

# What ESP Is and Can Be: An Introduction

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*General (language for no purpose) courses at any proficiency level almost always teach too much, e.g., vocabulary, skills, registers or styles some learners do not need, and too little, e.g., omitting lexis and genres that they do. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, it is more defensible to view every course as involving specific purposes. . . . (Long, 2005, p. 19)*

Ideally, as Michael Long suggests, English, or any language, is taught with specific purposes explicitly in mind. The reality, of course, is that the purposes served in language instruction are not always those of the language learners, so the instruction may look to learners like “language for no purpose,” to borrow Long’s words, or more troubling, like language for other people’s purposes (i.e., individuals or even national entities in positions of power; see Morgan & Fleming, this volume). Commitment to the goal of providing language instruction that addresses students’ own specific language learning purposes is what those who take an English for Specific Purposes (ESP)<sup>1</sup> approach see as distinguishing it from other approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT) (Hyland, 2002). However, while the

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<sup>1</sup>We should note that the specific-purposes approach is not exclusive to the teaching of English; it can be used to teach any language, hence the broader term *Language for Specific Purposes (LSP)* also exists. Since this volume focuses primarily on the teaching of English, the term *ESP* will be used throughout.

goal of ESP—specific-learner-centered language instruction—may appear straightforward enough, how best to meet the goal may be less obvious. At the very least, the ESP approach requires a willingness on the part of the language educator to enter (not unlike ESP students themselves) as a stranger into strange domains—academic and occupational areas that may feel quite unfamiliar—and to engage in a degree of reflection that attempts to sort out the extent to which learners' purposes are actually served when the language practices of any target discourse community are taught (Belcher, 2006). For many involved in ESP, these intellectual and, some would add, ethical challenges (Hyland, 2006; Pennycook, 1997) are among the main reasons why they find ESP exciting, intellectually stimulating, and professionally and personally gratifying.

One gets a sense of the enormous range of domains that ESP specialists enter into by noting just some of the seemingly endless acronyms generated by the various branches of ESP. There are, and no doubt will be, as many types of ESP as there are specific learner needs and target communities that learners wish to thrive in. Perhaps the best known of these (especially among language educators who are themselves most often situated in academia) is EAP, or English for Academic Purposes, tailored to the needs of learners at various, usually higher, educational levels (see Hyland, 2006, for an excellent overview of EAP issues and practices). Less well known (to many academics) and potentially more diversified, given the breadth and variety of the worlds of work, is EOP, or English for Occupational Purposes. The fastest growing branches of EOP are those associated with professions that are themselves constantly expanding and generating offshoots, such as EBP, English for Business Purposes; ELP, English for Legal Purposes; and EMP, English for Medical Purposes. There are also numerous other less well known but equally intriguing varieties of EOP, such as English for Air Traffic Controllers, English for Tourist Guides, English for Horse Breeders, and English for Brewers.<sup>2</sup> The ESP picture is further complicated by numerous hybrid permutations of EOP and EAP, combining elements of both, such as EAMP, English for Academic Medical Purposes (for health science students); EABP, English for Academic Business Purposes (for students majoring in business), and EALP, English for Academic Legal Purposes (for law students). EAP, EOP, and still further combinations of both are not the whole story either, as socially conscious ESP specialists have begun to consider highly specialized sociocultural purposes too (hence, English for Socio-

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<sup>2</sup>For more extensive lists of ESP varieties see Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998), Hutchinson & Waters (1987), and Orr (2002).

cultural Purposes, or ESCP; see Master, 2000, and de Silva Joyce & Hood, this volume) by addressing such needs as those of language and literacy learners who are incarcerated, coping with physical disabilities, or seeking citizenship (Belcher, 2004, 2006; Morgan & Fleming, this volume). What Hyland (2006) has recently observed of EAP is arguably also an apt descriptor of ESP in general: its motivation to help those especially disadvantaged by their lack of language needed for the situations they find themselves in, hope to enter, or eventually rise above.

This commitment to the purposes of the learners themselves is, to reiterate, what unites all the various branches of ESP. What the commitment entails is (1) first and foremost (before, during, and even after instruction), finding out what learners' needs are, then (2) developing or adapting materials and methods to enable needs-responsive instruction while concurrently (3) acquiring the expertise to function as needs-knowledgeable instructors (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Robinson, 1991).

## Needs First

As a learner needs-based approach, ESP practitioners are, not surprisingly, particularly interested in the gap between learners' current and target competencies. This may at first sight not seem so different from the interests of many other language educators, even those teaching language for general—or in Long's terms, “no”—purposes. It is probably safe to say that most language instruction attempts to address learners' present needs, having gauged current proficiency levels (e.g., elementary, intermediate, advanced) with the help of test scores or educational background information. Less common outside of ESP, however, is a determination to identify and explicitly address specific **target** needs—that is, not the needs of generalized language learners but those of specific learners eager to join the “literacy clubs” (Smith, 1988) or ongoing conversations of target discourse communities, or what Ann Johns (this volume) refers to as the “target situation.” Far from assuming that they already know what their students at a certain proficiency level need, ESP specialists accept responsibility for finding out what their learners will likely need (and want) to be able to read, write, speak, and comprehend as listeners to achieve their goals.

Acceptance of this needs-identifying responsibility means that well before actual instruction begins, ESP course designers will have collected and examined data, usually in the form of sample texts and audio or video recordings, from the target community, often with guidance, via interviews, from community insiders (see Long, 2005, for much fuller discussion of needs analy-

sis than possible here). Informed by recent developments in genre theory (Hyland, 2004; Paltridge, 2001; Swales, 1990, 2004), ESP specialists proceed with discourse-sample analysis, by considering, ideally, both macro- (rhetorical, whole-text) and micro- (lexicogrammatical) level characteristics of the written and spoken genres (i.e., routine communicative events) represented, such as memos, conference presentations, progress reports, job interviews, or whatever else seems salient. Of interest will be not just these genres in isolation, but the contexts in which they function and interact with other genres: how one genre responds to others (intertextuality or interdiscursivity), such as application letters in response to job ads, and how they, in turn, form large community-specific genre colonies or networks (Bhatia, 2004, this volume; Cheng & Mok, 2008). Attention is also ideally given to how target genres vary within and across communities, how they allow room for personal agency or “voice,” as well as to how they change over time. Rapidly evolving cyber genres like videoconferences, blogs, and email as used in specific communities are conspicuous examples of the dynamism and variability of genres, as new media and rhetorical situations develop, that ESP needs analysts need to be mindful of (see Nickerson & Planken, this volume).

While advances in technology, with resulting increased instability and proliferation of genres, may make the aims of ESP needs analysis seem like a moving target (metaphorically and actually), technology now also offers the means of making such assessments easier, more efficient, and more thoroughly empirical, and therefore less dependent on analyst intuition about specific registers (i.e., the linguistic features characteristic of genres in specific domains; see de Silva Joyce & Hood, this volume). Corpus linguistics, or computer-assisted collection and analysis of massive amounts of language data, has given ESP specialists access to mega-databanks of authentic spoken and written discourse (for a broader overview of what corpora can offer ESP, see Gavioli, 2005). Probably the best known, and certainly the largest, of these is the more than 500 million word (and still growing) Bank of English, with samples of written and spoken English representing a huge range of sources, including newspapers, textbooks, websites, television and radio broadcasts, meetings, and conversations (see, for example, [www.titania.bham.ac.uk](http://www.titania.bham.ac.uk)). Of increasing interest to many in ESP, as a result of the global spread and use of English, is the new corpus VOICE, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English ([www.univie.ac.at/voice/index.php](http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/index.php)), focusing exclusively on spoken English as a Lingua Franca (or ELF, English as used by speakers whose first language is not English, such as Korean and

German business associates) (see Planken & Nickerson on BELF, Business English as a Lingua Franca, this volume). A somewhat different perspective on the global use of English is offered by ICE (International Corpus of English, see [www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice)), with both written and spoken material representing a growing number of national and regional varieties of English. Another more specialized corpus, especially useful for EAP, is MICASE, the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English ([www.hti.umich.edu/m/micase](http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/micase)), with transcriptions and sound files of higher education speech events like dissertation defenses, large and small class lectures, seminar discussions, student advising sessions, and service encounters.

With the help of relatively accessible concordancing software, such as MonoConc Pro and Wordsmith Tools (for extremely teacher-friendly concordancing assistance, see The Compleat Lexical Tutor at <http://132.208.224.131>), ESP specialists can now even compile and analyze their own small, specialized corpora of expert and learner texts, and thus determine the distribution of specific lexical and grammatical features within and across texts (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007; Reppen, 2001). Frequency data obtained with such software also make it possible to identify differences (and parallels) between domain-specific genres and more everyday language use through comparison of self-compiled corpora with data from existing large general corpora such as the Bank of English (Flowerdew, 2005; Gavioli, 2005). Even ESP students themselves, when trained in corpus tool use, can contribute to needs analysis by mapping the distance between their own and their target community's communicative performances (see Lee & Swales, 2006). As Lee and Swales remark, such tools have the added benefit of empowering learners to determine their own target needs, or goals, without reliance on "native speaker" (or even teacher) judgments of appropriateness.

Other recent developments in both qualitative and quantitative data collection have greatly increased the ability of ESP specialists to collect both "subjective" and "objective" needs data, or newcomer perceptions and old-timer expectations (Hyland, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991).<sup>3</sup> Scientific survey methods, for example, can tap into the varied, not-infrequently conflicting

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<sup>3</sup>Long (2005) urges us not to over-privilege learners, or "newcomers," as informants on present and, especially, future needs. Morgan and Fleming (this volume), however, worry that too often not enough attention is given to learner concerns. Both views serve to underscore the value of multiple perspectives for needs analysis (i.e., triangulation, or better yet, analytic induction, on which see Silverman, 2006), as any single perspective is inevitably partial.

perspectives of large numbers of stakeholders, as Chia, Johnson, Chia, and Olive (1999) found in their survey of more than 300 Taiwanese medical students' and their professors' differing views of the main English language competencies needed by the students. Still more fine-tuned target needs data can be collected through ethnographic methods, as Boshier & Smalkoski (2002) discovered in their on-site observation and interviews of faculty and immigrant students in a U.S. nursing program. Journal entries from the student nurses augmented the ethnographic needs assessment by opening a window on culture and gender-related issues and revealing a need for assertiveness training that might not have otherwise surfaced. Another ethnographic technique, prolonged participant engagement, which Jasso-Aguilar (1999) very actively accomplished by working alongside hotel housekeeper language learners, can provide a deeply emic (insider) perspective on the actual day-to-day language needs and desires of learners, and may uncover, as it did for Jasso-Aguilar, the limitations (and possible motivations) of top-down managerial views of what learners need. Analysis of ethnographic data itself can be greatly facilitated by concordancing technology. Concordanced transcriptions of recorded data from Shi, Corcos, & Storey's (2001) months-long study of Hong Kong hospital ward teaching sessions helped reveal to researchers the common topics, types of interactions, and interlocutor roles, but also the importance of bilingual competence, in colloquial Cantonese and technical English, for successful patient/student/preceptor communication.

As valuable as recent theoretical, technological, or methodological advancements have been for needs analysis, an equally if not more significant contribution to the efficacy of needs analysis is the seemingly simple realization that needs assessment is best when ongoing. Learners themselves, especially when already in the target setting, can provide crucial data on the effectiveness of concurrent ESP instruction and identify new target needs that emerge as their community immersion deepens. Even after an ESP course ends, there is good reason for needs analysis to continue. Eggly's (2002) use of extended post-course videotaping of international medical residents interacting with their patients in a U.S. clinic not only provided information on any additional individualized ESP support needed but, at the same time, served as a means of helping the residents monitor and consider how to address their own ongoing needs (see Hussin, 2002, p. 35, on developing a "reflective practice model").

If needs analysis is now seen as previously too narrowly procedurally conceived as a one-time-only, pre-instruction investigation, it is now also seen as having been too ideologically narrow (Benesch, 2001; Pennycook, 1997;

see also Basturkmen, 2006, on ESP's need for more widely encompassing social theory). Key to this critical-theory-informed reconceptualization is recognition that any target discourse community is situated in other, still larger socioeconomic and political realities, and any community member, or would-be member, holds numerous subject positions, as citizen/non-citizen, insured/uninsured, steadily employed/transiently employed, or minority/majority race/ethnic group member, etc. (Morgan & Fleming, this volume; Vandrick, forthcoming). Too narrowly defining the target discourse community or the goals of those on the periphery of it can lead to too pragmatically identifying learners' target needs as what is necessary for assimilation in and accommodation to an existing hierarchy, which in turn could limit future options (on the need for **critical** pragmatism, see Pennycook, 1997). In her own broadly conceived needs analysis of immigrant factory workers in Chicago, Garcia (2002) found that while they certainly needed language to successfully function in the workplace, they had other goals and interests that extended well beyond their immediate factory floor needs, such as learning to use computers.

Target discourse communities may themselves too narrowly define what they are, as, for instance, in the case of academic communities viewed by domain experts as places where students should cover a certain amount of subject-area material in a certain amount of time no matter what their educational/linguistic/cultural backgrounds. Re-visioning needs analysis as **rights** analysis, Benesch (2001) has argued, can enable ESP practitioners and their students to see target communities of practice as not solely defined by those in power, but as places where newcomers have rights too—to be included and accommodated—hence as interactive social systems that can, and should, change as new members join (see also Casanave, 2002). Cadman's (2002) redefinition of EAP as “English for academic possibilities” captures this broader way of defining any target discourse community and related “needs” of learners.

## Needs-Responsive Materials and Methods

It would make little sense to seek needs assessment data as input for ESP courses if those who develop and teach them were then to choose generic, ready-made commercial materials unresponsive to the specific target needs so carefully identified. In addition to the input that needs analysis provides for course design, another noteworthy advantage to performing it is that the very materials collected can also serve as authentic, needs-specific course materials and task stimuli. Hussin (2002) notes how effectively materials

“produced for purposes other than to teach language” (p. 27)—such as audiotaped phone messages, videotaped interactions, and written documents gathered on-site—can function as language teaching tools. Viewing needs analysis as ongoing, as recommended, has an added course materials benefit as well. Students’ written and spoken texts analyzed as an ESP course progresses, and any additional expert texts collected, can inform the design of “data-driven” materials, derived from instructor-compiled learner/expert corpora (T. Johns, 1994; T. Johns & King, 1991). Technology facilitates not just the archiving and analysis of such data, but also relatively easy creation of tailor-made materials (see Jabbour, 2001, for examples; Coxhead & Byrd, 2007, on “gap-maker” software) and direct, anytime/anyplace access for students.

While tailor-made ESP materials have clear advantages in terms of authenticity and specificity, discerning ESP practitioners can make effective use of carefully chosen commercial materials, especially those produced by other ESP specialists knowledgeable about relevant discourse/genre research and theory as well as target-domain data. One such off-the-shelf resource for business English purposes, Nickerson and Planken (this volume) tell us, is Koester’s (2004) *The Language of Work*, a textbook unusually well grounded in recent research and replete with authentic workplace data. For wider-angle approaches, as often needed in EAP classes with students studying a variety of subject areas, somewhat less specialized texts can be useful. Swales and Feak’s (2000, 2004) textbooks for graduate students and junior-level professional academics are excellent examples of texts based on authentic academic materials for use with disciplinarily heterogeneous learners. The Swales and Feak texts actually offer the best of both wide and narrow angle approaches, by encouraging learners to move from more general observations about academic discourse to ethnographic analysis of data in their own fields.

Students can, indeed, provide significant course materials themselves when taught to function as ethnographers, that is, to find and learn from data in their own areas of interest, and hence promote their own academic (or occupational) literacy (awareness of a community’s usual communicative practices; see Ann Johns, 1997, and this volume, on this “socioliterate” approach). The products of such ethnographic work, student-generated portfolios—which may include genre samples from student-selected subject areas in the form of hard copies or digitized versions of expert and student texts, recordings of lectures, or notes on informant interviews—greatly increase the likelihood of individual students’ access to authentic materials



truly relevant to their needs (on portfolio use for EAP undergraduates, again see Ann Johns, 1997; for graduate-level EAP students, see Hirvela, 1997; Lee & Swales, 2006).

At this point, it should be noted that the presence of authentic materials in a classroom is no automatic guarantee of authenticity. Some have even suggested that once removed from the contexts where they naturally occur, authentic materials are anything but that (see Widdowson, 1979). One approach to enhancing authenticity is the use of simulation, or tasks inspired by real-life communicative activities. For instance, to use EMP again as an example, students can engage in role plays as patients and medical practitioners after watching videos of experienced medical professionals (see Boshier & Smalkoski, 2002; Eggly, 2002; Hussin, 2002). Problem-based learning (PBL) is an increasingly popular type of simulation in various EOP and EAP contexts. PBL activities are designed to engage students in collaborative solving of typical field-specific problems, simulated or actually occurring, using as resources materials that the learners themselves find and critically analyze (see Belcher, this volume; Shi, this volume; Wood & Head, 2004). As with all ESP instruction, the goal of such authentic-as-possible tasks is not just to serve as vehicles for developing communicative competencies but to equip students with language learning and personal problem-solving strategies (i.e., increased metacognitive awareness) that they can carry with them into their target communities.

Of course, it would be impossible to fully prepare learners for all the routine (and less routine) communicative events they will eventually need to engage in, all the spoken and written genres they will want to be functionally competent with. Even if all the crucial target situations could be anticipated and delineated, classroom time constraints would force instructors to make difficult choices. Another type of strategy training beyond simulation and PBL that can help address this pedagogical challenge is rhetorical and lexicogrammatical consciousness raising, or, increasing awareness of how written or spoken texts accomplish what they aim for. Genre awareness, Devitt (2004; see also Ann Johns, this volume) argues, is a much more realistic goal than actual acquisition of a wide array of target genres, and it is a goal best met by first teaching students to analyze more familiar “antecedent” genres, such as personal narratives. With genre-analytical tools in hand and an awareness of discourse as discourse—capable of being deconstructed and demystified (Hyland, 2006)—learners can move on to analyze and eventually produce more sophisticated genres with, and later without, instructor guidance. Another scaffolded approach, aiming

not just at genre awareness but also acquisition of a sequence of progressively more challenging genres (see de Silva Joyce & Hood, this volume) involves a careful cline of instructor support: first immersing students in genre samples, thus providing a text and context-rich environment, followed by teacher modeling of text construction, collaborative text construction, independent generation of texts, and finally critical reflection on what has been learned about the genre itself (as well as related domain knowledge)—both how it enables and how it constrains (Feez, 2002; Macken-Horarik, 2002; see also Cruickshank and de Silva Joyce & Hood, both this volume).

While learner autonomy may be the ultimate goal of any ESP course, or of any type of instruction at all, success in ever more demanding environments may be still more likely if learners are supported by further scaffolding in their new settings. ESP instruction, like needs analysis, is now seen as ideally extending beyond the classroom through support of more experienced others that newcomers will likely come in contact with (and may need to please). With such support in mind, Hussin (2002) has offered nursing preceptor workshops aimed at boosting mentoring skills, with advice on communication strategies and guidelines for giving constructive performance feedback. In academic contexts, subject-area faculty have been helped by EAP specialists to make their classrooms more language-learner friendly through such scaffolding strategies as vocabulary glosses, previews of complex lecture content, peer collaboration opportunities, and more frequent and incremental feedback on student writing—types of support helpful, certainly, to all students (see Snow, 1997). ESP specialists may not be able to radically transform target environments into more tolerant, accepting places for all language learners (but see Cruickshank, this volume, on collective contextual change efforts) or to significantly alter performance expectations, but they can work as change agents by contributing to heightened understanding of how to help learners meet academic, workplace, and their own expectations (see Hafernik, Messerschmitt, & Vandrick, 2002). As more diverse learner populations succeed in more fully participating in their target discourse communities, the learners themselves, through their presence and involvement, will alter not just the composition of those communities but very likely the tenor of interactions in them (on “tenor” and power relationships, see de Silva Joyce & Hood, this volume; for more on transformative pedagogies, see Morgan & Fleming, this volume).

## Needs-Knowledgeable Instructors

Being an ESP instructor may now look like an even taller order than might first have been envisioned, calling for knowledge of genre theory, corpus tools, scaffolding techniques, as well as metacognitive and metadiscoursal awareness-building strategies. Yet all of these are areas clearly connected with language teaching and are more and more likely to be included in the ELT training that pre-service teachers receive (though instruction on application of ELT methods to ESP goals may be far less common). What ELT teacher training programs do not understandably usually aim to provide, however, is the specialist-area knowledge that ESP instructional methods often require. It is not usually a comforting thought, to say the least, for any teachers, novice or experienced, to realize that their students may know more about a crucial subject area (or the “carrier content”) of a language course than they, the teachers, do. This for many may be the single most daunting aspect of the ESP approach to language teaching. The question that remains to be, addressed here is, How can ESP instructors meet their own teacher knowledge needs? Considered in a possibly more helpful light, it might be, How have ESP practitioners succeeded in gaining control of the knowledge they need to address their students’ needs?

Some have suggested that ESP practitioners may not really need as much specialist (or target situation) knowledge as has been assumed. According to Ferguson (1997), what ESP practitioners actually need is knowledge **about** an area—that is, its values (e.g., what counts as support for arguments) and preferred genres, rather than in-depth knowledge of an area. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) similarly remark, “Business people do not expect a Business English teacher to know how to run a business; they expect knowledge of how language is used in business” (p. 188). In many EAP situations, such as those involving first- and second-year tertiary students not yet in a major field of study, knowing about academic literacies in general may serve instructors well, especially with respect to equipping students with rhetorical flexibility, ability to move with relative ease from the literacy demands of one subject area to another (Ann Johns, this volume). Even when teaching a more disciplinarily homogeneous group, such as engineering students, a very narrow-angled approach may not be essential. Miller (2001) has pointed out his own successful use of more generally accessible topics from popular engineering periodicals, which kept him and his students confident in his expertise vis-à-vis the material.

Another means of keeping the subject matter at manageable levels, for both students and instructors, is the sustained content-based approach to instruction (SCBI), or, essentially, subject-area course simulation. SCBI classes focus on a limited range of closely related topics for an entire term, with materials taken from actual subject-area textbooks, such as introductory biology or world history, but usually at a lower grade level than that of the students, such as elementary or secondary school books for a class of tertiary language students. In this way, specialist knowledge demands on the instructor and language demands on the students are kept at less than overwhelming levels (Weigle & Nelson, 2001).

There are times, however, when a more narrow-angled approach would seem to serve students best, as when they are already immersed in a workplace or in advanced study of a discipline, such as dissertation writers or law students (Northcott, this volume). In such cases, increasing one's own content-area knowledge may be essential (not to mention invigorating), and dipping into actual texts that one's students are coping with may be helpful (see Bruce, 2002, on the value of tort textbooks and Northcott, this volume, on other resources for ELP; see Eggly, 2002, on medical journals and textbooks for EMP). ESP practitioners should remember, though, that they need not see themselves as working in complete isolation (though physically they may be) and that others may have faced similar content-area challenges and shared solutions in the ESP research literature, in such journals as *English for Specific Purposes*, the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, and the *ESpecialist*. Other professional resources include such medical English websites as [www.englishmed.com](http://www.englishmed.com) and [www.hospitalenglish.com](http://www.hospitalenglish.com) and conferences, such as those held by BALEAP, the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes.

Content-area specialists can also serve as significant resources for more narrow-angled approaches. The same specialist informants consulted for needs analysis can function as continuing sources of support, lending sample documents and recommending authentic communicative tasks (see Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Some subject-area specialists are even willing to act as specialist mentors while students in their discipline take EAP classes, providing feedback on student performance to complement (and often reinforce) that of the EAP teacher (see Cavusgil, 2007). Other subject-area specialists collaborate even more extensively by team-teaching courses with ESP specialists, thus giving students access to subject and language experts simultaneously (Cruickshank, this volume; Dudley-Evans, 1995; Shi, this volume). Another more common type of subject-area and

ESP specialist collaboration is in the form of linked ESP and subject-area classes, or “learning communities” (Ann Johns, this volume). Members of a learning community take the same cluster of classes—for example, the same EAP and introductory psychology and geology classes. Subject matter in the shared subject areas can then become a source of materials and tasks for the EAP class, and instructors of the clustered classes can easily consult with each other on the needs of the language learners (for EAP, see Ann Johns, 1997; for an EMP example, see Johnson, 2000). Ideally, students in learning communities also become sources of content knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and emotional support for each other (Benesch, 2001).

Students are, in fact, probably the most readily available sources of specialist knowledge in any ESP classroom. Dudley-Evans (1997) has observed that what may be most crucial to the success of any ESP practitioner is willingness to learn from and with one’s own students. Student-compiled portfolios and problem-based-learning presentations referred to earlier can be significant resources not only for students but for their instructor as well. Collaborating with students on investigations of disciplinary or workplace discourse and even on assessment of learner performance, acknowledging the students’ content-area expertise while serving as the language specialist, not only scaffolds the specialist-knowledge learning curve for the instructor, but also gives the student a valuable confidence-boosting role to play (which may be especially helpful to adult language learners; see Orsi & Orsi, 2002, on their work with professional brewers).

While respect for students’ subject-area knowledge, that of domain experts, and for the specialist area itself is vital to any ESP endeavor, it is possible to be overly respectful. As suggested earlier, domain specialists in particular, because of the tacitness and automaticity of their expert knowledge of discourse practices, limited understanding of language and literacy acquisition, and perhaps too distant memories of being novices, may not be especially sensitive to newcomers’ needs or knowledgeable about how to meet them (Benesch, 2001). The traditional epistemologies and goals of their domain can keep insiders from recognizing the interests and needs of increasingly locally diverse and globally connected populations of students or workers (Jasso-Aguilar, 1999). As domain outsiders, discourse analysts, and language/literacy-learning specialists attuned to cultural diversity, ESP practitioners are especially well positioned to critically reflect on and help others consider how a community can promote more inclusive participation. ESP specialists have their own professional expertise to offer—to those

who already belong to communities that can be enriched by greater inclusiveness and to those who hope to join them.

## Overview of Contents

This volume is divided into three parts: English for Academic, English for Occupational, and English for Sociocultural Purposes. The EAP section considers academic contexts at progressively more advanced levels, from secondary school to the pursuit of a profession in tertiary-level academia. The EOP section, an immensely diverse branch of ESP, focuses on what are, to all appearances, the fastest growing EOP offshoots: English for Business, Legal, and Medical Purposes. There is invariably some overlap between EOP and EAP, as business, law, and medical schools fall under the “academic” umbrella, yet the interests of ESP specialists in these areas range well beyond learners’ needs in school settings and indeed include the needs of those already at work in their professional communities. The ESCP section pushes the boundaries of ESP to encompass the needs of those who do not neatly fit into either academic or occupational categories but who definitely seek membership in communities new to them, communities anywhere from immediate neighborhood to nation-state levels. Throughout this volume, readers will find some recurring motifs, such as globalization, English as a Lingua Franca, and migrant populations, which, in effect, function as unifying strands across many of the chapters and reminders that despite the distinct purviews of EAP, EOP, and ESCP, there are many concerns that those committed to addressing learner-focused needs share.

Part 1 opens with Ken Cruickshank’s chapter on secondary-level EAP. As Cruickshank notes, while EAP is most frequently associated with post-secondary settings, efforts to serve English language learners situated in any school context are, in fact, a type of EAP. Cruickshank’s concerns lie primarily with the effects of increasing global migrations and the large numbers of students in English-dominant settings, many with interrupted educations, who must cope with learning a new language and learning academic subject matter alongside well-acclimated students. The challenges of transitioning from secondary to post-secondary school, especially for immigrant or Generation 1.5 students, have long been the concern of Ann Johns. In her chapter, Johns readily acknowledges and addresses the difficulties EAP practitioners face in attempting to meet the needs of this population, beginning undergraduates whose target situations are as diverse as are their own often undecided academic goals.

The last two chapters in Part 1 both consider the challenges of much more advanced, post-baccalaureate language use in academia. Although the goals of those already in a specific field of study may be more easily defined than those of many undergraduates, a disciplinarily heterogeneous class of graduate students is far from undemanding for EAP practitioners. In her chapter, Christine Feak identifies graduate-level learner needs that cut across disciplinary boundaries, needs that EAP specialists are well qualified to address. Interested in the high-stakes language-use challenges that confront those who complete their graduate degrees and pursue careers as professional academics, Ken Hyland highlights in his chapter strategies that are likely to be of value to academics writing for publication in any discipline.

Part 2 begins with Brigitte Planken and Catherine Nickerson's paired chapters on English for Business Purposes (EBP), the first focusing on spoken discourse, the second on written discourse. While other EOP branches can be described as rapidly growing, EBP's growth is actually explosive, as businesses continue to barrel ahead toward globalization and English is increasingly the preferred medium (at least for now). In their first chapter, Planken and Nickerson point to great strides in our understanding of BELF, or Business English as a Lingua Franca. In their second chapter, Nickerson and Planken call our attention to research on the types of multi-modal communication increasingly crucial to day-to-day operations in international business settings.

Jane Lockwood, Gail Forey, and Neil Elias focus on one very specific subarea of EBP in which the recent phenomena Nickerson and Planken discuss—the global spread of business, English, and technology—all come into play. Lockwood, Forey, and Elias consider the language training needs of outsourced call centers, needs not currently addressed by popular assessment strategies developed in English-dominant settings.

At first sight, law may seem an EOP area less likely to be greatly affected by globalization, as laws are quite specific to local contexts, yet, as Jill Northcott remarks in her chapter, globalization is expanding the demand for legal English instruction (or ELP). While legal English may well be the most challenging of all occupational varieties of English for outsiders to comprehend, Northcott assures us that there is a growing body of resources available to ELP instructors. Among these resources is the work of legal genre analyst Vijay Bhatia, whose chapter sheds light on one of the main contributors to the density and complexity of legal discourse, namely, intertextuality.

The impact of globalization on medicine in some respects parallels that on law, though professional mobility in the medical sciences may be even greater as English-speaking nations become increasingly dependent on immigrant health care personnel. In her chapter on medical English, Ling Shi reports that EMP specialists have been in the vanguard among ESP practitioners in investigating face-to-face communication, especially its cultural and sociopolitical dimensions. In my own chapter, I discuss the benefits that a recent development in medical education itself, problem-based learning, offers to EMP pedagogical practice.

The focal area of Part 3, English for Sociocultural Purposes (ESCP), can be defined, Helen de Silva Joyce and Susan Hood observe (this volume), as neither EAP nor EOP, or as inclusive of all subtypes of ESP, all of which serve both social and cultural purposes. In their chapter, de Silva Joyce and Hood address one of the great challenges of ESCP: how to help immigrant learners meet immediate survival needs yet be prepared for less easily defined future possibilities. Brian Morgan and Douglas Fleming argue for a critical approach to ESCP, focused on the actual needs and rights of immigrant learners “as workers, family members, participants in community activities.” This last chapter of the volume makes abundantly clear what the learner focus of ESP can contribute in the service of these (and many other) learners: ability to empower them, in the words of Morgan and Fleming, “to act on the world *purposively* through language.”

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