

English for Specific Purposes

**An Overview for Practitioners
and Clients (Academic & Corporate)**

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Objective

This presentation answers the following questions:

- What is **ESP**?
- What do **ESP** professionals do?
- What are some areas for the application of **ESP**?
- What are some areas for research and development in **ESP**?
- What are some **ESP** resources?

What is ESP?

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a subdivision of a wider field, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), which is defined as:

“...the area of inquiry and practice in the development of language programs for people who need a language to meet a predictable range of communicative needs.”

Swales, 1992: 300

What is ESP?

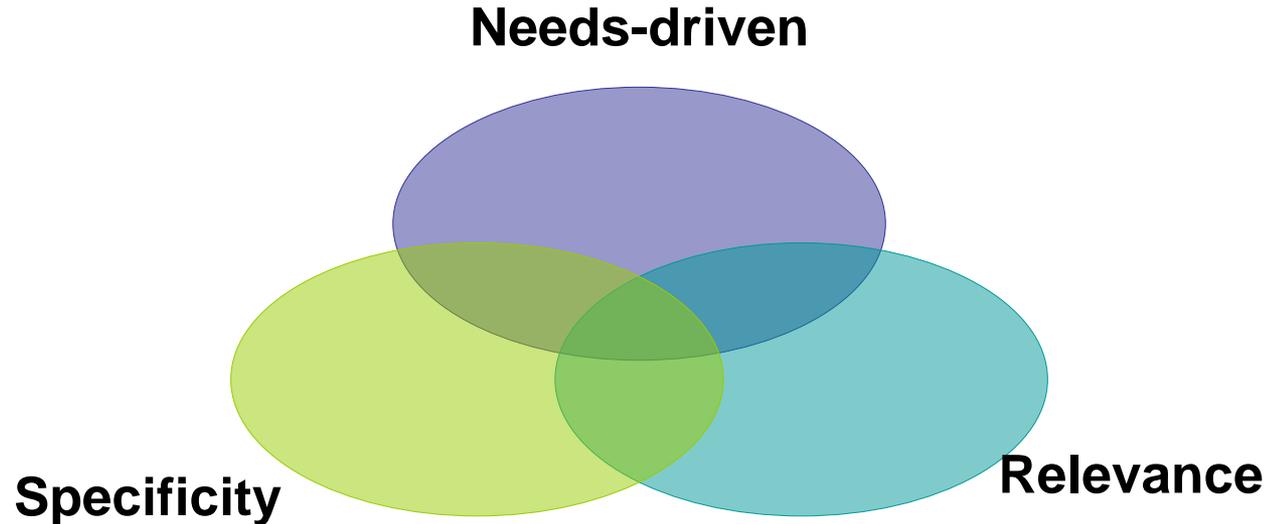
LSP/ESP is...

- Learner-centered, second/foreign language training*
- Needs-based, involving all stakeholders
- Characterized by collaboration with workplace/content experts
- Characterized by the use of appropriate, authentic tasks & materials (specificity and relevance)
- *Not* synonymous with “content-based instruction.” CBI is an approach to syllabus design, often employed in ESP courses.

*Adapted from Hutchinson & Waters, 1987

What is **ESP**?

Core Principles of **ESP**



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What is ESP?

English language training for speakers of other languages has been divided into:

General English

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Literacy: | For those who may be literate in native language but not in English |
| Coping Skills: | Shopping, housing, travel/transportation, healthcare, schooling, etc. |
| Pre-Academic: | Listening, pronunciation, reading, composition, grammar, study skills common to all disciplines; that is, English for general academic purposes (EGAP or “common core” academic language & skills) |

ESP

■ English for Academic Purposes (EAP)*

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Learners: | Studying to enter professions, focusing on the language of academic performance in specific discourse communities (and sometimes preparing for near-future identified workplace needs) |
| Fields: | Business, Engineering, Medicine, Information Technology, Law, etc. |

■ English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Learners: | Employed in industry sectors, focusing on the language of job performance (or preparing for identified employment opportunities) |
| Fields: | Industry sectors, government, United Nations, NGOs |

* *N.B. The focus of the TESOL ESP Interest Section is on EAP (rather than EGAP) and EOP.*

Modified by Kevin Knight, © Lomperis: Multiple publications, 9-28-94 to 3-6-09 (with input from van Naerssen and Westerfield)

What is ESP?

ESP learners can be divided according to their need for English communication skills.

1. Language learners who are in the process of developing expertise in their fields need English communication skills as tools in their training.
2. Language learners who are already experts in their fields need English communication skills as tools in their work.

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ESP Target Learners

Language learners

|

**In process of
developing expertise**

|

**Eng. comm.
skills as
tools
in training**

Language learners

|

**Already
experts**

|

**Eng. comm.
skills as
tools
in work**

Adapted from © Lomperis and van Naerssen, 1992

What is ESP?

The evolution of ESP:

- “ESP first arose, and has continued to develop, in response to a need: the need of non-native speakers of the language to use it for some clearly defined practical purpose. As purposes change, so must ESP.” (Robinson 1989: 426)

- Socio-cultural contexts are now basic to analyses of meaning in language, broadening our focus to include wider communication needs.

Thus, should we rethink LSP→CSP?* (Communication for Specific Purposes)

- The professional/workplace culture of the language user is now the starting point for many needs assessments of & related research on communication needs.*

*(Adapted from van Naerssen, 1997)

- There is a need for more alignment in research and practice of LSP and Professional Communication. (Adapted from Candlin, 2008)

What do **ESP** professionals do?

ESP professionals, due to their industrial/communication expertise, often have multiple roles in the public, private, and academic sectors on a local, regional, or global scale including:

- Teaching or training (onsite and/or online)
- Teacher or trainer development (onsite and/or online)
- Curriculum design
- Materials development
- Program administration
- Policy analysis and development
- Public speaking
- Research
- Consulting

What do **ESP** professionals do?

Tasks and language skills addressed in **EAP** and **EOP** contexts include:

Academic

- In class: Understand class lectures, take notes, answer professor's questions, give oral presentations
- Homework: Read & write discipline-specific genres, reports, lab exercises; work in teams
- Research: Conduct research; write papers, projects, lab reports
- Exams: Answer various types of examination questions (written and oral)

Occupational

- Administration: Prepare ISO certification, departmental budgets, expense reports
- Performance: Make a marketing presentation; negotiate a contract; close a sale; write correspondence/reports; keep records; order supplies/equipment; read manuals to maintain/repair equipment; interact with coworkers/superiors about a work process or issue; follow telephone and email etiquette; participate in/lead meetings; at international conferences, give presentation, handle Q&A, network, socialize
- Social responsibility: Warn others about a safety hazard; document compliance with regulatory standards
- Human resources: Interact in interviews and performance appraisals; participate in training

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What are some areas for the application of ESP?

- Identification of target market “customers” (EAP & EOP), program design, materials development, delivery of training, program evaluation, professional development
 - Follow Best Practices, especially:
 - Organizational needs assessment (ONA)
 - Instructional needs assessment (INA)
(See slide on Best Practices.)

- Language planning & language policy (LPLP)
 - For LPLP purposes, analyze national economic goals, identify industry sector / business needs, review education / training available, design and deliver EAP/EOP models and programs to develop English capability that supports these goals and needs.

- EOP and multinational corporations (MNCs)
 - Present business case for English communication skills in the workforce, including the related advantages / responsibilities of MNCs for growth and competitiveness of the corporation, the industry sector, and the national economy. (See slide on EOP and Economic Stakeholders.)

What are some areas for the application of **ESP**?

EAP, EOP, and Economic Stakeholders

- Who? Governments, trade associations, multinational corporations (MNCs), national / local companies, entrepreneurs, professional associations
- Why? English capability is necessary for economic development, and businesses need a highly skilled, competitive workforce.
- Problems: Many efforts being made to address workforce English are not coordinated with the educational system, not really job related, and not sufficient in scope and quality.
- Solutions:
 - Tertiary **EAP** programs build skill sets that bridge to the workplace.
 - **EOP** professionals bring standards and quality to the provision of **EOP** training, as well as to policy work, consulting, research, etc.
 - Well-qualified **EOP** professionals who provide programs will particularly be well versed in the Best Practices.

(See slide on Best Practices.)

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Best Practices

Best Practices were developed for the following areas by the TESOL Task Force on Standards for Workplace Language Training: *Guidelines for Workplace Language Trainers* (J. Friedenber, A. Lomperis, W. Martin, K. Westerfield & M. van Naerssen, 2000-2001).

1. **Develop an effective, current strategic plan**
2. **Conduct effective marketing**
3. **Assess the client organization's needs**
4. **Determine an appropriate program design**
5. **Develop a proposal and negotiate a contract**
6. **Identify and arrange program administration and staffing**
7. **Conduct an instructional needs assessment (INA)**
8. **Create an instructional design/curriculum**
9. **Select and develop appropriate training materials**
10. **Deliver training**
11. **Evaluate course(s) and program, and apply recommendations**

A version of this content can be found in the 2003 TESOL publication *Effective Practices in Workplace Language Training*. (See slide on Recommended Resources.)

What are some areas for R&D in ESP?

Research on communication in specific settings can:

- Be a valuable tool in the needs analysis process
- Provide additional insights into professional/workplace communication

To be called LSP/ESP-related research, research on communication in specific settings should have specific relevance to non-native speakers:

- Addressing specific training/workplace communication needs
- Addressing gaps for specific non-native speakers

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What are some areas for R&D in ESP?

- Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and return-on-investment (ROI) for all industry sectors* (CBA/ROI usually documents that improved job performance in English pays back many times the cost of the original English training program.)
 - Create a common database that can be used for marketing and evaluation purposes.
- Language planning & language policy (LPLP)**
 - Address national economic goals, industry sector needs, and English capability needed to support these goals & needs.
 - Address educational & training changes needed for developing relevant English capability; design and deliver relevant EAP/EOP models & programs.
- Under- or uninvestigated genres***
 - Computer-mediated communication → New genres that involve visual/auditory literacies (e.g., color, sound, graphics)
 - Discipline-specific texts

Adapted from *© Lomperis, 2-1-09, **© Lomperis, 1-25-09, ***Belcher, 2004

What are some areas for R&D in ESP?

- Collection and analysis of huge databases of language from specific EAP or EOP texts (corpus linguistics) ***
- Under- or uninvestigated discourse settings***
 - Factory work, construction work, nursing, doctor/patient, lawyer/client
- Frameworks for engaging with the disciplines: cooperation, collaboration, team teaching,* etc.
- Communication needs of nonnative English speaking academics**
- The impact of technological exclusion on academic and professional interactions (how individuals write, send, & get information, teach/learn)**
- Inquiry into how people accomplish change through language***
 - Leadership, peace-making, other community goals

Adapted from *Dudley Evans, *et al.* 1998; **Hyland *et al.* 2002; *Belcher, 2004;**

What are some **ESP** resources?

ESP organizations/communities exist at local, regional, and global levels. The websites of these organizations may provide links to other organizations, journals/periodicals, examinations, and online resources.

ESP organizations include

- TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) **ESP**-IS (Interest Section)
- IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) **ESP** SIG (Special Interest Group)
- IATEFL BE (Business English) SIG
- Asia-Pacific LSP (Language for Specific Purposes) and Professional Communication Association
- Taiwan **ESP** Association (TESPA)

ESP professionals are also active in many other professional organizations including

- ASTD (American Society for Training and Development)
- EASE (European Association of Science Editors)
- IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers)
- IFTDO (International Federation of Training and Development Organizations)

What are some ESP resources?

Selected resources include:

Journal: *English for Specific Purposes: An International Journal*. Elsevier.

Annual Review of Applied Linguistics: An Official Journal of the American Association of Applied Linguistics. Cambridge University Press.

Journal of English for Academic Purposes. Elsevier.

Text: *Current developments in English for academic, specific and occupational purposes*. (2008). Garnett Education.

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What are some ESP resources?

Selected resources include:

Text: Friedenber, Joan, Deborah Kennedy, Anne Lomperis, William Martin, & Kay Westerfield. With contributions from Margaret van Naerssen. (2003). *Effective practices in workplace language training: Guidelines for providers of workplace English language training*. TESOL Publications.

Lomperis, Anne E. (Forthcoming). Issues in language policy for the labor force in developing countries. In M. Gueldry (Ed.), *Languages mean business: Integrating languages and cultures in/for the professions*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press. (N.B. Chapter 14: Lomperis' multi-level analysis of 13 industrial sector cases, 311-342)

Article: Martin, William M. & Anne E. Lomperis. (2002). Determining the cost benefit, the return on investment, and the intangible impacts of language programs for development. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Autumn), 399-429.

Web: Opp-Beckman, Leslie & Kay Westerfield. *Internet-based projects for business English*. (Website) <http://aei.uoregon.edu/esp/index.html>

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Acknowledgements

Content:

- Kevin Knight
 - Kanda University of International Studies, Japan
- Anne E. Lomperis
 - Language Training Designs, USA
- Margaret van Naerssen
 - Immaculata University, Pennsylvania, USA
- Kay Westerfield
 - University of Oregon, USA

