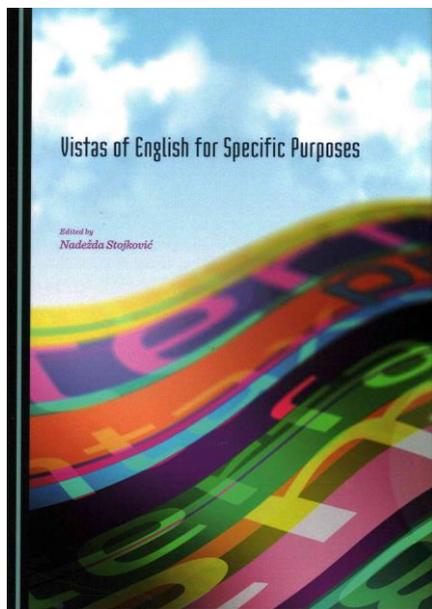




Vistas of English for Specific Purposes

Edited by Nadežda Stojković

Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. x-ix + 405



Review by Silvia Cacchiani¹

In recent years it has become increasingly clear that courses in English for Special Purposes (ESP) constitute an inescapably diverse and multi-faceted domain of research. *Vistas of English for Specific Purposes*, edited by Nadežda Stojković, takes up the challenge and provides the reader looks at selected problematic issues and key aspects of locally focused teaching experiences from different perspectives and in multiple fields of expertise – also where English language teachers are flying blind to a large extent (e.g. English for Music or English for Customs Officials).

The 32 chapters in the volume, we learn from the book blurb, constitute a selection of papers from the *First International Conference on Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes – Connect and Share* (Faculty of Electronic Engineering, University of Niš, Serbia, May 2013). They are organized in fifteen main sections – from the Table of Contents: *English for Art* (i.e. music); *English for Business*; *English for Customs, Military, and Police Forces*; *English for Law*; *English for Mathematics*; *English for Medicine*; *English for Tourism*; *English for Engineering and Technology*; *One Country ESP Specifics*; *ESP Perspectives*; *Language Teaching Strategies*; *Material Design, Performance Assessment*; *Political Science and International Relations*; *Professional English*; *English for Social Sciences* (1-386). The remaining sections cover bio-notes (*Contributors*, 387-400) and a short *Subject Index* (401-405).

Nearly all contributions reflect on different stages in the development of successful pilot studies and projects launched in the fields of ESP teaching in Eastern European universities. The bottom line that shapes research across this diverse array of chapters is the strong interconnection between needs analysis, students' perceived needs (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998), motivation and attitudes, as well as authenticity, material design,

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task development and assessment. This is fully in line with the strongly context-dependent and most definitely learner-centered nature of ESP teaching/learning (Nunan 1988). The following selection of papers provides the reader with analyses and applications that reach beyond individual case studies and fields of expertise.

In Chapter 7 – *Insight into maritime vocabulary in Romance languages from the intercomprehension perspective* – Delia Lungu and Laura Cizer work within the intercomprehension framework, which assumes a positive correlation between learner's motivation, autonomy and awareness-raising activities. Following McCann, Klein and Stegmann (2009), they first identify seven “sieves” or categories of prior knowledge of the L1 and/or of acquired L2s, along with corresponding transfer strategies within individual language families: International vocabulary; Pan-Romance vocabulary; Sound correspondences; Spelling and Pronunciation; Pan-Romance syntactic structures; Morphosyntactic elements; Eurofixes. Undoubtedly, newly developed or reinforced reflective skills significantly improve chances that learners will get a better grasp of the meaning of texts written in unfamiliar languages. To probe this point, the authors develop a set of intercomprehension tasks using parallel versions of a short written text about the 2012 Costa Concordia maritime disaster. L1 speakers of Romanian are thus encouraged to carry out activities especially intended to help them compare and contrast linguistic features across Romance languages (Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian), English, understood here as a bridge to the Roman languages (Hemming, Klein, and Reissner 2011), and Romanian, which is used to check students' (progress towards) understanding and metalinguistic awareness. Zooming in on needs analysis, Chapter 3, by Slavica Čepon, places the main emphasis into *Non-native speakers of English at the General English Secondary/Business English Tertiary interface*. Working in the tradition of grammar for business purposes and form-focused instruction (e.g. Ellis 2002; Dörnyei 2009), the author uses quantitative data analysis to argue for continuity in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language. Particularly, comparison with diverse forms of naturalistic practice in English for Occupational Purposes shows that explicit grammar instruction (Ellis 2005) can indeed work more effectively against foreign language attrition via reinforcing knowledge of grammar already acquired in General English courses and by keeping its use current. Taking an entirely different perspective, in Chapter 12 – *English language skills assessment in a medical context: a study of students' perceptions* – Nataša Milosavljević administers a questionnaire to 412 first, third and fifth-year students at the Niš School of Medicine to gather data about learners' attitudes, perceived needs, relative value attached to the four language skills, and satisfaction with learning achievements. Statistics in SPSS indicate a mismatch between importance and satisfaction: speaking is seen as key to communicating in professional settings but performance is felt to be highly unsatisfactory, which suggests a need to fine-tune course contents, materials, methods and activities accordingly. In a similar vein, Yvonne Liermann-Zeljak and Ivanka Ferčec look at *The importance of English in the education of electrical engineers* based at the University of Osijek, Republic of Croatia (Chapter 16); Besa Bytyqi discusses *The use of a needs analysis questionnaire as the best tool to enhance learning outcomes in English for Public Administration and Political Sciences Courses* at the South East European University, Republic of Macedonia; and Shershneva and Saule K. Adbygapparova provide some preliminary remarks on post-needs assessment questionnaires administered to ESP learners at the Kazach-British Technical University (Chapter 31 – *Professional English priority and focus*).

While sharing the same relational view of learners as real people with specific needs, identities, goals and L2-related experiences (Ushioda 2009), other contributions develop a close connection between ESP learners' attitudes and motivations on the one hand, and implications for language teaching on the other. Chapter 4, by Marija Stefanović and Vesna Stanković, addresses questions about *Teaching English 'one-to-one'* to business professionals that will necessarily evaluate materials, teaching methods and the ESP teacher herself for time-effective learning experience. In Chapter 13 – *Language use in medical settings: program design and evaluation* – Zora Antić takes issue with Milosavljević (Chapter 12) and moves discussion from needs analysis and the relative weights of language skills to course design. More specifically, she suggests taking a process-oriented approach (Widdowson 1981) to exercise multiple intelligence modalities (Gardner 1985) and implement problem-based and project-based learning in the interest of life-long learning (Stein 1995). In Chapter 10 Anna Stefanowicz-Kocot looks at *Motivating ESP learners in a hybrid course*: starting on the assumption that learner's autonomy has positive effects on task motivation (Julkunen 1989) and learners' ability to attain their Ideal L2 Self (Dörnyei 2005; 2009), the author complements in-class work with a Moodle



course that enables access to a customizable glossary, personalized learning paths, interactive activities, and cooperative learning.

Research into disciplinary language and genre-based conventions in authentic texts is another facet of material development and course design. This is hardly surprising if we recognize the contribution of genre analysis and corpus linguistics to ESP teaching and learning (e.g. Hunston 2002). It is therefore particularly appropriate that Marija Petrović and Betty Samraj turn attention to the rhetorical structure of law school lectures in Chapter 9, on *Discourse analysis of Law School lectures and suggestions for listening comprehension*. In Chapter 11 – *Teaching and learning Medical English using corpus resources* – Francesca Ripamonti builds a glossary intended for students of internal medicine: the author uses corpus-based and corpus-driven analysis (Tognini Bonelli 2001) not only to select lemmas and decide on the macrostructure of this lexicographic tool for learners, but also to populate articles with definitions, colligations and collocations. This, we may want to say, can be seen as an especially valuable attempt to serve the knowledge construction and production needs of the intended learner/user (Bergenholtz and Tarp 1995).

Other chapters turn to materials, activities and tasks (Nunan 1989) that have been the subject of most recent debate in ESP teaching – reflections on *Exploiting authentic video materials in business English teaching* (Chapter 2, by Nadezhda Dimitrova Georgieva) and on *Creating YouTube videos in an ESP classroom with Net Generation students as a cultural briefing activity* (Chapter 15, by Tina Orel Frank and Živa Čeh); *Using audio materials for ESP vocabulary acquisition* in a course of English for Professional Purposes, with an eye to in-class activities in the pre-listening stage (Chapter 27, by Inese Ozola); *Teaching English for Sciences through mock scientific conferences* (Chapter 23, by Irina Kochkareva); *Implementing panel discussions in ESP teaching* in a course of English for Specific Purposes for students of Social Informatics, Marketing and Public Relations, Policy Analysis and Public Administration (Chapter 24, by Marijana Budeč-Staničić); the use of Moodle, blogs, and blog reflections on cultural incidents to promote intercultural awareness (Hofstede, Pedersen 2002) and intercultural communication in both General English and ESP courses (Chapter 29, by Nataša Bakić-Mirić – *Intercultural communication module: a framework for teaching General English an English for Specific Purposes*); and, as a welcome complement to these chapters, discussion of teachers' questions and questioning techniques in Chapter 25, by Nataliya Fedicheva on *Interrogative skills for ESP teachers*.

On a more technical note, Chapter 28, by Filip Jelenković and Milorad Tošić, looks at *Semantic multiple-choice question generation and concept-based assessment* against the background of research on scalability and Massive Online Open Courses (Martin 2012). More to the point, the authors monitor and evaluate the implementation of the open-source project OpenSeMCQ.org (<http://www.OpenSeMCQ.org>). OpenSeMCQ is a domain-independent semantic generator for multiple choice questions (MCQs) from various domain ontologies. Questions match user-defined knowledge boundaries in realistic scenarios for concept-based learning support at higher cognitive levels and concept-based assessment tests of different complexity (White 2012). While registered users have been evaluating questions for adequate to optimal quality since 2011, achieving subdomain adequacy involves direct access to semantic data sources endpoints directly, without individually encapsulated domain knowledge.

In sum, the papers in this volume bring us to reflect on a multiplicity of contexts, aims and objectives. It could generally be noted that including an introductory chapter would have helped to bring order to multiplicity and set the stage for the contributions to the volume. We also feel that a handful of papers might have perhaps benefited from another round of proofreading, and that abstracts should have been consistently used throughout the volume. However, this does not detract from the merits of the collection: the publication illustrates just some of many areas of enquiry under investigation in Eastern European countries, and yet it is a demonstration that an especially dynamic and committed, locally focused but globally dedicated ESP teaching community is beginning to earn international recognition. As we see, the challenge for all those involved in the community is to tailor course design, materials and methods to the specific needs and goals of specific learners, with one appropriate point of departure being Ushioda's (2009) person-in-context relational view of emergent motivation, self and identity. A good deal has been written in this intersectional area of research (see e.g. articles and references in Byram and Hu, eds, 2013). What most contributors think is important, however, is to move the emphasis away from the literature review towards the applied side of ESP teaching, with a focus on sharing hands-on experience and reflections on particular game changers. ESP



teachers and teacher trainers will certainly appreciate this choice and extend the details and scope of the activities, tasks and projects presented in the volume to cater for the specific needs of other specific learners.

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