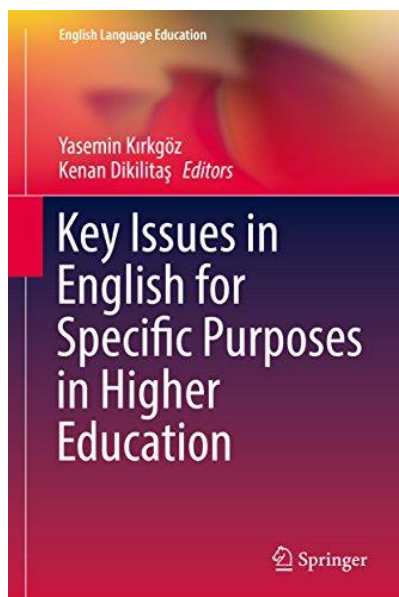


BOOK REVIEW



NAVIGATING METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN ESP TEACHING AND RESEARCH ACROSS ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

Yasemin Kirkgöz and Kenan Dikilitaş (Eds.). KEY ISSUES IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN HIGHER EDUCATION (2018), Cham: Springer. 353 pp., ISBN-978-3-319-70213-1 (HBK), ISBN-978-3-319-88905-4 (PBK), ISBN-978-3-319-70214-8 (EBK).

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The last two decades have witnessed the growing importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in academic and professional settings. The impressive range of publications in Anglophone and non-Anglophone contexts bears proof to the diversification of methodological approaches in ESP education and the consolidation of ESP-related research (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013; research articles published in international journals such as *English for Specific Purposes*, *Ibérica*, *ESP Today*, *Asian ESP Journal*, to name just some of the publications in the field). Applied linguists' and ESP practitioners' interest in ESP developments is also reflected by their active networking through international associations (e.g. The European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes [AELFE]), or in ESP Special Interest Groups operating within applied linguistics or language educators' associations.

Ten years after the publication of *ESP in European Higher Education* (Fortanet-Gómez & Räisänen, 2008), which showcases research endeavours and teaching related case studies from Europe, the current volume, *Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education*, covers more geolinguistic regions in an attempt to offer a more comprehensive picture of developments in ESP

education and research. The case studies included in this book illustrate local institutional initiatives and individual or team ventures in various academic settings from Finland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, Turkey, UK, USA, or Venezuela. Most contributions provide insights into disciplinary contexts (arts and humanities, aviation, chemistry, engineering, medicine), while some address issues of broader relevance.

The introductory chapter, co-authored by the editors, contextualises recent developments in ESP against the backdrop of an increase in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programmes in higher education and a growing need for quality language learning for specific professional and academic purposes. Conceptual and terminological clarifications are supported by multiple references to literature in the field. An overview of changing trends in ESP methodology is followed by a chapter-by-chapter synopsis. Apart from the first chapter, there are eighteen contributions, grouped into four parts: “Materials Design and Development in ESP”, “ESP Teacher Development”, “Curricular Issues in ESP”, and “ESP, CLIL and EMI”. This thematic structuring serves organizational purposes; however, the picture is more complex. As expected, most chapters address issues that are relevant to more than one area, thus illustrating the interconnectivity of linguistic, thematic and methodological dimensions in ESP. Several studies also operationalise the editors’ intention of exemplifying both methodological approaches in ESP research and innovative educational strategies in ESP. In this review I will try to integrate reference to the above key areas with other aspects identified as common denominators among the various contributions.

An important dimension in ESP, *Materials development and course design*, represents the main focus in the first four chapters, each of them illustrating a different research methodology and a different approach to educational environment specificity. Baştürkmen and Bocanegra-Valle investigate materials design processes in two Spanish universities by exploring ESP teachers’ explicit and implicit beliefs underlying materials selection and development. Interview data are triangulated with analysis and discussion of ESP materials designed by the respondents. Stoller and Robinson focus on discipline-related learner needs. The authors report on the methodological approaches developed for an online course and illustrate strategies for helping students to improve writing skills, focusing on genres relevant to their domain (chemistry).

Quero and Coxhead’s case study illustrates the use of multiple corpora for selecting high frequency medical vocabulary for inclusion in an ESP course for medical students in Spanish-medium universities in Venezuela. The authors have been guided in their research and materials design project by the students’ needs in this academic environment, where they share the same first language with their tutors, need reading comprehension proficiency, but do not need to be able to speak English. Corpus-based research is present also in Farhady, Tavassoli, and Haghghi Irani’s study. They used corpus linguistics to analyse a corpus of 150 million words from authentic materials for refining a taxonomy of disciplines.

Their study revealed the existence of six macro-disciplines with 29 micro-disciplines and 399 university majors. Building on these findings, they have identified discipline-related grammar structures for inclusion in specific ESP/EAP courses.

Despite the evident diversity in these four studies, they all reflect innovative research endeavours of experienced practitioners interested in developing effective ESP materials in response to learner needs identified in certain geolinguistic regions and disciplinary fields.

Bringing in teachers' and students' voices regarding the educational dimension of ESP could be seen as a further dimension shared by several chapters, e.g. Baştürkmen and Bocanegra-Valle elicit not only the teachers' views on ESP materials design but also teaching and learning related values. Mede, Koparan, and Atay compare the perceptions of three categories of stakeholders (students, teachers and graduates) regarding an ESP programme aimed at developing professional communication skills for civil aviation cabin services.

Çelik, Stavicka, and Odina explore ESP teachers' views on challenges encountered and solutions adopted in two countries: Turkey and Latvia. This allows them to compare factors influencing ESP teaching and to broaden the discussion beyond the teachers' immediate teaching/learning environment. A further example is Mačianskienė and Bijeikienė's complex survey of students' and teachers' perceptions of teaching/learning effectiveness for confident communication at future work places.

This thread, identified in chapters belonging to different sections of the book, appears to be a stronger common denominator than the overall thematic umbrella for Part III, only tangentially mentioned in the chapters belonging to that section.

Teacher development is one of the main thematic areas addressed in this volume. It is present especially in the chapters included in Part II of the book. Norton's contribution illustrates an integrated, collaborative teaching and teacher development approach (originating from Japan), operationalised through lesson study groups, peer observations, co-operation between ESP teachers and subject teachers. The author underlines the importance of a positive, supportive institutional culture for the success of this approach. Lehtonen's chapter builds on the author's practitioner research at a language centre in Finland. She explains how a combination of teaching experience, systematic self-observation and self-reflection can contribute to personal and professional growth. The added value of this practice-based research consisted also in 'discovering' new aspects of ESP, to the benefit of her teaching activity, as facilitator of student learning. Like Norton and Stewart in their respective chapters, Lehtonen also stresses the importance of a "supportive community" for carrying out research at the work place.

Stewart's chapter exemplifies the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration through team teaching, for ESP practitioners' professional development and their status consolidation within the university community. As with other contributions to this volume, also this one builds on insights derived from years of personal

experience in the field. A further example of collaborative development is illustrated in Fujimoto-Adamson and Adamson's study, an outcome of their research and exploratory teaching activity in two Japanese academic contexts. They resort to reflections on teaching practices and collaborative autoethnography, with sound explanations of their methodological options.

Similar to the above studies, Alonso-Belmonte and Fernández-Agüero also address ESP teacher development. They derive insights from classroom-based research and a survey regarding critical thinking skills included in comprehension tasks, as explained by experienced language teachers working in bilingual schools in Madrid. In this complex study, the authors used quantitative analysis for identifying good practice and areas for improvement. Their conclusions underline the importance of integrating the cognition dimension in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and ESP teacher education, to the benefit of both teachers and learners. This conclusion is reinforced by Staub in his chapter dedicated to Quality Assurance, where he highlights the interdependence between EAP programme quality in EMI universities and ongoing professional development for EAP professionals.

Innovative methodological approaches in ESP education is an over-arching theme present in several chapters, alongside or in close interaction with other themes. Stoller and Robinson, for instance, exemplify innovative ESP teaching practices, in response to student and discipline-specific needs. They contextualise and adapt a genre-based approach for developing writing skills in chemistry students, with a focus on journal articles, conference abstracts, posters, research proposals.

Two chapters (Mede, Koparan, & Atay, and Er & Kırkgöz) illustrate innovative teaching approaches and curriculum design for specific fields in two Turkish academic settings ("Civil aviation cabin services" in the former, and "Aviation English for cadets" in the latter). Both author teams underline the vital importance of high-level mastery of English for flight safety. Fujimoto-Adamson and Adamson's complex study also qualifies for inclusion under this topic. Their focus on *hybrid practices*, with examples of accommodating *bilingual language practices* in an EMI setting and exploration of translanguaging effects on student learning can be inspirational for further studies in this area.

Mačianskienė and Bijeikienė's case study, embedded in a Lithuanian academic context, illustrates complex methodological approaches for carrying out the research (mixed methods) and for fostering active learning in ESP classes. They go full circle, from needs analysis to post-teaching and assessment survey for checking the validity of the methodological approaches opted for. Alonso-Belmonte and Fernández-Agüero discuss pedagogical issues from multiple perspectives in a CLIL environment. As mentioned above, they focus on the need for developing higher order thinking skills in learners and ensuring that teaching practice and materials, in general, and comprehension tasks, in particular, serve this purpose.

Interdependencies among ESP, EAP, and EMI are present throughout the volume, and as mentioned also in Kirkgöz and Dikilitaş' opening chapter, the editors' and contributors' approach is in line with Airey's (2016) concept of an all-embracing continuum. For the purpose of this review, however, I will try to group the studies according to three sub-themes: *ESP and EAP*, *ESP and EMI*, and finally, *EAP and EMI*.

ESP and EAP. Examples of materials design and teaching approaches for developing specific academic competences are included in both Stoller and Robinson's study and in Farhady, Tavassoli, and Haghghi Irani's study. Yaylı and Canagarajah's chapter goes a step further in the direction of EAP, even English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP). Their research explores genre related writing processes, comparing the perceptions of Turkish arts scholars with those of Turkish science scholars, regarding research articles (RA) introduction drafting, manuscript revision and RA reviewing for national and international journals. Starting from the Creating a Research Space (CARS) model, the authors carry out qualitative research through semi-structured interviews with experienced scholars (two in science and two in arts), resulting in multilayered comparisons, with a view to deriving insights for ESP teaching. Even if the ESP component is tangentially mentioned in this study, the research could be best ascribed to the domain of EAP.

ESP and EMI. Studies building on the interaction between ESP and EMI, or ESP for EMI, include Fujimoto-Adamson and Adamson's collaborative autoethnography, Çelik, Stavicka, and Odina's comparison of ESP teaching in EMI settings in two country contexts, as well as Soruç, Dinler, and Griffiths's research into listening comprehension strategies employed by EMI students in Turkey. Quantitative analysis is complemented by qualitative analysis of strategies used in a full EMI, or partial EMI context, with interesting comparisons regarding gender-related preferences. With the increased merging of ESP and EMI tasks in universities engaged in internationalization, there is also a continuous rethinking of roles for academics participating in ESP and EMI processes. In her chapter, Dearden explores challenges brought about by role changes experienced by EMI academics and English language specialists. She underlines that Higher Education institutions need to be aware of the multi-faceted realities involved in *going EMI* and provide support to both subject teachers and language specialists for ensuring a successful transition to English-medium instruction. Like other authors in this volume, Dearden concludes that collaboration between the two categories of academics would be mutually beneficial for them and the quality of EMI.

EAP and EMI. O'Dwyer and Atlı raise similar concerns regarding the introduction of EMI in the Turkish academic environment. They discuss the challenges faced by students and lecturers, and wonder to what extent the educational system in a non-Anglophone country such as Turkey provides second language learners and university lecturers with the necessary EAP competences for operating confidently in an EMI context.

In the concluding chapter, Staub stresses the importance of ensuring the quality of EAP programmes in an EMI context and explains how Quality Assurance frameworks developed by organisations, such as the international association Eaquals, can facilitate the purposeful integration of quality oriented components in the planning, delivery and assessment of EAP programmes. He illustrates how this can be achieved on the example of the Quality Assurance framework developed by the US-based Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA). With the growing relevance of quality oriented approaches in ESP and EAP, it would have been beneficial to include more references both to the Quality Assurance frameworks mentioned and to further publications in this field.

The contributions reunited in this volume are representative of a variety of academic settings and, thus, constitute a clear strength of the book, even if there are slight imbalances among the chapters and a number of typos need revising. Content-wise, an important trait, noticeable throughout the volume, is cross-referencing among chapters. Through the topicality of the themes addressed and the complementarity of aspects analysed from multiple perspectives, *Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education* is highly relevant to ESP, EAP, CLIL practitioners, curriculum and materials designers, and to decision makers at various levels in institutional or national education systems. It is inspirational not only for ESP or EMI academics, but also for applied linguists or other professionals involved in bi-/multilingual education.

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Reviewed by **LAURA-MIHAELA MURESAN**

Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication
Bucharest University of Economic Studies
Romania
laura.muresan@rei.ase.ro

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