

Book review

INTRODUCING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Author: Laurence Anthony

Publisher: Routledge, 2018

Ksenija Bogetić

Department of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University, UK
Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences, Ljubljana, Slovenia

As English for Specific Purposes remains among the most vibrant arenas of language teaching and research today, its textbooks are often emphasized to come against challenges of matching practical interests of wider groups of learners and staying up to date in terms of global theories and methodologies (Dean Brown 2016). Laurence Anthony's *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* successfully comes up to the task by integrating methodological insights with a state-of-the-art view of the trends and challenges in the field, without sacrificing either the practical orientation or the clarity of presentation. To applied linguistics practitioners, the author will be better known as a corpus linguist, creator of widely used tools for automated empirical language analysis, and an expert in Data Driven Learning (Anthony, 2019); this distinct background may partly account for the intricate and results-based approach of the book, and has surely come in usefully for sharing advice on the application of new technologies in course design.

Overall, the book presents the key concepts and practices of ESP, with regard to its four pillars and the interrelations thereof. The author himself describes his target audience as including both students of varied ELT and ESP programmes, as well as teaching professionals. While the presentation may seem overly simplified at times, especially at the outset of reading, a lot of the detail may indeed be useful for those already in the teaching profession. Each chapter follows a regular pattern, and includes tasks, research ideas, further reading and closing reflections, which may be especially productive in postgraduate programme contexts.

The book is divided into three sections, and covers 10 chapters and an Introduction. The opening (Introduction, pp. 1-7) provides content overview, as well as comments on how research ideas, further reading and contentious issues will be dealt with in the book. Section 1 (Chapters 1-3, pp. 7-61) sets the scene for the rest of the book by introducing the field of ESP and outlining its four pillars: needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation. The four pillars are covered in more detail in Section 2 (Chapters 4-7, pp. 61-147), while the final Section 3 (Chapters 8-10, pp. 147-194) provides more practical examples and issues concerning the real-world applications of ESP.

As common in textbooks of the field, Section 1 and its Chapter 1 start by situating ESP and its history in relation to English Language Teaching (ELT), introducing the

Submitted April 14th, 2023, accepted for publication July 16th, 2024

Corresponding author: Department of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University, UK

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences, Ljubljana, Slovenia

E-mail: ksenija.bogetic@fil.bg.ac.rs

main branches of ESP, and comparing and contrasting ESP with other ELT approaches. Chapter 2 deals with the global position and status of English in the world, discussing the growth of English as a global lingua franca, as well as the role of ESP in today's globalized economy, via examples ranging from Asian worker migrations to the 'hypergrowth' of English language call centres. Chapter 3 turns to the four pillars of ESP as the 'core' matter of the book; the four pillars to be discussed are first illustrated via a practical example, followed by an explanation of each.

Section 2 dedicates a separate chapter to each of the four pillars. Chapter 4 addresses the nuts and bolts of identifying needs in the design of ESP courses, while Chapter 5 turns to the learning objectives. Chapter 6 deals with the decisions concerning teaching materials and methods, including the varied advantages and disadvantages of using published, custom-made or corpus materials, as well the applications of traditional and novel methods when working with heterogenous and homogenous learner groups. Chapter 7 turns to the final 'pillar' of evaluation, including the evaluation of learners, instructors, courses, and programmes.

Section 3 addresses many of the four pillars' aspects from practical angles of implementation of different settings (Chapter 8) and the biggest challenges in ESP (Chapter 9). The final chapter of the book, Chapter 10, discusses the future of ESP, with an interesting discussion of "the role that ESP should have in empowering learners to close the gap between their current skills/knowledge and the skills/knowledge that the discipline community might want and accept" (pp. 185). In his closing reflections, Anthony also foregrounds some important questions from more recent critical ESP movements, which emphasize the potential of providing learners with the knowledge and skills to actively challenge how the discourse community operates.

On the whole, the book can be said to successfully achieve its purpose of providing an accessible and thought-provoking introduction suited to different kinds of readership. Practical advice abounds, while much of the content (perhaps most notably, the thoughts in creating, adopting or adapting learning materials) is likely to bring some new insights even for experienced teachers. What appears innovative compared to many ESP textbooks on the market is the way that Anthony mobilizes his background in corpus linguistics, Data Driven Analysis and genre analysis (without ever going excessively technical) to discuss the possibilities of course and material design. Examples concerning the use of corpus methods to reach "greater confidence in what should or should not be taught in the classroom" (p.79), along with showing how, for instance, "the ability to perform a corpus analysis can itself become a goal for learners" (p. 80) are particularly insightful and may spark new methodological inspiration for experienced practitioners as well. While in the face of the increasing dynamism and complexity of globally connected professional communities, design of language education textbooks remains a daunting task (Bhatia, Anthony & Noguchi 2011), for newcomers in the field, *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* may well represent an ideal reading material, and is likely to remain an invaluable global resource in the field for years to come.

REFERENCES

- Anthony, L. (2019). Tools and strategies for Data-Driven Learning (DDL) in the EAP writing classroom. In *Specialised English* (pp. 179-194). Routledge.
- Bhatia, V., Anthony, L., & Noguchi, J. (2011). ESP in the 21st century: ESP theory and application today. In *Proceedings of the JACET 50th commemorative International Convention* (Vol. 143, pp. 143-150).
- Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing needs analysis and English for specific purposes*. Routledge.