

CONVERGENCE OF ESP WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES

Edited by

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Foreword

Welcome to the collection of essays *Convergence of English for Specific Purposes with Other Disciplines*. This volume, edited by Nadežda Stojković, Gabriela Chmelíková and Ľudmila Hurajová, discloses the variety and scope of research in ESP courses and the design of study materials for different professional fields, ranging from courses of English for tourism to English for aviation, English for medical geology and English for nursing.

The collection opens with Chapter 1, developed by M. Angeles Escobar and Iria da Cunha, which focuses on designing writing materials for tourism text genres using technological tools. Chapter 2 reports on the results of the comparative study conducted by Wassim Bekai and Samar Harkouss on motivation in teaching speaking ESP in two Lebanese universities. Chapter 3 is Huang Jian's contribution which presents a case study on material development for listening to financial and economic news. Chapter 4, developed by Vanya Katsarska, discusses cultural sensitivity in teaching aviation English. Chapter 5 provides Jungyeon Koo's findings of the use of lexical bundles in Korean learner corpus for ESP pedagogy. It is followed by Svetlana Rubtsova's Chapter 6 which considers the use of Biblical and historical precedent in teaching ESP and translation in political media discourse. Chapter 7, developed by Miriam Pérez-Veneros, Diego Sánchez and Elena Giménez-Forcada, analyses the potential of research articles for teaching and learning medical geology in English in a university context. Chapter 8 presents Shi Wenjie's case study on assessment issues in an ESP-based college programme in China's tertiary education. Chapter 9 reports on the results of Anna Stefanowicz- Kocoł and Monika Pociask's investigation into improving social competences of nursing students in ESP classes. Chapter 10 presents the findings of Ting-hui Wen's research on the use of English-Chinese parallel corpus in teaching translation. In the last Chapter, Gabriela Chmelíková and Ľudmila Hurajová discuss the advantages and disadvantages of ESP and CLIL in higher education.

Discussed by scholars from across the globe, this collection addresses interesting theoretical and practical aspects of course and material design in the context of English for Specific Purposes. Enjoy!

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Preface

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), but also more generally Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), is in its rationale for existence tied to the discipline whose linguistic, communicative basis it provides. ESP is a form of English Language Teaching (ELT) that performs language training directed towards enabling English language lecturers to design and conduct courses that are solely aimed to enable learners to linguistically function in a target professional domain setting. For that to be achieved, an ESP course is designed specifically for the required environment. In practice this means that an ESP lecturer is to research the professional setting, analyze, abstract and synthesize its linguistic characteristics, e.g., the expert vocabulary, typical syntactic structures, relevant morphological word formation processes, exemplary text organization, both written and spoken stylistics. All this is needed in order to design and/or compile teaching and learning material and decide upon the appropriate teaching methodology and pedagogy so that the course in its entirety simulates that particular professional situation. Only if the course simulates it successfully, will the learners be able to fully and immediately engage into the profession, and through uninhibited communication in the work place, perform their jobs to the benefit of all engaged.

There exist no (or too few) ready-made teaching material or methodological approaches since each professional setting, though undeniably sharing characteristics with the overall domain, is nevertheless unique. A dedicated ESP lecturer caters for those idiosyncrasies doing minute, multifaceted linguistic investigation into the linguistic characteristics of the professional domain. This book is to prove the variety, depth, and quality of the ESP research done into probing the linguistic specificities, and of ESP converging with different professional disciplines.

Nadežda Stojković, Gabriela Chmelíková, Ľudmila Hurajová

CHAPTER ONE

Designing Writing Materials for Tourism Text Genres through Technological Tools

M. Angeles Escobar, Iria da Cunha

Introduction

The area of English for Tourism Purposes is both complex and diverse. Recently, a review and analysis of the most difficult tourism texts has been presented in Spanish in da Cunha, Montané and Coll (2017) and in da Cunha, Escobar, Montané and Fisas (in press). These authors argue that there are robust differences in the perception of their writing difficulties. Also, they show that professionals are also aware of the fact that some genres are more frequent than others. Students need additional help while writing texts that are specifically difficult in this field. The main objective of this paper is to show how teachers can benefit from a semi-automatic writing system that students can use to practice, both individually and with tutors or in groups. In a nutshell, we attempt to give an account of a number of linguistic characteristics, concerning three particular levels: text, lexicon, and discourse, addressing five tourism textual genres that present difficulties for students, those being: promotional articles, travel blogs, reports, tourist accommodation regulations and business plans. By integrating technology, we show how teachers can change the way they usually teach writing for specific purposes. ArText is the semi-automatic writing system employed in our study. This prototype can freely be downloaded from the Internet (<http://sistema-artext.com>). We draw on the possibilities of this system to engage students in their learning process. In particular, they are presented with a real corpus of texts taken from the Tourism Industry. The texts on the screen can then be analysed in respect to vocabulary, discourse and body content. In this way, technology results in a practical way to teach students how to structure the document, assign titles to the sections, add prototypical content and incorporate linking words and expressions related to the text.

As is well known, visual scaffolding is an excellent way to provide comprehensible input to ESL students. Our main tenet is that students need to learn the key parts of difficult texts in this way. Not only will they learn the essential

writing skills for these text genres but they will also make progress in their acquisition of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Therefore, we attempt to engage students in the learning process increasing their attention and focus, through a meaningful learning experience. First, we consider a semi-automatic writing system to provide a comprehensive description of some text genres to Spanish-speaking students that acquire ESP in a formal context of distance education.

In particular, we want our students to analyse the main aspects that should be included in each of the aforementioned texts in Spanish in order to find their English counterparts addressing text structure, body contents, key phrases, and vocabulary. Section 2 describes some current methodologies in the ESP classroom based on corpus studies and technology. Section 3 provides a description of a new semi-automatic writing system called arText, which may be relevant in this kind of methodology. Section 4 attempts to discuss five textual genres in Tourism following that corpus analysis. Section 5 offers concluding remarks.

ESP and Teaching

New teaching methodologies in ESP have recently been developed in several contexts in tertiary education:

“(1) Content-and-language integrated learning (CLIL), (2) use of didactic case studies, (3) corpus studies conducted for teaching purposes and aimed at identifying high frequency language elements: terms, specialized lexis items, collocations, phrases, formulae, acronyms, etc., that need to be prioritized in language courses, (4) more effective course-books with higher terminology indexes, (5) extended use of online materials, purposes, and (6) teaching professional culture and non-linguistic skills.” (Jendrych 2013, p. 46).

A corpus usually incorporates those elements of discourse that are repeated in a language with a greater frequency, cf. Bocanegra-Valle, 2010. The design of an ESP course schedule, work materials and classroom activities should take into account data found in corpus studies including real texts. Likewise, the teacher can give the student access to examples of the current use of the language from which the student will extract some guidelines since they will pay attention to clear templates, cf. Schmidt (1990). Moreover, the knowledge of those words that are used more frequently will facilitate the understanding of the speech. Following Thornbury (2002) we assume that the relative frequency of a word turns out to be a key factor in determining its inclusion in a

syllabus, provided that the most frequent words express the most frequent meanings in the language.

Many researchers also point out the relevance that the analysis of the corpus has in the process of learning a language in the ESP classroom (Flowerdew & Mahlberg 2009; Gavioli 2005; Boulton 2011; among others). They seem to put forward the thesis that working with a text implies the mastery of technical vocabulary. In particular, Gavioli (2005) supports the twofold claim that corpus work provides students with a useful source of information about ESP language features, and that the process of “search-and-discovery” implied in the method of corpus analysis may facilitate language learning and promote autonomy in learning language use. Furthermore, the presence of technical terms with a higher frequency of use among specialists found in corpus studies will favour their natural acquisition among learners. Naturally, course materials that contain a greater number of frequent terms will be preferable to another one with a smaller number. Finally, the evolution of new technologies can facilitate the classroom methodology based on ESP corpus:

“Language teaching methodology has benefited, like many other areas of study, from the advantages which IT technology offers to trainers and trainees and which have influenced the manner of devising the presentation of the studied information, as well as its dissemination and evaluation with the result that, at present, ESP methodology is substantially influenced by the computer-based learning strategies” (Caraiman, C. 2014, 916).

Students could be guided and encouraged towards making use of these resources as much as possible since they are used to working with technology, and therefore they might feel more motivated. Today, the ordinary textbook on paper is usually combined with numerous online material available to the student as open courses such as E-xplore Technical English, e-learning platforms such as MOODLE, online publications, online dictionaries, the TechnoPlus program, podcasts, webinars, etc. All this adds variety and dynamism to the learning process (cf. Conroy 2010). In the next section, we will be discussing a new semi-automatic writing system that can be extended to the ESP classroom. By doing so, we will be able to offer students the content of the language closer to its linguistic characteristics, dealing in particular, with the most frequent and difficult text genres in Tourism.

A New Automatic Writing System: arText

The arText system (da Cunha, Montané and Hysa 2017) is an automatic editor that assists the user in the drafting of different textual genres corresponding

to three specialized areas: Tourism (Promotional article, Travel blog entry, Report, Norms and Regulations, Business Plan), Medicine (scientific article, review article, scientific article summary, clinical history and academic paper) and Public administration (claim, letter of introduction, complaint, request and complaint). These genres are considered the most frequent and difficult to write in these areas, as demonstrated in da Cunha, Montané, and Coll (2017). The system can be used free of charge online from the following address: <http://sistema-artext.com/>.

The arText system has three modules. Module 1 allows the user to structure their text according to the selected textual genre. The system shows the prototypical sections of this genre, along with the contents that are usually included in each of them. Also, concrete phrases are offered that can be used to describe much of those content areas. For example, for the genre corresponding to the promotional article, this module indicates that four sections are usually included: Header, Introduction, Body, and Annex. Also, the Body section includes various types of content, such as Photos, Most outstanding characteristics of selected points of interest, Proposal of itinerary or itineraries, Reference to historical facts, etc. And finally, for example, Proposal of itinerary or itineraries has several phrases associated with it, such as ‘the route starts in [place]’, ‘take the route/road’, ‘at the end of the route’, etc. Module 2 allows the user to freely perform the spell checking of the text through the spell checker open source Web Spellchecker Ltd., which the arText system has built-in. Also, this module allows the user to format the text since it includes a format bar with the most usual options (size and typeface, insertion of tables and images, assignment of styles, etc.). Module 3 allows the user to perform a linguistic revision of the text once it is written. This module offers innovative suggestions for improving the text in relation to various aspects related to the lexicon and discourse, such as detection of non-defined acronyms, detection of sentences that are too long, proposal for sentence segmentation, alternative discourse connectors and excessive lexical repetition detection, among others. The information provided in Modules 1 and 3 of the arText system is specific to each textual genre and comes from the analysis of a textual corpus (cf. da Cunha, Escobar, Montané and Fisas, in press). Figure 1 shows a screenshot of the main page of the arText system online editor, where the three modules can be visualized.

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Contributors

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