



MJAL 7:3 Autumn 2015

ISSN 0974-8741

**Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon
Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji**

**Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon
Universities**

LIMA BEATRICE KAHBOH LEBSIA TITANJI

Department of English

Faculty of Arts

University of Buea, Cameroon

Email: beatitanji@yahoo.co.uk

Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji (corresponding author)



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

ABSTRACT

There is no gainsaying that the English language is a vital tool in university and tertiary studies. The fact that technological developments continue to evolve each day tells us that the need for improving on learners' language skills should also continue to evolve. For a twenty-two years now the English language has been used in Cameroon for teaching general courses at the university level west of the Mungo; specifically at the University of Buea. As much as the general English courses have stood the test of time, there seems to be growing needs for English for special purposes to enable learners know the register and jargon of the various professions they intend to major in future. This paper sets out to highlight some of those reasons why it is important that learners go beyond second language learning (ESL). The University of Buea offers ENG 101 and 102 as a university-wide and compulsory course in ESL but it does not suffice to the needs of the students after they graduate. English for special purposes (ESP) is necessary it is an adult course and is tailored to meet the needs of people who already have some acquaintance with English and are learning the language to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions. An ESP course will thus be built on an assessment of purposes and needs and the function for which English is required.



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

Key words: English for Special Purposes (ESP), English as a second language (ESL), Needs analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The need for ESP grows as the learner specializes in his/her profession. The term "specific" in ESP refers to the specific purpose for learning English. The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the student's real world. It concentrates more on language contexts than on teaching grammar and language structures. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) states that ESP is a learner-centered approach to teaching which focuses on developing English communication skills in a specific discipline such as accounting, agronomy, engineering, IT technology and academic learning. ESP creates the real-world communication situation wherein learners become users. To achieve these ends, the student and teacher need to decide the activities and text materials that are most relevant to the student, profession and field of interest Galluzzo (2005). It is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners. Whereas ESL concentrates more on the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, ESP stresses on needs analysis which determine what language skills are most needed by the students and the syllabus is designed accordingly. (Lorenzo Fiorito 2005). An ESP programme might decide to focus on the writing skills in students who are preparing to work in newspaper writing or develop speaking skills in students who are studying English to become journalists, tourist guides or preachers. Galluzzo (2005) thinks that as well as the student is central in the classroom, the teacher is equally central and Nunan (1986) thinks that learner roles in an instructional system are closely linked to the teacher's status and function. The essence of ESP is



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

to focus on communication skills that would strengthen the students' performance in his/her area of specialty.

Someone has said, communication is a process whose life-blood is relationship. The consciousness of being related as a Sender to the Receiver or vice-versa, fuels the dynamics of any communicative move. According to Prabhu (1995), "the discourse which actually results in the classroom is shaped as much by learners' reactions as by teachers' intentions."

In ESP, students must be weaned from the temptation to see communication as another subject for the examination. They must be charmed out of the comfort of answering questions about communication in the quiet of the examination hall. They must be encouraged to see every concept as that which can be put into practice. The activities in the examination hall should be to test one's familiarity with the concepts. The greater test is the performance in the interview hall where consciousness of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. This is when we see that communication plays a very important role in everyone's life especially in one's professional life. It then becomes crucial and imperative for the teacher of ESP to be cautious of those concepts in designing his/her course outlines to fit the needs of the would-be professional.

The combination of language and subject matter of the student enables him/her to apply what is learned in the language classroom and remains a great motivator since the student learns what he/she is interested in. The vocabulary structures learned are in context and help to reinforce what is taught in the professional course thus motivating the student to learn more. The ESP teacher should be able to use the students' subject matter and make the most in the class which should make the students learn faster. The fact that students come to the ESP classroom within the context of a 'déjà vu,' the course becomes relevant to them. This being that they can use what they learn in the ESP classroom right away in their work and studies. Using the ESP approach



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

enhances the relevance of what the students are learning and enables them to use the English they know to learn even more English since their interest in the field will motivate them to interact with speakers and various texts that they will meet.

2. TEACHING OF ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BUEA

The University of Buea runs the Use of English course as a compulsory programme for all undergraduates but it does not focus on special courses as per profession which falls short of students' needs at the professional levels. This situation calls for an added demand in the teaching and learning of English to enhance their performance. The Use of English programme dwells more on the grammatical and remedial skills that many students miss out or were never taught at the secondary level. The ESP module suggests that English should come in and function in conjunction with the subject matter of the student. The time allotted for use of English is just two hours a week for twelve weeks which does not suffice the needs of the students; thus the need for a third module which can cater for the specific purposes in the professional area. The course content for use of English does not focus on the realities of the students after school reason why there is a need for ENG 103/ ESP.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ESP TEACHER

The ESP teacher comes into the classroom with a lot of experience from long years of teaching and it is his/her place to organize, strategize, plan and run the course to the greatest interest of the students. The teacher should be able to adapt his/her teaching skills to the ESP situation. Adaptation entails extra work and the teacher may find other specialists on the professions to



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

create texts that could be used as classroom materials that can be beneficial to the students. Study aids can be generated from texts on the field of study of the students as the case may be. This keeps the students within their professions in terms of vocabulary and usage. The teacher needs to do a needs analysis into the target learners which should shape the syllabus type to be chosen for the programme. ESP involves knowledge of many aspects of the field: needs, wants, goals, content, structure, purpose and social context. ESP teachers should be conscious of the level of their students and specialization and take note of the following:

- Avoid giving students intuitive ideas that are inaccurate, over-generalized or out of date.
- Teachers can increase learning by raising the status of students in class through genuine learner –centred classroom methods and data-driven learning.
- Teachers should engage students in deep thinking through student-centred, meaningful discussions and exercises.
- Teachers should include many different tasks and examples for students who prefer different learning styles; e.g. students can analyze authentic doctor-patient interactions and note the similarities and differences between these and general English.

The following table indicates the way students' work may be divided up to achieve the best potentials of ESP in a programme.

Table 1: Grading of students



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

No	Assessment	Number	% Each	Total %
1	Assignments	1	15%	15%
2	Project Work	1	15%	15%
3	Presentation of Project	1	20%	20%
4	Final Exam	1	50%	50%
5	Overall Total	1		100%

Classroom experience has shown that when a mark is put on a module, students usually work hard to earn the mark. It is for this reason that this article sought to distribute marks in the ESP grading system.

1. Assignments: This will involve research on the part of the students who will use resources out of the classroom such as the Internet and consultations and not wholly rely on teachers.
2. The reason for including a project into the programme is to enable learners take the course seriously and learn to work in the language on their own. Knowing that the project will carry part of the final mark, students may take the project module more seriously.



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

3. Presentation as a module in course assessment will help learners to communicate with other people out of their close friends and associates; classroom presentations also encourage the students to use the English language as much as possible in the productive skills of speaking and writing.
4. The final examination is the obvious part of all studies and aims at evaluating the work of every learner who would have been engaged in a learning process.

4. COURSE ORGANIZATION, GOAL SETTING AND OBJECTIVES

It is the prerogative of the teacher to organize the learning goals to meet student needs. The ESP teacher selects designs and organises course materials necessary for the programme. In the course of lectures, the learners are provided with feedback as they progress. The teacher sets long-term goals and short-term course objectives for students' achievements. The teacher's knowledge of students' potential is central in designing a course syllabus with realistic goals that take into account the students' concern in the learning process. A syllabus should never be designed without the student as main focus.

5. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The teachers' communication skills and collaboration should create an adequate classroom atmosphere. The language classroom should offer opportunities to use language and interact with other speakers. Sometimes, the teacher is the only outlet for the student to use the language with the student. Considering the limited time the teacher has with the students, effective communication skills can be structured in the classroom through activities related to students' knowledge and practices. The teacher should create supports for the students in the classroom



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

that can enable them function in the language. One way of doing this could be to create self-confidence in order to communicate better. Once students get self-confident in using the language, it becomes possible for them to interact with other speakers; first in the classroom and then outside. Besides aiding the learners to speak confidently, the ESP teacher also has the responsibility for making choices which determine what and how to learn and thus serving as a source of information to the students about how they are progressing in their language classroom. Evaluation thus depends on the teacher who indicates what is happening to each student on the programme at what time and level.

6. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ESP STUDENT

Like the teacher, the ESP student has his/her responsibilities to facilitate the teaching/learning process. English at this level of studies requires that the student finds time and resources to learn by him/herself while being taught. The ESP learner comes to the classroom with a specific interest for learning; as an adult learner, he/she has adult learning strategies and is in charge of developing skills to advance in the classroom. While the teacher does his/her part through materials development, the student should on his/her part show interest for learning. Interest can be facilitated by the teacher and student together; through proper interaction, teacher gets to know what the utmost interests of the learners are and focuses materials development on the specific areas of relevance as well as profession. ESP English should be presented in authentic contexts to make the learners acquainted with the particular ways in which the language is used in functions that they will need to perform in their fields of specialty or jobs. The vocabulary and structures of the English classroom serve as complements to the professional area and context; the students use what they already know about the subject to learn English.

7. LEARNING STRATEGIES



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

Adults must work harder than children in order to learn a new language, but the learning skills they bring to the task permit them to learn faster and more efficiently. The skills they have already developed in using their native languages makes learning English easier. These adult learners have language learning abilities that are potentially immense because educated adults are continually learning new language strategies in their native languages, since language learning continues naturally throughout our lives. They are constantly expanding vocabulary, becoming more fluent in their fields, and adjusting their linguistic behaviour to new situations or new roles. ESP students can exploit these innate competencies in learning English for their different professional needs. Fiorito (2005)

8. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION

After an evaluation of a programme and a description of policy and possibly a needs analysis outlined by the government, the administrators of institutions then decide whether or not there is a need for English for special purposes in a given institution. The responsibility of the administration at the level of decision-making is crucial because it is the administration that provides the funds, infrastructure and sets up new programmes. The responsibility is crucial in running every new course in a school and when it is deemed necessary, the groundwork takes into consideration all the variables that include input, process, output and outcomes.

9. COURSE OUTLINE FOR ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

ESP course outlines can be designed following the needs of the students and sometimes those of the institutions. If students indicate the need for additional English language lessons after a general English course, the administration can study the situation and then after evaluation introduce a special English course. On the other hand, if the administration after evaluation sees



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

that students' levels have not improved, it could decide to create an ESP course to salvage the situation. Whatever the situation may be, an ESP programme is best designed after a needs analysis which seeks to determine exactly what the learners need the language for. As already said above, language at this level is for professional and specific purposes and some learners may only want to focus on writing thus, one design will not fit all. The proposed design in this article will be for a writing module for engineers. Each teacher will be required to analyze the needs/purpose of his/her learners. Nunan, D. (1989) and then draw up a course design as the case may be.

Having determined the learners' needs through research tools such as questionnaires or interviews, the teacher will determine the outline for the technical writing course. The following may be necessary to study before drawing up an adequate design.

- Conduct a needs' analysis
- Conduct a language analysis of authentic data such as reports to determine the features of the genre of the text needed for the ESP context
- Decide on a teaching approach that will suit the learners' writing purpose and text type
- Ensure that the overall activities focus on promoting the type of writing outlined in the information gathered
- The information gathered should be enough to provide material to design a course for the learners.



MJAL 7:3 Autumn 2015

ISSN 0974-8741

Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

SAMPLE ESP COURSE OUTLINE

To illustrate the ESP concept I have decided to propose a prototype course outline which shares some common features with the standard ESP course outlines reviewed, but differs from those reviewed in proposing examining modules for projects, specialized registers and stylistics.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an English Language course based on the needs analysis of learners who wish to improve their level of the English language based on their professional leanings. The course will provide a broad introduction to language for specific purposes and further in-depth study of texts and vocabulary related to the learners' field of study. It will explore the means by which language functions in the field of engineering.

COURSE AIMS

The aims of the course will be

To promote engineers' ability to write different types of reports e.g. Instruction reports and Specification reports

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course objectives will be to:

- Recognise the organisation of different types of report
- Use appropriate grammatical structures and functions
- Write a full report with 80% accuracy
- Assess one another's writing



MJAL 7:3 Autumn 2015

ISSN 0974-8741

Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

- Use the appropriate technical and semi-technical vocabulary
- Use appropriate layout and punctuation
- Employ the process of editing and drafting
- Using linking devices where appropriate to produce cohesive text
- Express a variety of functions in writing
- Using spoken and written competencies in specific work places

COURSE OUTCOME

By the end of the course, it is expected that students will be able to:

- Describe the condition of something, e.g. piece of equipment.
- Give instructions or orders.
- Suggest actions to be taken.
- Clarify actions that have been taken.

ORGANISATION AND TEACHING STRATEGIES.

The course consists of four hours of formal teaching per week during which students are expected to participate actively. In-depth discussions of issues raised in the lectures would be encouraged. There will be opportunities for students to do presentations on aspects of language in society. Students are also expected to participate actively in feedback on presentations by other students to develop critical skills, and to participate fully in examining language samples to develop analytical skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Attendance Policy:



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

Students are expected to regularly attend lectures and tutorials and to participate actively in discussions and activities. Lectures and tutorials involve discussing readings and reviewing content of lectures. It is expected that students complete assigned readings to ensure that they can participate actively. Students are also expected to be punctual and remain for the entire class period. It is very distracting when students make an abrupt entrance into, or exit from the class. The lecturer/tutor must be notified if students need to leave class early for valid reasons.

The reason for including a project into the programme and subsequent presentation is to encourage the students to use the English language as much as possible in the productive skills of speaking and writing. Experience has shown that when a mark is put on a module, students usually work hard to earn the mark.

Basturkmen (2010) suggests course designs that could be useful in ESP. The following outline has been adapted to fit the Cameroonian situation and needs. By the end of the course, the students should be able to do the following as described according to the teaching weeks in the semester.

Table 2 below presents a prototype course outline which could be adapted to tertiary institutions to effect ESP courses.

Table 2: OUTLINE FOR ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

WEEK	TOPIC	CONTENT	OUTCOME	ASSIGNMENT
ONE	Introduction to	Mode of implementation	Students have an idea of the	Pair-work to



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

	the course	and assessment. Discussion on expectations of the course	course content	identify needs
TWO	The nature of ESP	Defining ESP. ESP vs EGP. Characteristics of ESP	Situating the course and relating it from EGP	Consultation of resource books
THREE	Developments in ESP	How English is used in Cameroon	Focusing on the learners' immediate needs	Group work: research on use of English in Cameroon
FOUR	Notions of genre	Discourse communities I	Students get to know what discourse communities are	Identification of students' discourse communities in relation to their profession
FIVE	Notions of genre	Discourse communities II	Students are introduced to the different jargons	Students identify jargons related to



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

			of discourse communities	their profession
SIX	Introduction to target situations	Case specific of students. What do they need to know? What are their goals?	Introspection by individual students	Group work: research on specific discourse of students' target needs
SEVEN	Continuous assessment I	Presentation of critical review of articles on the field of study	Students write and deliver oral presentations on selected texts	Reviewing journal articles for project
EIGHT	Target situation analysis	Briefing on project work	Students learn project-writing	Group-work: discussion on what to write
NINE	Project work (cont'd)	How to do a presentation	Individual students present their work	Practice of presentation
TEN	Presentation of projects	Individuals present written	Groups criticize projects	Groups revise and correct



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

		projects		presentations
TWELVE	General revision on presentation	Question/answer session	Classroom interaction	Group revisions
THIRTEEN	Class revision	Revision	Question/answer session	Group revision

Instructors may use the following grammatical structures to facilitate reports and presentations depending on the situation:

1. Present continuous
2. Present simple
3. Modals (shall, should)
4. Modals + passive infinitive
5. Simple present passive
6. Simple past passive

The ESP course will cover technical and semi-technical vocabulary in areas that may be problematic or unknown to students such as spelling, multi-word verbs and compound words/nouns. The instructor should be skillful in selecting texts that contain such vocabulary items that should strengthen the student in his/her field of study.



MJAL 7:3 Autumn 2015

ISSN 0974-8741

Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

ESP will surely call for extra resources and institutions should be of assistance to the students who complain most of the time about the lack of resources. The following series could be useful for the ESP class.

1. EXPRESS SERIES: Full references on the following can be found online if needed.

- Andrew Frost- English for Legal Professionals- Students' Book
- Rosemary Richley- English for Customer care
- David Gordon Smith-English for Socializing
- David Gordon Smith- English for Telephoning
- Marion Grussendorf-English for Presentations
- Kenneth Thomson- English for Meetings
- James Greenan, Tony Grice- English for Careers: Nursing 2: Class Audio CD
- Sylee Gore-Marketing and Advertising Students' Book



Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

- Evan Frendo, Sean Mahoney- English for Accounting: Students' Book

- 2. Amanda Ilic, David Howey, Marian Dunn, Nicholas Regan- English for Mechanical Engineering in Higher Education Studies

- 3. Judith Mee, Lesley Fitzpatrick-English ESL. All texts Study Guide (2009-2012)

- 4. Ian Mackenzie-English for the Financial Sector: Teacher's Book

- 5. Marie McCullagh, Rosalind Wright- Good practice Teacher's Book: Communication Skills in English for the Medical Practitioner

CONCLUSIONS

This article has argued that English for Special Purposes (ESP) is a course that can cater for the needs of the student after the general English course in the first year of the university. The transition from first year to intermediate and final year requires extra efforts to fit in the register and jargons of the fields of specialization. This paper has not only outlined the reasons why ESP is important for professionals, it has proposed a course outline that can be suitable for universities in Cameroon. The course outline presented here can be adjusted to meet the needs of learners in similar settings subject to the availability of the necessary input resources such as qualified teaching staff, access to library resources online and on site. Lee Iacocca says, you can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere. This just tells us how important it is to communicate at the work place which can be done through ESP.



MJAL 7:3 Autumn 2015

ISSN 0974-8741

**Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon
Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji**

REFERENCES

BASTURKMEN, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. Basingstoke PalgraveMacmillan.

DUDLY-EVANS, T. AND St. JOHN, M., (1998). *Developments in English for Specific purposes*. Cambridge: CUP

ELLIS, M. AND JOHNSON, C., 1994. *Teaching Business English*. Oxford: OUP

Galluzzo, G. (2005) Performance assessment and reviewing teacher education: the possibilities of NBPTS standards. *Academic Research Library* 74. 142-145.

HUTCHINSON, T. AND WATERS, A., (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learning centred approach*. Cambridge: CUP

MCDONOUGH, J. AND MCDONOUGH, S., ()1997. *Research Methods for English Language Teachers*. London: Hodder Headline Group.



MJAL 7:3 Autumn 2015

ISSN 0974-8741

Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji

NUNAN, D., (1988). *Syllabus Design*. Oxford: OUP

NUNAN, D., (1989). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: CUP

Douglas, D. (2000). *Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dudley-Evans, T. & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Flowerdew, J. & Peacock, M. (Eds.) (2001). *Research perspectives on English for Academic Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gavioli, L. (2005). *Exploring corpora for ESP learning*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Harwood, N. (2010). *English Language Teaching materials: Teaching and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K. (2006). *English for Academic Purposes: An Advanced Resource Book*. New York: Routledge.

Johns, A.M. (2002). *Genre in the classroom*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Long, M. (2005). (ed.) *Second Language Needs Analysis*. Cambridge, UK and New York:



MJAL 7:3 Autumn 2015

ISSN 0974-8741

**Teaching of English for Special Purposes in English-Speaking Cameroon
Universities by Lima Beatrice Kahboh Lebsia Titanji**

Cambridge University Press.

Paltridge, B. and Starfield, S. (eds.) (2013). *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*.
Boston: Wiley-Blackwell.

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press.