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The future of ESP studies: building on success, exploring new paths, avoiding pitfalls

Christopher Williams

1. A brief history of ESP

- 1 The study of specialized discourse has burgeoned over the last twenty years or so, and, with English becoming ever more the lingua franca of this globalized world, English for Specific Purposes has rapidly assumed a key position in language studies in general. This has coincided with an increasingly “functionalist” approach to education in general, with the emphasis ever more on the acquisition of skills that can be utilized in a professional context, at the expense of a more theoretical, idealistic perspective which views education as an intellectual endeavour concerned with an individual’s personal and cultural development as a whole.
- 2 Let us begin with a simple question: what does the “S” in ESP stand for, “specific” or “special”? Google can provide us with a rough answer, with “English for Specific Purposes” outnumbering “English for Special Purposes” by a ratio of roughly 14 to 1 (respectively 955,000 hits vs 66,200 hits).¹ The marked preference for “Specific” denotes an awareness that the type of language that ESP scholars are concerned with is not so much “special” in itself as pertaining to “specific” spheres of professional and institutional communication in English. ESP comes within the realm of “specialized” (as opposed to “special”) discourse.
- 3 Secondly, how do we define ESP? Definitions abound in the literature. Here are just a few:

English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain. (Paltridge & Starfield 2013: 2)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a learner-centered approach to teaching English as an additional language, which focuses on developing communicative

competence in a specific discipline such as academics, accounting, agrology, business, IT, teaching, and engineering. (University of Winnipeg, ESP Program <<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/elp/esp/overview.html>>)

Unlike many other research areas in theoretical and applied linguistics, ESP has been, at its core, a practitioners' movement, devoted to establishing, through careful research, the needs and relevant discourse features for a targeted group of students. (Johns 2013: 6)

- 4 The focus in all three definitions above is on how learners can achieve a competence in a specific domain of English, an essentially practical goal coming within the wider field of applied linguistics. And while this focus undoubtedly constitutes the “bread and butter” of the majority of ESP studies, my impression is that this does not tell the whole story, as I will argue shortly.
- 5 It is hard to pinpoint the birth of ESP, though several authors – e.g., Abdullah (2001: 345); Upton (2012: 11) – cite Swales' (1985: x) suggestion that Barber's 1962 article on “Some measurable characteristics of modern scientific prose” marks the first academic study in what we now call ESP where Barber outlines the ways in which scientific English differs from general English. However, as Johns points out (2013: 7), we can already see a major interest in ESP developing not long after the end of World War II. The spread of technology and international trade was closely linked to the predominance of the US as a political and economic force throughout the Western world and, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 6) have observed:

The effect was to create a whole new mass of people wanting to learn English, not for the pleasure or prestige of knowing the language, but because English was the key to the international currencies of technology and commerce.
- 6 Moreover, during the late 1960s and early 1970s we can discern the beginnings of a shift away from the theoretical linguistics epitomized by Noam Chomsky's transformational grammar towards a growing interest in communication in real situations spearheaded in the United States by sociolinguists such as Dell Hymes and in the United Kingdom by scholars such as David Crystal, John Sinclair and Malcolm Coulthard.
- 7 Johns (2013: 7) splits the history of ESP into four main phases: The Early Years (1962-1981), The Recent Past (1981-1990), The Modern Era (1990-2011), and The Future (2011 plus). The situation outlined in the first phase was to lead to a growing interest in catering for the needs of learners of English as a foreign language – see, for example, Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991); Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) – as well as in identifying the characteristics of the language of specific domains. The latter task would subsequently be hugely facilitated with the spread of corpora and software such as Wordsmith Tools, particularly from the 1990s onwards. Corpus studies continue to play a key role in the development of ESP research, as is testified, for example, by studies such as Boulton, Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet (2012) or Nesi (2013).
- 8 Over the years a plethora of subfields of ESP – each with its own acronym – has been spawned, an indication of how vigorously the field of ESP has been ramifying. These subfields include:
 - English for Science and Technology (EST)
 - Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL)
 - English for Vocational Purposes (EVP)
 - English for Specific and Academic Purposes (ESAP)
 - English for Professional and Academic Purposes (EPAP)

- English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA)
- English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)
- English for Business Communication (EBC)
- English for Sociocultural Purposes (ESCP)
- English for General Business Purposes (EGBP)
- English for Medical Purposes (EMP)
- English for Legal Purposes (ELP)
- English for Academic Legal Purposes (EALP)
- English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP).

And in this digital era, recent additions have included:

- electronic Business English (e-BE)
 - electronic Medical English (e-ME).
- 9 As Brunton (2009: 22) states, “ESP is today more vibrant than ever with a bewildering number of terms created to fit the increasing range of occupations that have taken shelter under the ESP umbrella.”
 - 10 Particular mention should be made of the exponential growth of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) over the last twenty years or so, thanks to the ground-breaking work of scholars such as John Swales (e.g., 1985, 1990, 2004), Ken Hyland (e.g., 2006, 2009) and Ann Johns (e.g., 2002, 2013). The fact that EAP cuts across the various domains of specialized discourse has led to a shift of focus as regards the needs of large numbers of non-native-speaking university students. One eloquent example of this change – and also a clear indication of how the higher education sector has become increasingly internationalized – is that in the United Kingdom today the primary concern of many university language centres is no longer to offer foreign language courses for native speakers of English but to provide courses in EAP for non-native speakers (Howarth forthcoming). A recent study (Higher Education Funding Council for England 2014) has highlighted the fact that only 26 per cent of postgraduate students in the UK are in fact from Britain: 23 per cent come from China alone.
 - 11 The proliferation of highly specialized subfields of ESP might seem to suggest that researchers would benefit from taking a “narrow-angle” perspective by focusing on the specificities of a given subfield of ESP. Pulling in the opposite direction is the expansion of EAP studies where arguably a “wide-angled” approach is advisable in order to identify the broad features that cut across different branches of specialized knowledge. As Upton (2012: 21-22) has pointed out, the narrow-angle/wide-angle dichotomy has been hotly debated in recent years, though he also cites Belcher (2006: 139) who argues that for many “the wide versus narrow approach debate is a nonissue”, as the teaching approach should really be based on what learners need.
 - 12 For a more detailed introductory survey of the history of LSP/ESP see Johns (2013) and Upton (2012).

2. Major and minor strands in ESP

- 13 Returning to the question of how to define ESP, it is worth examining the list of suitable topics provided for would-be contributors in the journal *English for Specific Purposes* published by Elsevier² and widely considered to be currently the most influential research journal in the field of ESP:
 - second language acquisition in specialized contexts

- needs assessment
 - curriculum development and evaluation
 - materials preparation
 - discourse analysis
 - descriptions of specialized varieties of English
 - teaching and testing techniques
 - the effectiveness of various approaches to language learning and language teaching
 - the training or retraining of teachers for the teaching of ESP.
- 14 Seven out of nine topics may be defined as learner-centred, the two exceptions being “discourse analysis” and “description of specialized varieties of English” which may or may not be primarily concerned with teaching ESP. Indeed, as Isani observes, there is a consolidated tradition of ESP studies carried out by
- researchers who view ESP in its broader perspective of specialized language, discourse and culture or who, like Bhatia (2004) have moved away from pedagogic applications towards the analysis of specialized varieties of English as objects of study per se. (2013: 192–193)
- 15 This also applies to EAP where legions of scholars have been involved in recent years in pinpointing, for example, the features which distinguish one subgenre of research article from another, often as an intellectual pursuit rather than with a pedagogical objective in mind.
- 16 In my opinion, this dual nature of ESP studies deserves to be foregrounded more explicitly than perhaps it has been to date. The major strand in ESP is learner-centred, but there is also a robust minor strand in ESP that is concerned with analysing the features that characterize the myriad of subfields that constitute ESP today without necessarily being preoccupied about whether this will be beneficial to the way non-native speakers learn English.
- 17 I shall now briefly examine a number of ways in which the field of ESP may profitably develop in the future.

3. Deeper engagement with non-linguistic fields of knowledge

- 18 The call for linguists to work more closely with practitioners from other professional spheres is hardly a new one; it has been reiterated periodically by a number of scholars (e.g., Candlin & Candlin 2003; Cheng & Kong 2009; Sarangi & Candlin 2010; Sarangi 2012; Bhatia 2014, to cite a selection of more recent works). These days there are also journals such as the *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice* actively engaged in “moving to sites from a variety of other professional domains such as law, healthcare, counselling, journalism, business interpreting and translating, where applied linguists have major contributions to make.”³
- 19 And yet there still appears to be a common tendency among many linguists working in ESP to carry out research and publish papers without consulting professional practitioners engaged in the fields of, say, law, healthcare or engineering who may often provide precious insights as to why certain linguistic phenomena are the way they are.
- 20 One anecdotal example may suffice to illustrate this point. A few years ago, while working on a paper on the question of gender neutrality in legislative drafting in the English-speaking world, I was aware that on 8 March 2007 it had been announced in

Westminster that gender-neutral drafting was to be introduced in the UK. I therefore collected a corpus of legislative texts which went up to the end of 2008 (I completed the article in early 2009) expecting to find some instances of this new policy gradually creeping into the laws drafted in 2008. But I found that the old “sexist” language (e.g., the use of “he” instead of “he or she”) was still being used throughout, which made me doubt whether the pledge solemnly announced in 2007 had actually been implemented. I therefore wrote to the then Minister for Equal Opportunity Meg Munn as well as to drafters working in the Offices of Parliamentary Council in different parts of the UK to ask why no change in policy was discernible in recently passed legislation despite the announcement. I was informed that this was because the implementation of gender-neutral language only applied to new bills that were introduced after the autumn of 2007 but did not apply to bills that had already been introduced before that date. And given that it normally took many months, even years, for a bill to finally become law, the new policy would only become visible at a later stage, a state of affairs that I was subsequently able to verify.

- 21 The fact that I was alerted to this procedural rule meant that I did not jump to erroneous conclusions in interpreting the evidence provided by my corpus of texts. But this knowledge of the procedure was purely the result of my consulting experts in a field with which, as a linguist, I was not entirely familiar, despite my considerable readings in legal English over the years. I concluded my article by underlining the truism that, besides trusting the text, as John Sinclair (2004) suggests, one also needs to know the context (Williams 2008: 153). This inside knowledge can often come exclusively from the professional practitioners operating in that particular field but may well be beyond the intuitions of even an experienced linguist whose “speciality” is ostensibly in one or more of the branches of ESP.
- 22 Linguists should therefore approach ESP with a mixture of curiosity and humility and acknowledge that their familiarity with the subject area – be it medicine, law or engineering – is likely to be patchy at best. This of course is not to deny that linguists can also provide insights into the language of the professional/working world that would probably go unnoticed even by experienced professional practitioners.
- 23 Moreover, it is a fact that linguists today have a much clearer and more nuanced idea of the linguistic features characterizing a given genre or subgenre. To return again to the legal sphere, the tendency in the past was for linguists collecting samples of authentic texts to focus on cases representing “archetypal” written legal language such as contracts or laws rather than, for example, an oral cross-examination in court, partly because written data was more easily accessible than spoken data (modern technology has reduced this divide in recent years), and partly because of the relative absence of specifically law-related lexis in a lot of courtroom discourse, as in:

Well I know, I understand what you say you have been talking to her today, but you see what I am asking you is this, that statement suggests that you said those things which you now say are wrong to the police. Did you say it to the police or did you not?⁴
- 24 Today, thanks to the work of scholars such as Bhatia (2004), there is a greater awareness that hybridity is a constitutive part of specialized genres and that there can be major differences between subgenres belonging to the same field.

4. The importance of studying and teaching popularized forms of specialized discourse

- 25 English for Specific Purposes has to do with specialized forms of discourse with which the majority of native speakers will be unfamiliar: only a small proportion of native speakers will feel at home when reading a text or listening to a talk on, say, mechanical engineering, taxation law, quantum physics, debt restructuring, or the treatment of cancer of the colon. Hence the proliferation of popularized texts which attempt to make highly complex, technical topics comprehensible to the layperson. The number of such popularized texts has grown exponentially with the development of information technology. Gotti (2014: 19) sees popularization in terms of reformulation:

Popularization has often been described as a reformulation process; that is, a kind of redrafting that does not alter the disciplinary content – object of the transaction – as much as its language, which needs to be remodelled to suit a new target audience. In the process, information is transferred linguistically in a way similar to periphrasis or to intralinguistic translation. This phenomenon is also favoured by the widespread use of metaphor and simile in popularising processes. Both techniques establish a direct link with the public's general knowledge, which makes the content easier to identify.

- 26 But herein lies a paradox, as John Swales rightly pointed out in the discussion following the presentation of my paper at the GERAS conference held at Aix-en-Provence in March 2014: non-native learners of ESP (more often than not university students) may already possess a certain degree of technical knowledge about their subject in their native language but have relatively limited English language skills. If that is the case, they may well find that highly technical texts in English are easier to understand than their popularized equivalents which will tend to be written in a less formal, more idiomatic style using terms and expressions that may well be unfamiliar to non-native speakers (often the result of adopting a Germanic expression rather than its Latinate equivalent, as in *lousy take-off* vs. *atrocious imitation*). On the other hand, it could be strongly argued that these learners should also be aware of how native speakers – be they laypersons or experts – often tend to discuss complex topics of a technical nature not only in the professional sphere but also outside it. From a pedagogical point of view, then, it may well make sense when teaching non-native speakers to do the opposite of what one would do if one had a group of native-speakers wanting to acquire a specialized knowledge of a subject, i.e., start with relatively technical texts and gradually introduce more popularized texts at a later stage once the non-native speakers have acquired the necessary linguistic skills and technical lexis.
- 27 ESP scholars may also wish to pursue their research interests in identifying the discourse features that distinguish popularized forms of ESP texts with respect to specialized texts for the expert, bearing in mind that the dualism of specialized vs. popularized texts is an oversimplification and distortion of a highly complex and rapidly evolving situation, as numerous scholars have pointed out (e.g., Myers 2003: 269; Williams 2013: 37–38). To give just one example from the legal sphere, if, on the one hand, an academic journal on trust law and practice such as *Trust and Trustees* plainly veers towards the specialized whereas a John Grisham legal thriller would clearly count as a popularized text, where, for example, does one place along the specialized-popularized cline of legal English the body of papers written for the journal *Clarity* whose aim is to make legal language clearer and more user-friendly, or blogs

written by lawyers for fellow lawyers (often known as “blawgs”), or websites/leaflets advertising the services of lawyers to the general public, or a TV debate where politicians discuss a recently passed piece of legislation or proposed bill?

- 28 Particular mention should also be made of the phenomenon known as FASP (*Fiction à substrat professionnel*) which has enjoyed considerable success among ESP scholars in France since being first introduced by Michel Petit (1999) only fifteen years ago as “a theoretical framework for the many researchers interested in how popular literature engages with other disciplines” (Isani 2010: 182). FASP continues to be a fruitful source of ideas for ESP researchers investigating the interface between literature and specialized languages.

5. Exploring further the phenomenon of multimodality in relation to ESP studies

- 29 As Plastina (2013: 378) has observed: “Over the past, ESP has mostly fostered the development of the language skill of reading print-based texts or monomodal specialized texts.” It goes without saying that, in this increasingly digitalized world, the traditional way of getting learners to read textbooks on specialized topics has given way to the multimodal approach where video clips and other resources freely available on the Internet have revolutionized the learning process.
- 30 The pioneering work of scholars such as Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) has inevitably impinged on our idea of what now constitute the key issues of current research in linguistics and related branches, including ESP.
- 31 Indeed, a number of scholars today (e.g., Vaish & Towndrow 2010) argue that classes need to be multimodal in order to teach students the skills required in the 21st-century work environment. This clearly has repercussions on teaching methodologies and academic research in general which have had to adapt to changing circumstances and no longer focus solely – or even principally – on the written text. This rapidly-changing scenario represents an exciting challenge for ESP scholars insofar as new methodologies, terminologies and approaches are required in order to pinpoint the features of what constitutes an ESP “text” in today’s world of multimodal communication.
- 32 Moreover, the fact that the younger generations are increasingly au fait with the new technologies and the Web 2.0 environment constitutes a powerful teaching resource insofar as learners may well be able to provide up-to-the-minute information in the classroom, thereby narrowing the divide between teachers and learners. This contemporary view of the learner as interactive and creative participant in a collective learning process that incorporates multimodal technology and the Internet as an integral part of a classroom lesson should be taken into account by ESP researchers concerned with identifying what is meant today by “learners’ needs”. Plastina (2013: 378–379) highlights the inventive element for ESP learners that multimodality offers:

The opportunity of authoring multimodal texts by coherently integrating different digital media elements (texts, graphics, sound, animation and video) is becoming a popular practice among the net generation. The development of web-based authoring tools has drastically changed traditional ideas of authorship, as well as blurring the boundaries between speech and writing [...] developing multimodal communicative competence now needs to be at the forefront of ESP.

- 33 And yet, according to Prior (2013: 520), “multimodality seems to have remained a somewhat peripheral area of ESP research [...] the dominant research questions continue to be questions of language forms in monomodal frames.”

6. The potential of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL/EMILE)

- 34 Another area that has expanded rapidly in recent years affecting the scope of ESP studies is Content and Language Integrated Learning, known as EMILE (*Enseignement d'une Matière par l'Intégration d'une Langue Étrangère*) in the French-speaking world. CLIL as an acronym has existed for over twenty years and has made inroads in a number of countries, particularly in Europe but also in various parts of Asia (e.g., Japan, China and South Korea) as well as South America (in the USA scholars tend to focus on what is known as SIOP – Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol – rather than CLIL). The underlying philosophy of teaching CLIL is rather different from that of teaching languages for specific purposes insofar as the former is principally concerned with conveying the content of a non-language subject, such as mathematics or history, in a foreign language whereas ESP courses will tend to be taught by teachers of English who have graduated in language studies and have, in most cases, only subsequently acquired a content-based knowledge of, say, medicine, finance or law. González Ardeo (2013: 29) frames the similarities and differences between CLIL and ESP as follows:

CLIL and ESP share a number of key features, such as the use of content from different non-linguistic subjects, development of academic and communication skills, and use of communicative language teaching methodology. However, there are some key differences in these two approaches, and one of them is the objectives and learning outcomes. CLIL clearly states that content-learning objectives are equally or even more important than language-learning objectives, whereas ESP is language-led and language-learning objectives are of primary importance.

- 35 In Italy, for example, CLIL is now being implemented in secondary schools by subject teachers – an example of the so-called “hard CLIL” approach, rather than the “soft CLIL” approach where content-based material is taught by the language teacher. These subject teachers have been specially trained in CLIL methodological courses and where a certified C1 knowledge of the foreign language, in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, is required in order to be a qualified CLIL teacher, but there is no official collaboration between subject teacher and language teacher.
- 36 This tendency towards prioritizing content over language within the context of CLIL methodology has led to a shift in pedagogical concerns with respect to the more traditional ESP course especially where, as is the case in Italy, it is the subject teacher and not the language teacher that does the actual CLIL teaching, and this is arguably adding a new dimension to ESP. A considerable amount of research is currently being carried out in CLIL, and there are already a few journals devoted exclusively to it (see Appendix).⁵ This has entailed a gradual broadening of the readership of ESP (or ESP-related) studies and journals, once traditionally aimed primarily at English language scholars but now also increasingly consulted by teachers of non-language disciplines in search of ideas and methodological guidance for their CLIL courses.

- 37 A further stimulus for non-native teachers of non-language disciplines to consult CLIL/ESP-related research is the fact that higher education institutions outside the English-speaking world are increasingly being urged to provide courses in English – “internationalization” being the buzzword for universities the world over – thus obliging more and more non-native academics in, for example, agriculture, business management, medicine or engineering, to use English as the language of instruction. It has even been hypothesized (González Ardeo 2013: 24) that in the future academic institutions may favour CLIL courses as opposed to ESP courses:

The University of the Basque Country (UBC) is immersed in an ongoing process of internationalization and, consequently, its language teachers are witnessing an unstoppable process of Anglicization. At present, and presumably in the medium and long term, institutional decisions will continue to support CLIL in preference to ESP.

Conclusion

- 38 I have briefly outlined above my perspective on the rapidly-changing scenario of ESP studies, with a few suggestions as to which aspects may become the fruitful foci of interest for future research. Despite the prolonged economic crisis affecting most parts of the globe, the momentum of globalization bringing in its wake the consolidation of the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca and the spread of what is commonly known as “international English” continues apace. Hence the unabated expansion of English for Specific Purposes not only in terms of the number of students worldwide wishing to learn specialized English of a technical nature but also in terms of research into ESP. Notwithstanding its relatively young existence as a discipline, ESP research has already reached an appreciable level of maturity, but there is clearly scope for new approaches and insights which will help to improve our knowledge of ESP not only as an inexhaustibly rich field of research but also in terms of how best to teach the subject to the growing millions of non-native speakers requiring tuition in ESP.
- 39 And while it is undeniable that research in ESP has made great strides over the last few decades, there is always the danger of resting on one’s laurels and of not taking full advantage of the potential of this rapidly growing area of research in which there has been an exponential growth in the number of researchers involved in ESP as well as the number of journals devoted to ESP. I would therefore argue that any new work in the field should be truly innovative, focusing on aspects that stretch or question the boundaries of ESP. It is no longer sufficient (if ever it was) to take a corpus of texts on some aspect of specialized discourse and simply see what “turns up”. ESP researchers should ideally start with a hypothesis and then investigate the validity of that hypothesis. In the increasingly competitive world of academia where researchers are obliged to “publish or perish”, the gatekeepers of ESP studies need to ensure that only high quality work is accepted by rigorous peer reviewing.

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APPENDIXES

1. Journals devoted to ESP (the country, academic affiliation or publisher, where known, is provided in brackets)

English for Specific Purposes (Elsevier)

The Asian ESP Journal

College ESP Journal (China)

ESP World (Russia/Asia)

ESP Today: Journal of English for Specific Purposes at Tertiary Level (Belgrade, Serbia)

Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes (Nis University, Serbia)

ARTESOL English for Specific Purposes Interest Section (Argentina)

Taiwan International ESP Journal (Taiwan ESP Association)

ESpecialist (Brazil)

ASp (France)

ESP Across Cultures (Italy)

2. Journals devoted to Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) in general

Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice (Equinox Publishing)

Ibérica (Universidad de Cadiz, Spain)

LSP Journal – Language for special purposes, professional communication, knowledge management and cognition (Copenhagen, Denmark)

Revista de Lenguas para fines específicos (Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain)

Scripta Manent, the journal of the Slovene Association of LSP Teachers (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

3. Journals devoted to specific subfields of LSP

International Journal of Legal English (China University of Political Science and Law)

International Journal of Law, Language and Discourse (City University of Hong Kong)

Journal of English for Academic Purposes (Elsevier)

Journal of Academic Language and Learning (University of Queensland)

Journal of Academic Writing (University of Coventry)

The Journal of Medical English Education (Japan)

4. Journals devoted to CLIL

CLIL Magazine (The Netherlands)

International CLIL Research Journal (Finland)

Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning (Columbia)

NOTES

1. The search was carried out on 16 March 2014.

2. See <<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/english-for-specific-purposes>> last accessed 20 May 2014.

3. <<http://www.equinoxpub.com/journals/index.php/JALPP/index>> last accessed 21 June 2014
 4. <<http://www.otago.ac.nz/law/research/journals/otago036333.pdf>> last accessed 2 July 2014
 5. For a more exhaustive overview of CLIL resources currently available, including an ongoing bibliography on CLIL, see <<http://www.unifg.it/didattica/corsi-di-lingua-e-ecdl/didattica-lingue-straniere/clil>>.
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ABSTRACTS

In this paper I give a synopsis of the state of the art in ESP, briefly outlining the ways in which it has developed and the role it plays today in academic research and in foreign language teaching. I then suggest some of the ways in which ESP studies might evolve in the future, focusing in particular on the following: the need for deeper engagement with non-linguistic fields of knowledge (medicine, law, engineering, economics, etc.) and for more dialogue with practitioners operating in such fields; the importance of studying and teaching popularized forms of specialized discourse; exploring (and exploiting) further the phenomenon of multimodality in relation to ESP studies; the potential of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL/EMILE) as a tool for research and for language teaching methodology in the field of ESP; the need to ensure that future ESP studies focus on what is genuinely innovative, relevant, and interesting to teachers and practitioners. This very succinct overview of ESP studies past, present and future is aimed in particular at scholars who may be approaching ESP for the first time or whose knowledge of ESP may be relatively limited.

L'auteur fournit dans cet article un résumé de l'état de l'art en anglais de spécialité (ASP) ; il souligne la façon dont l'ASP s'est développé et le rôle qu'il joue actuellement au sein de la recherche universitaire et de l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère. Il propose ensuite des voies sur lesquelles l'ASP peut évoluer dans le futur et il se penche en particulier sur les pistes suivantes : la nécessité d'une implication plus profonde dans des domaines non linguistiques (médecine, droit, ingénierie, économie, etc.) et de plus de dialogue avec les praticiens de ces domaines ; l'importance de l'étude des formes de vulgarisation du discours spécialisé et de leur enseignement ; l'exploration (et l'exploitation) du phénomène de la multimodalité en lien avec les études en ASP ; le potentiel de l'enseignement d'une matière par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère (EMILE/CLIL) ; la nécessité de veiller à ce que les études en ASP se penchent sur ce qui est à la fois innovant, pertinent et intéressant pour les enseignants et les praticiens. Cette brève présentation des études en ASP passées, présentes et futures est destinée en particulier aux chercheurs en ASP novices ou à ceux dont les connaissances en ASP sont réduites.

INDEX

Mots-clés: anglais de spécialité, EMILE, innovation, interdisciplinarité, multimodalité, vulgarisation

Keywords: CLIL, ESP, innovation, interdisciplinarity, multimodality, popularization

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