University of Mohamed Lamine Debaghine -Setif 2-

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

Level: 3ʳᵈ year

Lecturer: Dr. Soumia BOUDINAR

Semester 1 : Introduction to English for Specific Purposes

Lecture 2:

A more recent delineation of ESP is that of Anthony (2018)

> "English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners, focuses on the necessary language, genres, and skills to address these needs, and assists learners in meeting these needs through the use of general and/or discipline-specific teaching materials and methods" (p. 10).

1. Characteristics of ESP

An alternative approach of defining what ESP is, was proposed by Strevens (1988). He suggests that ESP can be delineated through identifying its absolute and variable characteristics. It is apparent that Dudley-Evans' and St John's (1998) definition is inspired from Strevens' (1988) in most of its characteristics.

I.   Absolute Characteristics:

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;
- ESP makes use of the discipline it serves; underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
- ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

II.   Variable Characteristics:

- ESP maybe related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners. (Dudley-Evans & St John 1998, p.5)

It is obvious that the absolute characteristics are specific to ESP because learners' needs are of central importance when designing language activities.

Concerning the variable features, ESP courses can be designed for a specific group using definite teaching methodology, nevertheless, all learners" categories and disciplines can be concerned with ESP. For that reason ESP should be seen simply as an 'approach' to teaching, or what Dudley-Evans and St. John illustrate as an 'attitude of mind'. Similarly, Hutchinson and waters" (1987:19) stated that, "ESP should properly be seen not as any particular language product but as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning".

Similarly, Knight (2010, p.4) assumes that the teaching of ESP is characterized by:

➤ Learner-centeredness: the ESP course is defined by the learners. It is determined by what learners will need to do with the language in the target situation and how they might master the foreign language during the period of learning.

➤ Needs-based: the ESP course is designed to meet the learners' specific needs.

➤ Collaboration with workplace/content experts: ESP teaching is built on the basis of team teaching where there is the contribution of both subject-matter expertise and language teachers.

➤ Specificity and relevance (content-oriented): the teaching materials designed for the ESP course are authentic and relevant to the matter the ESP teacher aims to destine.

In fact, the above mentioned characteristics differentiate ESP from any other field of language teaching in terms of course design, materials production, and mainly learners' needs.

2. ESP Vs EGP

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that there is no difference between the two in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice. ESP, like any other language teaching activity, stands on facts about language nature, learning, and teaching; it is, however, often contrasted with General English.

ESP teaching approach is known to be learner-centred where learners' needs and goals are of supreme value, whereas General English approach is language centred, and focuses on learning language from a broad perception covering all the language skills and the cultural aspects of the English speaking community. However, In ESP after the identification and the analysis of specific learning needs, students learn "English en route to the acquisition of some quite different body of knowledge and set of skills".

Further distinction between General English courses and ESP is that, learners of the latter are mainly adult with a certain degree of awareness concerning their language needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Whereas, General English courses are provided to pupils as compulsory module at schools, their unique purpose is to succeed in the examinations.

Widdowson (1983) establishes distinctive features of ESP and EGP.

The most important EGP features are:

1. the focus is often on education;

2. as the learners" future needs are impossible to predict, the course content is more difficult to select;

3. due to the above point it is important for the content in the syllabus to have a high surrender value.

The most relevant ESP features are:

1. the focus is on training;

2. as English is intended to be used in specific vocational contexts, the selection of the appropriate content is easier;

3. it is important for the content in the syllabus to have a high surrender value, most relevant to the vocational context;

4. the aim may be to create a restricted English competence.

Homework:

<mark>**In a table, draw the main distinctive features between ESP and GE?**</mark>

Example:

Feature	GE	ESP
1. Language	It is an end in itself	It is a means to an end
2. Approach	Uses a language –centred approach	Uses a learning–centred approach