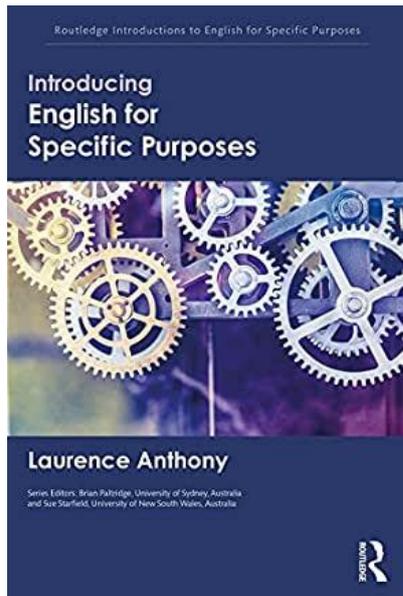


BOOK REVIEW



INTRODUCING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: A MANUAL FOR EXPERIENCED AND NOVICE ESP INSTRUCTORS

Laurence Anthony. INTRODUCING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (2018), London/New York: Routledge. 210 pp., ISBN-978-1-138-93664-2 (PBK).

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Introducing English for Specific Purposes by Anthony Laurence, a Professor in the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Waseda University, Japan, is a practical manual for graduate and undergraduate students, experienced teachers and researchers, whose interests lie in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). The book opens with an introduction, which outlines the main issues and assumptions of the book, gives an overview of its content, and explains how it should be used. The main part of the book is divided into three sections: (i) *Contextualising ESP*, which describes the background to ESP as a field of enquiry; (ii) *Understanding the four pillars of ESP*, which explains the theories and practices that form the basis of the four key *pillars* of ESP; and (iii) *Applying ESP in real-world settings*, which first defines ways to implement ESP, then discusses the main challenges that instructors have to deal with while teaching ESP and, finally, outlines the future direction of the field.

The sections are further divided into ten chapters in total. They all have the same structure and exhibit the same features: each chapter is initiated with a brief statement describing the relevance of the topic to be addressed, then it contains a short review of what will be covered, and, lastly, it offers an explanation of what

should have been learned by the end of the chapter; “Then, in the body of the chapter, the main topic is discussed with reference to past and present theories and best practices in the field” (p. 3).

Chapter 1 focuses on the concept of ESP, which is defined as:

[...] an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners, focuses on the necessary language, genres, and skills to address these needs, and assists learners in meeting these needs through the use of general and/or discipline-specific teaching materials and methods. (pp. 10-11)

On the basis of this definition Anthony indicates two major branches of ESP: English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational Purposes. Further, he describes the main features of ESP and tries to make clear how ESP differs from other approaches complementing or competing with ESP language teaching and learning like Task-Based Language Teaching, Problem-Based Learning or Content-Based Instruction. ESP is generally an eclectic approach that incorporates elements from various other approaches. It “takes the most useful, successful, and valid ideas from other theories and practices, combining them into a consistent whole” (p. 9). As Anthony further observes, its uniqueness lies in “commitment to learner-centeredness, a close connection with specialist subjects, and a focus on collaboration in both planning and teaching” (p. 9). This part of the book gives a very good overview of similarities and differences between ESP and many other approaches to learning and teaching English as a second or foreign language with general purposes. The author ends the chapter with a critical review of the two well-known definitions of ESP, put forward by Strevens (1988) and by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), in order to address some of the contentious issues and clear up some of the confusion caused by the approaches under analysis.

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The second chapter deals with the role and status of English as a lingua franca in the globalized world. Anthony specifies the reasons why English has developed into a dominant language in many sectors such as industry, modern technology, commerce or the academic context. Next, the author notes “how ESP courses and programs are usually positioned within industry and academia” (p. 27). Finally, he outlines how the increasing role of English affects workplace practices and the teaching and learning process as well as research.

In the following chapter, the author focuses on the most important aspects of any ESP course, the so called four *pillars* of the ESP approach; that is to say, needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation. After discussing these pillar components briefly, he tries to answer the question of how “the building of these pillars will be influenced by the experiences and perceptions of learners, instructors, and administrators” (p. 50). The chapter ends with reflections on who should teach ESP within this framework. This third chapter ends the first section of the book by providing the reader with a general overview of the main elements of an ESP course.

The four chapters in Section 2 delve into the four *pillars* of the ESP approach. Identifying needs in the design of ESP courses and programs is the subject of Chapter 4, the first chapter of this section. It begins with an explanation of what needs analysis is. Anthony understands needs analysis after Brown (2016: 4) as “the systematic collection and analysis of all information used for defining and validating a defensible curriculum”. Next, the author discusses the four major views of needs: *the diagnostic view*, *discrepancy view*, *democratic view*, and *analytic view*. A practical and timely contribution of this chapter is the introduction of methods to conduct both a large-scale, detailed needs analysis and a smaller scale needs analysis. Especially helpful for novice teachers is the table with sample questions that different stakeholder groups need to be asked in order to conduct large-scale needs analyses (see Table 4.1 on pages 69-70). At the end of the chapter, Anthony refers to the ways that a needs analysis can be evaluated, and discusses the insufficiency of using a survey or an interview as the only data-collection instruments for conducting a full needs analysis.

Chapter 5 deals with “different aspects of deciding and sequencing learning objectives” (p. 77). Whereas General English classes are built mostly around grammar rules and vocabulary lists, the learning objectives of ESP “are expressed in ways that are directly linked with the results of a needs analysis and are built on a number of important, theoretical-grounded principles” (p. 78). The foundations for deciding learning objectives are: register analysis, rhetorical (discourse) analysis, genre analysis, learning and metacognitive skills. Hereafter, the author concentrates on the steps to be taken to achieve these goals, their sequences and duration. The chapter ends with reflections about “the subject knowledge problem that exists in many ESP classrooms” (p. 77) and how it should be overcome.

The next chapter focuses first on the role of materials, offering a guideline for their evaluation, and then on methods in ESP didactics. Before starting a course, teachers have to decide about the materials that they are going to implement in their courses. Materials can be adopted, adapted or created from scratch. The volume gives an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of all these options. The role of technologies (Internet included) when creating or adapting course materials is highlighted and supported as it facilitates access to a huge range of authentic samples of text, image, audio and video. Since the materials chosen affect the teaching methods, in the further part of Chapter 6 Anthony reviews “a range of traditional and novel teaching methods [for] [...] homogenous groups with a narrow and clearly defined goal, or heterogeneous groups with broad, less well-defined goals” (p. 97). As a conclusion he indicates that because of the dynamics of the ESP classroom the most suitable approach to ESP teaching and learning is usually an eclectic approach. Subsequently, the author explains “how corpus software tools can facilitate teaching and learning in the ESP classroom” (p. 97). At the end of the chapter the readers can find useful information about the role of authenticity in materials and methods design. He claims the superiority of

authentic materials over the adapted or adopted materials but also points to problems which are sometimes caused by authentic materials themselves.

Chapter 7, the last chapter of Section 2, begins with an explanation of an end of term test, assessment and evaluation. Then, it focuses on interpreting the results from evaluations. Next, the main features of an effective evaluation measure are explained and how they can be included in the procedures of a single teacher is discussed. In what follows, Anthony focuses on how to evaluate learners, instructors, courses and programs, and puts forward “some of the challenges that are often faced when doing an evaluation” (p. 122). The final issue that is addressed in this chapter is the problem of deception in evaluation.

Section 3, *Applying ESP in real-world settings*, starts with Chapter 8, which deals with implementing ESP in ideal, opportunistic, and just-in-time settings. Anthony describes how the principles of an ESP course can be implemented in three different settings, and outlines their strengths and weaknesses. Next, he explains “how these settings can greatly affect the responsibilities of ESP instructors and the work they need to do” (p. 148). At the end of the chapter, we find reflections about whether an ESP course should meet the very specific, *narrow-angled* needs of individual learners, or the *wide-angled* needs of a broad range of learners.

Chapter 9 opens with an explanation of the issues that might affect needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation procedures. These are challenges that the ESP teacher and program designer often face. The author groups and describes them briefly, then sketches situations in which they might occur, and finally suggests some strategies that can help mitigate these challenges. Then, Anthony discusses the contentious issue of managing change in ESP and provides a set of guidelines.

The last chapter describes how ESP might develop in the future. It gives a brief overview on possible opportunities and problems related to ESP from four different perspectives: context, curriculum design, classroom practices, and research into ESP. The chapter ends with some critical reflection of the ESP movement. A references and an index chapter complete the volume.

Introducing English for Specific Purposes by Anthony Laurence provides an effective theoretical and practical guide for those interested in ESP pedagogy. The great advantage that this book offers is its applied dimension. It provides readers with practical examples and ways of applying the core theories and practices of ESP and at the same time it discusses related crucial issues. The strong points of the book are also the clearly defined goals of each chapter and its reader-friendly structure. Each chapter contains opening reflections that help the reader orient themselves in regard to the topic, and closing reflections which sum up the issues described in the chapter. Also, the book is written in a clear and comprehensive way. I recommend it to both graduate and advanced undergraduate ESP students, as well as to novice and experienced teachers of English for Specific and Occupational Purposes because it covers a wide range of topics which are essential

in the field. Experienced teachers, however, might find that some of the problems are discussed too briefly, so they might need to reach for additional literature. In conclusion, *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* is a valuable and recommendable book for practitioners and theorists interested in ESP.

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