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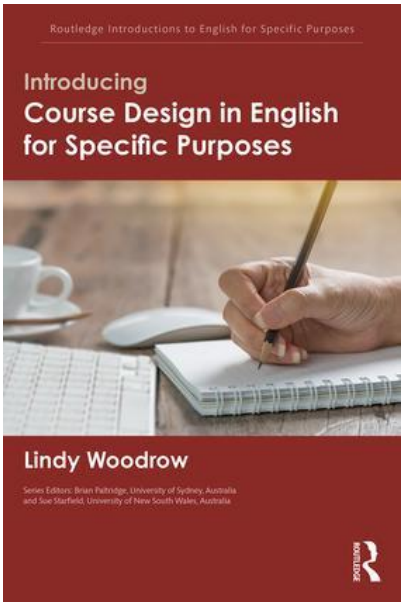
BOOK REVIEW



ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON COURSE DESIGN

Lindy Woodrow. INTRODUCING COURSE DESIGN IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (2018), London/New York: Routledge. 267 pp., ISBN-978-1-138-10065-7 (HBK), ISBN 978-1-138-10067-1 (PBK), ISBN-978-1-315-14327-9 (EBK).

The knowledge of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is nowadays considered to be almost an obligatory requirement for entrance into a multilingual professional environment, which affects the demand for ESP courses. Foreign language teachers still have many doubts about how to design efficient, need-tailored and learner-oriented ESP courses. The source of these uncertainties is the lack of a practical framework for class design which could offer a background for developing courses, as well as the inability to respond to the needs and motivations of diverse learners. Nonetheless, the field of course design has been considered to be the most prominent area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching since the early 1960s (Laurence, 2018; Paltridge & Starfield, 2012; Upton, 2012). Despite the fact that formulating one universal design for ESP courses is not possible due to variable characteristics of individuals participating in such courses, Lindy Woodrow has taken on a very ambitious task of creating an introduction to the theory and practice of ESP course design based on authentic examples of various courses, and reflecting in detail the process of course development from needs analysis to final assessment. Woodrow clearly highlights that the aim of the book is "to enable readers to have a good understanding of ESP and be able to design an ESP course. This is achieved by using a mixture of theory, research, reflection, tasks and resources" (p. 1).

Designed as a combination of theory and practice, *Introducing Course Design in English for Specific Purposes* is an essential guidebook for navigating an interdisciplinary approach to designing courses on language for specific purposes. The book consists of an introduction, main body, appendix, glossary and index. The main body is divided into three parts: "Essential aspects of English for specific purposes", "Approaches to ESP course design", and "Examples of authentic ESP courses". A common thread throughout the book is that the second and third sections in each chapter include reflections, tasks and recommendations for further readings and resources.

The book begins with a sound introduction that clearly sets out its structure and contents and defines the target audience, thus allowing the reader to identify the most relevant sections for their own purposes.

The first part comprises eight chapters and discusses the main issues regarding ESP, creating a theoretical background for questions that are further thematised in the book.

The opening chapter provides a concise overview of the main characteristics, classifications and types of ESP, starting with a reflection on the complex nature of ESP and the multitude of its definitions. Through a comparison with English for General Purposes (EGP), the main features of ESP are highlighted in an accessible and concise way. Further, the brief history and role of ESP are presented. Worth mentioning is a very transparent table with a literature review offering a division of the timeline of ESP into the most characteristic periods (see Table 1.2, p. 12). The chapter closes with a description of ESP types by building a foundation for designing courses, which is further explored in the next two chapters. In the second chapter, the idea of needs analysis in combination with a subsequent course design is explained and discussed. This part contains a reflection on the definition of needs analysis, methodology for collecting the necessary data, its setting and the possibilities of incorporating the identified needs into the course design. The steps of the procedure are clearly depicted in Figure 2.5 (p. 29). The third chapter is devoted to the topic of language skills in designing courses for ESP. Primarily, the role of language and grammar in ESP course design is examined, and writing, reading, listening and speaking are presented as aspects included in many ESP courses. The area of vocabulary is thematised in the fourth chapter of this section. It starts with suggestions for the division of ESP vocabulary into technical, semi-technical and general categories, and is completed with a transparent example of such categories in the fields of law, telecommunications, linguistics, and general academic. Furthermore, the author explores the topic of multi-word units and collocations. In the closing section of this chapter, Woodrow raises the issue of teachers' knowledge of specific vocabulary, supporting the view of Hutchinson and Waters (1987) that subject specialists are responsible for teaching technical vocabulary, whereas ESP practitioners should "ensure that students can operate in the target communicative situations" (p. 46). Simultaneously, the author discusses and recommends possible sources of ESP vocabulary, from specialist lists to

glossaries and subject dictionaries. Finally, Woodrow focuses on teaching vocabulary and its place in the syllabus design process. The next chapter deals with pedagogical issues of ESP teaching. Here, Woodrow discusses the qualities of ESP learners as opposed to EGP learners, organisation of the classroom, teaching methodology and roles of ESP practitioners. Among the many roles of ESP teachers, special attention is given to the ESP teacher as course designer (p. 55). The chapter closes with a summary of teacher-competency statements for the particular case of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) that are endorsed with a practical meaning for ESP teaching. In the sixth chapter, ESP is presented from the learner's perspective. Beginning with general features of ESP learning, Woodrow highlights the differences between ESP and EFL learners. Later on, a very informative overview of ESP course types is provided. The chapter closes with a discussion of the role of the learner in ESP. Technology in ESP is addressed in the seventh chapter. Among others, the technologies presented include new channels of communication (email, blogs, Twitter, etc.), course management, and assessment strategies. The major focus of the last chapter in this first part has been placed upon the assessment and evaluation of the course design. First, reasons and purposes for the assessment of ESP course design are thematised; then, common types of assessment in ESP (diagnostic test, placement tests, entry tests, exit tests) are described. Finally, Woodrow analyses the methodology of assessment and feedback strategies.

In sum, the first part of this volume raises the main issues of ESP in a very concise way and characterises the participants of the didactic model (that is, teachers and learners) with their needs, motivations and aims. Additionally, Woodrow completes each chapter with clear well-organised tables and figures summarising the presented content and also recommendations for further reading, including recent studies.

The second part of the book is devoted to the presentation of major theoretical approaches to ESP course design and acts as a bridge between the theoretical first section and the empirical third section. It is made up of seven chapters.

In the first chapter of this part (chapter nine), the author focuses on genre. Referring to Swales's (1990) definition of genre, the idea of discourse communities in ESP course design is discussed. As a continuation of the reflection on genre, Woodrow describes possible methods of investigating genres and incorporating the results of the investigations into course design. Discourse analysis, considered by the author as a "central element of ESP course" that provides all the same "deep insights into the demands of the target communicative situations in ESP" (p. 110), is the subject of the next chapter. In chapter ten, Woodrow analyses discourse in relation to grammar, pragmatics and intercultural rhetoric, presenting a wide range of approaches to researching discourse. Further on, the author discusses the implementation of discourse analysis into course design and its results. In the eleventh chapter, the author provides information about the study and course

design tool that has recently been gaining popularity – that is, corpora. The chapter delivers an introduction on different types of corpora and their functions in EFL teaching. Furthermore, the author highlights the potential of corpora for planning and designing the ESP course. The twelfth chapter addresses the two main ESP teaching methodologies: problem-based learning (PBL) and case-study approach (CSA). After explaining the idea of PBL, the author explores the stages of PBL sessions, considering their advantages and disadvantages. Similarly, Woodrow introduces the basics of CSA, including the stages and possible benefits and drawbacks of the application of case-study methods in the ESP classroom. Whereas in the twelfth chapter there are direct references to Business English and English for Medicine, in the next chapter the focus is on English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Here, different types of EAP and their specificities are discussed. Moreover, the chapter concentrates on the principles of context-informed approaches to EAP, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and content-based instruction (CBI). Also, Woodrow elaborates on the possibilities of cooperation with subject specialists within the ESP class, differentiating between cooperation, collaboration and team-teaching. To complete this reflection, the author explores the role of the learner as researcher within the academic-literacies approach. Chapter fourteen examines the importance of materials in ESP teaching and their preparation. The author draws attention to the role of authentic materials in the ESP classroom; starting with different types of authentic materials, their selection, and employability, Woodrow moves on to guidelines for adapting them to the needs of ESP. The next issue raised in this chapter is choosing an adequate course book. The last chapter in this second part is devoted to the topic of resources, presenting a diverse spectrum of online recommendations that can be useful for ESP teachers (examples of needs analysis, word lists, dictionaries and corpora for different fields of ESP, websites with podcasts, links to blog-writing software and e-readings). It also contains a comprehensive list of academic journals for ESP, as well as ESP organisations worldwide. Worth mentioning are also exemplary sources for problem-based learning and case studies.

As opposed to part one, this second part has a more practical scope and is more oriented towards approaches that are applicable to the process of ESP course design, delivering a valuable catalogue of ideas for possible resources that can be used in the classroom.

The third and last part contains eight authentic programmes designed by different authors (renowned researchers and practitioners) worldwide. The collected ESP courses address different settings, approaches and fields. The description of the courses is preceded by a short introduction characterising the field, target group, methodology and approach applied in each course. Each chapter is organised in a similar way and contains detailed information about participants, course length, course aims, syllabus list, assessment, examples of tasks and case studies. All of them are followed by a list of recommended readings.

The first course developed by Catherine Nickerson is a research-based course conveying language at the workplace. In the next chapter, the concept of a course for English for cross-cultural nursing, designed by Susan Bosher, is presented. English for lawyers is an example of a task-based course written by Jill Northcott. The third course was designed by Joan Cutting as a part of a European project to provide employment opportunities for young graduates in an airport setting. The fourth chapter depicts a specific EAP course designed by Woodrow herself that was the result of a research project identifying the needs of international students at an Australian university. In the following chapter, Brian Paltridge's concept for an EAP course that targets writing for publication is outlined. Maggie Charles is the author of the next course programme, which aims to incorporate corpora as support for developing writing in ESP. The last course by Zuocheng Zhang adopts a text- and content-based approach to convey strategies of international business communication in English.

A definite advantage of the volume is that its transparent structure makes it easy to read and navigate for less experienced readers – for example students or teachers who are taking their first steps in the realm of ESP. Also, the idea of dividing the theory and practice parts seems to be well thought out and logical. The great advantage of this volume is its practicability and interdisciplinary nature (as it mentions different fields of ESP). The issues raised are not only analysed theoretically, but the publication is also a precious source of multiple suggestions and guidelines for practitioners in order to understand the pedagogical principles proposed by scholars, practitioners and educators.

In addition, an undeniable advantage of the book is that each chapter is followed by recommendations for further reading, including recent studies. Moreover, comprehension of each chapter is fostered by tasks employing the presented theoretical content in practice to activate the critical thinking process.

Almost every chapter includes an illustration or table summarising its content, which increases clarity and facilitates understanding for those who are interested in the topic. The last section, which offers a range of authentic examples of course designs, is very rare in the subject literature and thus is extremely valuable.

However, there are also some minor drawbacks I would like to note; namely, some of the recommended links that spread throughout the book are no longer available, and the glossary added at the very end of the volume (p. 256-261) does not cover all of the interesting phenomena discussed by the author in the book, which makes its aim unclear. In my view, the glossary may not be useful for beginner ESP practitioners, as it is incomplete.

Without any doubt, the book meets the reader's expectations and fills an existing gap in ESP literature, providing necessary support for those who are starting their work as ESP teachers as well as those who already have experience in the field and would like to refresh or extend their knowledge on ESP course design.

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