Developments in English for Specific Purposes
A multi-disciplinary approach
Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John
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Developments in ESP
A multi-disciplinary approach

Tony Dudley-Evans
Maggie Jo St John

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3.4.2 Collaboration

If cooperation largely involves the language teacher taking the initiative and finding out what happens in the subject department, collaboration involves the more direct working together of the two sides, language and subject, to prepare students for particular tasks or courses. In collaboration the language and subject teacher work together outside the classroom. The collaboration has clear goals but also defined limits. There are three options for collaborative work:

1. The planning of a series of classes where the language class prepares the students for a subsequent subject class taught in English.

2. The running of a class on a specific skill or related to a specific task where the subject department has a specific input to the materials or the language teacher uses material produced by the department.

3. The North American 'adjunct' model, in which the adjunct acts as a back-up class to the subject, helping students with difficulties with that class.

A good example of the first option was the collaborative economics and-language course run for Iranian students of Finance at the University of Birmingham in the 1970s (Henderson and Skehan, 1980). The language level of the students was low and a major aim of the course was to move students from a dependence on rote learning towards developing critical thinking and a more questioning approach to learning. The economics lectures were based on a 20-minute tape accompanied by a set of 15 to 18 slides. Although the content and organisation of the course were appropriate for the students, the language was too difficult. A simplified version of the script was therefore written by the language teacher working with the subject teacher and recorded for use in the economics class.

All the language material was designed to prepare for the tape/slide presentation run by the economics teacher and its aims were thus subordinate to the aims of the economics class. Other English classes running in parallel with this course presented a more systematic approach to the teaching of relevant skills and language. Henderson and Skehan (1980) conclude that the course was successful because the collaboration resulted in a set of materials that were at the right linguistic level for the students, but also had validity from the subject point of view. They also recommend what they refer to as a 'phased approach to team-teaching', a point that we will take up later in this section (pp. 47-48).

An example of the second option is a reading programme run for
cannot be separated. In English L1 EAP situations, the NNS generally has to adapt to both language and culture. In EBP situations, the NNS may use the language but not adopt the culture: it is unlikely to be appropriate for a Finn negotiating with a Vietnamese to adopt an English-speaking cultural attitude.

We also mentioned that EBP teachers do not generally have any direct experience of their learners’ context whereas all EAP teachers have studied in an academic environment.

4.8 Summary

Business English is the current growth area in ESP and covers both courses for pre-experience learners (EGBP) and courses for job-experienced learners (ESBP). The primary concern is to communicate effectively, not necessarily totally accurately. As professionals, business people have very clear purposes and expect high quality, value for money and professionally delivered courses. More courses now combine language and skills development and more account is taken of the business context and business relationships. It is being recognised that the language depends on variables such as status, power and how well established the relationship is. Although many of the short, intensive courses are for spoken interaction, writing is important. With more personal computers and e-mail and less secretarial support, more business people have to compose their own correspondence. With the growth of transnational corporations, NNSs may have to write in English because documents will be read or copied to a NS Head Office or to NS staff. The professional demands placed on Business English teachers may well be higher than on those in other fields.

4.9 Recommended reading

Dudley-Evans and St John (1996) and the special edition of English for Specific Purposes (vol. 15.1) provide an overview of both research and materials in the 1990s in BE. Ellis and Johnson (1994) provide an introduction to the teaching of BE. The books by Scollon and Scollon (1995) and Mead (1990) provide useful introductions to intercultural issues. The books by Trompenaar (1993) and Handy (1992) will interest those who want to find out more about business ideas and philosophy. The BESIG Newsletter and Language and Intercultural Training publish practical articles related to BE and training issues.
is what learners already know, a present situation analysis (PSA), from which we can deduce their lacks. Thus, a TSA includes objective, perceived and product-oriented needs; an LSA includes subjective, felt and process-oriented needs; a PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, learning experiences.

**Task 7a**

Group the following statements under the headings target situation analysis (TSA), learning situation analysis (LSA) and present situation analysis (PSA).

1. I need to see vocabulary written down.
2. I have occasional meetings with British colleagues.
3. I find it difficult to write persuasively.
4. I pick things up by listening.
5. Student X needs to read more widely.
6. I like problem solving.
7. I get my tenses mixed up.
8. I hate group work.
9. I have to write reports.
10. My problem is finding the right word.

To establish a workable course design, means analysis is suggested (Holliday and Cooke, 1982: 133) as an adjunct to needs analysis. Means analysis looks at the environment in which a course will be run or, as in the original metaphor that generated the term, the environment in which a project will take root, grow healthily and survive. The two key factors considered are the classroom culture and the management infrastructure and culture. An important perspective is that these are viewed not as negative constraints but as relevant features. The negative-constraints view corresponds to: ‘ideally we would do . . . but it is not possible so we will compromise and do . . .’ The relevant-features perspective is a positive approach which says: ‘what will be best in this particular and given situation?’

Means analysis is an acknowledgement that what works well in one situation may not work in another. While hotel staff around the world may share some similar language needs, how they learn the language, the conditions in which they are learning and where and how they apply the language are not the same. So the needs, and how they are prioritised, ordered and then met will be different.
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For instance, the passive uses the verb to be; many ‘if clauses’ use the would/should/could modal verbs; the metaphorical meaning of expressions may derive directly or indirectly from their literal meaning.

These two criteria of ‘when needed’ and ‘building’ do not usually order everything. Some items will now be in specific places in the jigsaw, others could, at this stage fit in more than one place. They will fit into a specific place either because of other related variables in the grid or because of the materials or according to additional criteria such as: building confidence. For instance, at Dunchurch presentations come before meetings partly because it is easier to speak a prepared monologue than to take turns in a meeting. (Also, taking part in a meeting may mean giving a brief presentation so the building block criteria also applies to some extent.)

Task 8c

Look at the case studies and deduce some of the target events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Target events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUST course</td>
<td>I I I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research scientists</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunchurch</td>
<td>University of Birmingham Masters in IBF (International Banking and Finance)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(b) From target events and rhetorical awareness to skill areas to language

The target events will have been broken down into skill areas and the appropriate rhetorical awareness considered as part of the needs analysis. For the Birmingham IBF students, the needs associated with writing their assignments broke down into four skill areas:

- writing a good introduction
- citing sources and attributing ideas
- writing in an academic style
- discussing data

Within those the students needed to develop an awareness of how to
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Text comprehension

Working with a partner, learners prepare comprehension questions (and the answers) on a text. They exchange with another pair and answer the questions they are given. This can be extended to language work around the wording and phrasing of the questions. A further class activity is to compare all the questions and discuss which they think are best. The discussion usually helps to distinguish main points from minor issues. The group can select the best ones and then there is a set of questions the teacher can use for another group!

Note-taking/information transfer

Similarly, learners can devise information transfer activities for their peers (and the teacher) to complete.

Vocabulary development

We discussed techniques for vocabulary development in chapter 5. Learners can generate their own sets or word partnerships; they can devise matching and grouping activities and try them out on each other.

Reflection 9g

Take a text you use with learners (or one of our extracts, although they are rather short) and consider what activities learners could carry out on it. Write the rubrics that instruct them to generate their own questions, notes, vocabulary or other exercises.

9.6 Materials and technology

Technology offers the possibility of alternative materials and classroom interactions (chapter 10). After audio and video cassettes, the next major technological change, in the 1980s, was the use of computers and the opportunities for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). CALL programs are largely linear, constructed along certain thought patterns, with a single or limited response. The development of CD-ROM has brought more interactive packages. For the learner, CD-ROM offers information and the opportunity for repetitive practice.
Guidance for tasks

Chapter 2

Task 2d

Clearly the answer depends on circumstances in the ESP situation. We believe that there are advantages in ESP teachers specialising, but not to the extent that they teach only one skill or in only one department or sector. Some variety and flexibility seems desirable, so we support the idea that teachers should concentrate on certain subject areas for a period of time.

*EAP unit in department:* Advantages = easier administration; possibility of considerable integration of the EAP work with the subject teaching. Danger = professional isolation. *Centralised unit:* opportunity to coordinate work; greater variety of teaching; professional development through joint research projects, seminars and general discussion. Perhaps the ideal is a combination of the two systems with EAP teachers based in one centre, but working in teams in key departments?

Chapter 3

Task 3b

Both students will need all the skills. Postgraduate MBA: lecture comprehension a major priority; reading comprehension fairly important; writing essays very important – the use of source material and avoiding excessive copying from those sources can be a problem so this will be a priority. PhD research student: less need of listening comprehension; priorities will be reading and writing; may well need some induction into the expectations of the department about research students and the relationship with the supervisor, so spoken interaction skills and language.

Task 3d

Different answers are possible. Our view is:

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Situation 2</th>
<th>Situation 3</th>
<th>Situation 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
<td>Very feasible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Unsuitable</td>
</tr>
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The answers will always depend on the language unit's relationship with the subject departments.
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