

CONFERENCE REVIEW

ESP in the Context of the Internationalization of Higher Education and Economic Globalization
The 2nd International Conference of the Chinese Association for ESP &
The 5th International Conference on ESP in Asia
Fudan University
Yangpu, Shanghai, China
27-29 September 2013

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Joint International Conference

The 5th International Conference on ESP in Asia, in conjunction with the 2nd International Conference of the Chinese Association for ESP was held at Fudan University, Shanghai, on 27-29 September 2013. Under the theme of **ESP in the Context of the Internationalization of Higher Education and Economic Globalization**, the conference spotlighted the innovations in ESP teaching practice in the globalizing age. It provided a forum for ESP practitioners and educators to discuss topics of regional relevance. It was also an opportunity to exchange ideas about ESP research and practice in meeting the challenge of internationalization of higher education.

This conference was the fifth in a series of conferences on ESP in Asia following the successes of the first four meetings (1st at Chongqing University, 2009; 2nd at University of Nottingham Ningbo China, 2010; 3rd at Xi'an Jiaotong University, 2011; 4th at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2012, the last one was in conjunction with the 1st International conference of the Chinese Association for ESP).

The conference was also organised and sponsored jointly by a number of Chinese and Asian organizations:

College of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Fudan University, Shanghai, China
Shanghai Advisory Committee on English Language Teaching at Tertiary Level
The Chinese Association for ESP, China
Taiwan ESP Association
The Asia-Pacific Association of LSP and Professional Communication
Research Centre for Professional Communication in English, Department of English,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong SAR, China

About one hundred twenty papers were presented in the parallel sessions. These sessions were classified according to a wide range of themes such as:

Curriculum and course design in ESP
Materials design and writing in ESP
Development and application of ESP theories.
ESP teaching and learning approaches and methods
Innovations in ESP research and instruction
ESP teacher development
Development of ESP testing and assessment

English teaching and learning for academic purposes
English teaching and learning for professional purposes
English teaching and research for business/legal purposes
Cross-cultural Communication in ESP teaching

There were five workshops and four featured speeches over the three days of the conference as well as three post-conference workshops. These workshops and speeches; again, were classified into different themes such as *Corpora in ESP teaching*, *Genre analysis in ESP teaching*, and *EAP teaching (e.g. academic listening, reading, writing and speaking)*. Round-table sessions were also included in the main program of this conference. These sessions were three in number and each one was dealing with a specific theme or aspect of ESP: the first theme was about *English teaching and learning for legal purpose*; the second was about *English teaching and learning for business purposes* and the third one was about *EFL teaching at tertiary level*. Each round-table session was managed by eight members in the panelists.

Five plenary speeches were delivered in this conference by five well known experts in the field of ESP particularly in Asian context. These scholars are: Prof. Chen Yinghui, Dean of the International College, Asia University, Taiwan; Prof. Winnie Cheng, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Director, Research Center of Professional communication in English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong; Prof. Laurence Anthony, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Waseda University, Japan; Prof. Cheng An, Department of English, Oklahoma State University; Prof. Sun Youzhong, Dean of School of English and International Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China. These speakers covered a variety of aspects all related to the main theme of the conference.

According to the author's own point of view, two plenary speeches were of high significance in terms of the scope of research in ESP. Firstly, *ESP in Taiwan: Development and Challenges*, by Prof. Chen Yinghui. In this talk, the speaker addressed a new approach to English language teaching in an EFL context (Taiwan) from five directions: 1) curriculum design, 2) ESP teachers and practitioners versus subject specialists, 3) ESP textbook production, 4) teacher development, and 5) the establishment of Taiwan ESP association (TESPA) and publication of Taiwan International ESP Journal (TIESPJ). Secondly, *Developing Effective International Communication Skills: From Localized to Globalized Norms* by Prof. Laurence Anthony. In his speech, Prof. Anthony explained in detail the gap between the localized 'norms' of current Asian ESP teaching and the globalization on which most Asian countries have been impacted in different ways. The speaker argued that the current practice of teaching ESP in Asia tends to place heavy emphasis on correct grammar and vocabulary. This current situation in ESP teaching leads to weaknesses in both rhetorical structuring and presentation of journal and conference papers in which most Asian university students, graduates and faculty members should be involved. The speaker also offered suggestions on how to redesign university language courses so that students can develop more effective communication skills for global audience. Prof. Anthony conducted a post-conference workshop in which he offered a comprehensive overview about designing, teaching and evaluation of ESP courses with reference to the Faculty of Science and Engineering in Waseda University where the speaker currently works. This workshop was extended for about two hours with huge number of attendees all interested in such experience of actual performance in ESP teaching.

Based on the author's own modest experience, another interesting workshop was conducted by two English language instructors from the center of English Language Education at the University of Nottingham Ningbo, China. The speakers are Simon Dawson and Ricky Jeffrey; both are EAP teachers and are closely involved in the development of the range of language tests that are held by the Center of English Language Education. They claimed that Assessment in EAP typically requires candidates to perform complex tasks similar to those they face during their university study. Such tasks elicit complex outputs to be assessed. They showed two different examples of these complex outputs. One is written assignment of about 1000 words and the other is academic oral presentation. They claimed that such a length and complexity of these two tasks make the assessment procedure a challenging task in itself. There was a complete description of marking criteria of the assessment team at the University of Nottingham, China, has developed. They claimed that by using these criteria, they can satisfy the needs of candidates and assessors alike, and improve general validity.

As for the presentations, the author of this review was mainly interested in course design and writing materials in ESP. Also, the specific discipline the author was focusing on is English for Medical Purposes. Therefore, most presentations the author attended were about these aspects of ESP. According to the author's opinion, one incredible presentation was *Medical Academic English Curriculum Design within the Framework of ESP: A Reform of English Curriculum for Undergraduates in SMMU* by Chen Yu & Hu Jiyue, both English language instructors at the Second Military Medical University (SMMU) in China. In this presentation, the speakers claimed that in accordance with the Framework of Reference for EFL teaching at Tertiary level in Shanghai, SMMU has made initial explorations into the reform of English curriculum for undergraduates. Based on medical students' needs analysis, teaching resources and the orientation of medical education in China, the study introduced an innovative English language curriculum tailored for medical undergraduates with an elaboration on course design, course content, teaching materials, teaching method, assessment and teaching development. The presentation was supported by a number of video clips showing the actual performance of the Military medical students in the classroom applying the new curriculum. Amazingly, the students themselves organize an annual forum in which they do a variety of academic activities such as oral presentations.

As for the author's presentation which was *Teaching ESP online: Designing a CALL program for medical students in EFL context – English for medical students*. In this presentation, the speaker was going through his web-based project that he has developed for his context. The program was designed for Medical students in Libya and it was focusing on teaching different English language skills within the framework of ESP. The presenter described the context in which this program is implemented, reported the main purpose of the program, and finally gave some details about how it works properly in order to enhance the medical students' English proficiency.

One remarkable aspect of these conferences is the interaction among various disciplines. Participants came from different educational and non-educational contexts in Asia. Such an experience has a great impact on teaching ESP as it enriches the knowledge in all aspects of ESP. Thus, the discussions at the conference had both occupational and scholarly motives. Such lively interdisciplinary discussion is intellectually demanding; the people from different work places, scientific institutes, and English schools are all

amazingly knowledgeable and most have learned through such conferences how to benefit from one another's experience, what each considers important, and how much an integrated approach can add to the appreciation of ESP.

Contrary to the expectations of many prospective attendees including the author, even though the conference is international in title, the participation of the conference was limited to China and other Asian countries. Noticeably, the writer of this review was the only presenter who came from a non-Asian country.