tr>
<td>more serious</td>
<td></td>
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<td>business correspondence</td>
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**WHAT THE TWO HAVE IN COMMON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GENERAL VOCABULARY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grammar and functions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>anxiety about abilities</td>
<td>everyday English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small talk</td>
<td>survival English</td>
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<td>current events</td>
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Do You Have ESP?
GE Teacher facing ESP

- **No training for ESP teaching** → frustration, a feeling of inadequacy

- **Possessing the knowledge to generate communication with ESP learners**

- **Becoming consultants, negotiators with students** → additional roles
Areas to take into consideration

1. **Content of the ESP materials and the level of their specialisation**

2. **Reasons for EL Teachers to struggle with ESP**

3. **The roles of an ESP teacher**
1. Content of ESP Materials

- Little linguistic justification for highly specified texts (i.e. authentic texts)
- Specialized, technical terms internationally used

→ no crucial comprehension barrier

Hullen: “it is not the usage of technical term *per se* that distinguishes language for special purposes from general language, *but the factual knowledge necessary to understand* these words.”

→ teacher’s knowledge!
Why authentic texts?

- face validity and familiarity ➔ a students’ need
- relevancy ➔ students’ motivation
- no teaching value if not chosen/exploited wisely

↓

a teacher’s competence to choose the right
texts (or provide their own material) to generate and
boost language acquisition
2. Why do teachers struggle with ESP?

- **No (re)training**
- **No need to learn** specialist subject area
- **Need to** understand basic principles, have a positive attitude towards ESP content
- **Need to** “become interested students of a subject matter”
- **Need to** use particular jargon, use more generalized set of academic skills, know everyday small talk (general communication skills)

→ a common fund of knowledge
3. The roles of an ESP teacher

- Teaching
- Evaluation
- Needs analysis
- Syllabus design
- Materials development
- Collaboration, negotiation
- Research

ESP Practitioner
Conclusion

- little justification for highly specified materials, but a must have

- readiness to accommodate, negotiate, collaborate

- an unknown field to teach in but much knowledge (and right approaches) already brought along