

ESP IN CONTEXTUAL INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

English occupies an extraordinary and complex position in the modern world. Its precise status varies in different places and is subject to constant change. Crystal (1995) in 'World English' considers different international varieties of English and asks whether English is under threat or it does pose a threat to the other languages. Tom Mc Arthur (1992) in 'English in the world and Europe' places the English language in a global context: English is European in origin but it is also owned by a vast number of speakers in other continents. These speakers can be grouped according to one tripartite model into ENL, ESL & EFL uses (the uses of English as native, second and foreign languages). As John A.P. states that English is not only taught as a compulsory second language but it is used very extensively as a medium of instruction in higher education, for transacting a wide range of state and private businesses and as the common language of India (1980:212).

It is believed that knowledge of English is a sort of power which increases the learners' abilities/opportunities by giving them access to better jobs or levels of political power (Mercer & Swan, 1996:271). It has the largest number of non-native users/speakers all over the world (Rao, 1992:13).

In this situation the teaching and learning of English, in fact the complete pedagogical paradigm is also changing. There is a need to have a new functional methodology which is learner oriented.

Officially English has the status of associate official language as in 8th schedule of the constitution of India. In fact it is the most important language of India. After Hindi it is the most commonly spoken language and probably the most read and written language in India.

It would not take much time to realize that in spite of a large amount of teaching materials and latest developed learning/teaching methodologies as well as aids the Indian learners are still encountering problems while expressing themselves in English.

However we find that some of our Indian engineering undergraduates are equipped with adequate English diction for the technical part of their academic and professional purposes but they encounter problems in CONTEXTUAL INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION due to lack of knowledge in functional diction and moreover these students are also not able to communicate to their management with appropriate interactive, interpersonal skills in English. It suggests that conventional ESP courses do not meet the needs of such students. So, this paper examines the implications of this suggestion, with special reference to the development of communication skills courses for engineering students at the Technological Institutes, India.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), not to be confused with specialized English, is a sphere of teaching English language including Business English, Technical English, Scientific English, English for medical professionals, English for waiters, English for tourism, English for Art Purposes, etc. Aviation English as ESP is taught to pilots, air traffic controllers and civil aviation cadets who are going to use it in radio communications. ESP can be also considered as an avatar of language for specific purposes.

II. AN INTRODUCTION TO ESP

2.1 Definition of ESP

2.1.1 Some characteristics

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners (Maslow's Hierarchy of needs)
- ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.
- ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, diction, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

III. VARIABLE CHARACTERISTICS

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines.
- ESP may be used 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.

IV. TEACHING

ESP is taught in many universities of the world. Many professional associations of teachers of English (TESOL, IATEFL) have ESP sections. Much attention is devoted to ESP course design. ESP teaching has much in common with English as a Foreign or Second Language and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Quickly developing Business English can be considered as part of a larger concept of English for Specific Purposes.

V. GENERAL ENGLISH

5.1 General aims of Teaching English

1. To develop students' ability to use English accurately, appropriately, effectively and fluently for communication in various situations. 2. To develop students' ability to read and understand texts in English on different subjects and topics with minimal help from teachers. 3. To develop students' ability to use English appropriately for effective written communication for some of the common communicative functions. 4. To hone their ability to listen to and understand English when used in academic and social situations. 5. To enable students to become self reliant for learning many aspects of language and also to learn other content subjects. 6. To enrich their knowledge of grammar for accurate and precise communication. 7. To enrich their vocabulary and to enable them to use words most appropriate to situations. 8. To develop their skills to read and appreciate literature and develop a liking towards English language.

The major domains of teaching English are listening, speaking, reading, writing, communication, grammar, vocabulary, study skills, literary skills

VI. ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP)

6.1 An approach that goes beyond the linguistic boundaries

The ESP professional has to go beyond the regular skills of a classroom teacher but act as a collaborative, researcher, evaluator, course designer, consultant and material's provider, most of which has to be obtained from real sources.

As far as ESL or EFL is concerned, everything or almost everything is ESP, for it is a content-based and audience-oriented approach.

6.2 Some historical background

In the 1960's the structuralistic approach underlined the English language teaching so that language learning was totally lead by the grammatical domain. The criteria for course design were based on broadly accepted principles for selection and ranking of grammar rules.

In the 1970's however these criteria started to be questioned, and therefore forced to become more explicit. A shift from language code to language use led to a new approach to the ELT, based on communicative needs.

Wilkins (1976, p. 55) stated that the first step for the construction of any language course or program was to establish the objectives to be reached. These aims should account for the learners' language needs as far as communication was concerned.

There was an attempt to break with the teaching that Abbot (1980, p.123) named TENOR (TEACHING ENGLISH WITH NO OBVIOUS REASON), when the language teaching focus was on the code, it was difficult to establish the students' needs, except in terms of the code itself. This way, a student would need the SIMPLE PRESENT before the SIMPLE PAST.

Therefore, once the investigations of language code as used by its users in given communicative situations were taken into consideration, the students' needs assumed a totally different perspective, towards a functional dimension.

In the 70's NEEDS ANALYSIS became the initial stage for a language course design. The specifications of objectives soon arouse the interest for aspects such as functions, notions, lexis, etc, due to the recognition of the relation between language code and use. Since then, the concepts of ESP and Needs Analysis have come together.

VII. But what is an ESP?

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES is an approach to English Teaching as a Second or Foreign Language, which aim is to empower a group of people with specific needs, no matter if for academic, professional or personal issues.

The whole course is tailor-made, so that the focus of the teaching content and method varies according to each field of interest.

Two major types of ESP have been recognized

- English for Academic Purposes
- English for Occupational Purposes

VIII. ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP)

The “specific purpose” most common within the university students is the reading of specialist literature in English. Consequently there is a consensus reduce the teaching of grammar is based to the minimum necessary for understanding academic texts. The emphasis is largely on a general course content to cover common problems (such as reading strategies), rather than specific courses according to the student’s field (e.g. English for Engineers).

IX. ENGLISH FOR OCCUPATIONAL PURPOSES (EOP)

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) do note that there is not a clear-cut distinction between EAP and EOP: “= people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to, a job”. Perhaps this explains Carter's rationale for categorizing EAP and EOP under the same type of ESP. It appears that Carter is implying that the end purpose of both

EAP and EOP are one in the same: employment. However, despite the end purpose being identical, the means taken to achieve the end is very different indeed.

It is important to point out: “... The language of international air-traffic control could be regarded as 'special', in the sense that the repertoire required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined target situation, as might be the linguistic needs of a dining-room waiter or air-hostess.

However, such restricted repertoires are not languages, just as a tourist phrase book is not grammar. However, the language used by air traffic controllers or by waiters are examples of English as a restricted language. Mackay and Mountford (1978) clearly Illustrate the difference between restricted language and language with this statement:

Knowing a restricted 'language' would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situation, or in contexts outside the vocational environment. (1978, p.4)

X. IMPLICATIONS of ESP

- Specialized varieties of English
- Discourse analysis
- Second Language Acquisition in specialized contexts
- Needs assessment
- Curriculum Development and Evaluation
- Materials preparation
- Teaching an Testing techniques
- Various approaches to language learning and language teaching

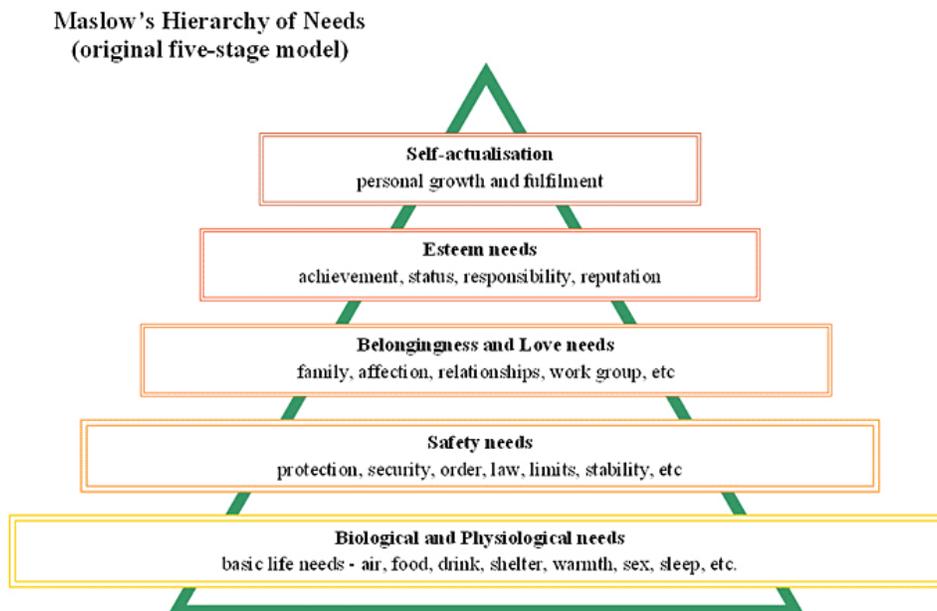
XI. Motivational psychological Approach in ESP

Abraham Maslow developed the Hierarchy of Needs model in 1940-50s USA, and the Hierarchy of Needs theory remains valid today for understanding human motivation, management training, and personal development. Indeed, Maslow's ideas surrounding the Hierarchy of Needs concerning the responsibility of employers to provide a workplace environment that encourages and enables employees to fulfill their own unique potential (self-actualization) are today more relevant than ever. Abraham Maslow's book *Motivation and Personality*, published in 1954 (second edition 1970) introduced the Hierarchy of Needs, and Maslow extended his ideas in other work, notably his later book 'Toward A Psychology of Being', a significant and relevant commentary, which has been revised in recent times by Richard Lowry in his own right.

These extended models have instead been inferred by others from Maslow's work. Specifically Maslow refers to the needs Cognitive, Aesthetic and Transcendence (subsequently shown as distinct needs levels in some interpretations of his theory) as additional aspects of motivation, but not as distinct levels in the Hierarchy of Needs.

These augmented models and diagrams are shown as the adapted seven and eight-stage Hierarchy of Needs pyramid diagrams and models below.

There have been very many interpretations of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the form of pyramid diagrams. The diagrams on this page are my own interpretations and are not offered as Maslow's original work. Interestingly in Maslow's book *Motivation and Personality*, which first introduced the Hierarchy of Needs, there is not a pyramid to be seen.



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Harding1 (2007) stresses that the general skills that a general English teacher uses e.g. being communicative, using authentic materials and analyzing English in a practical way are also applicable to ESP. He also suggests that teachers should:

- Think about what is needed and don't just follow an off-the-shelf course or course book;
- Understand the nature of their students' subject area;
- Work out their language needs in relation to their skills;
- Use contexts, texts, situations from their subject area;
- Use authentic materials;
- Make the tasks as authentic as possible;
- Motivate the students with variety, relevance and fun;
- Take the classroom into the real world and bring the real world into the classroom.

X. WHAT IS ESP EXACTLY?

People described ESP as simply being the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified, as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes.

ESP should be seen simple as an “approach” to teaching. Tony Dudley-Evans², co-editor of the ESP Journal gives an extended definition of ESP in terms of “absolute” and “variable” characteristics:

XI. ABSOLUTE CHARACTERISTICS

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners;
- ESP makes uses of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
- ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.
- *Variable characteristics:*
- ESP may be 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.

Based on the aforesaid concept it is suggested to teach ESP to the undergraduates (Engineering students) in Indian context into the following patterns:

- English for Mechanical Engineers(piston, stroke, thermodynamics etc....)
- English for Civil Engineers(hydraulics, soil mechanism, transportation, leveling, surveying)
- English for Electronic & Communication Engineers(transistor, diode, rectification, modulation)
- English for Computer Science Engineers (boot, mouse, keypad, routet,)
- English for Electrical Engineers(electro-magnetic force, direct current etc...)
- It is further suggested that the syllabi of the aforesaid courses should be based on the lexicon, terminology and concept of the respective engineering branches which are being pursued in the respective engineering students.

XII. ESP ALSO FOCUS ON ENGLISH AT WORK PLACE

12.1 English Used At Post Office

Letter, post card, mail, post office box, PO box, stamp, deliver mail, address, return address zip code, insurance, printed matter, junk mail, personal mail, postal money order, air mail, sea mail, mailman, postal clerk, picture post card, postage, cancelled stamp, commemorative stamp, postbox, mailbox, stamp machine

These English phrases will help you in a post office when you need to buy stamps, send mail, or use other services.

I'd like ..., please, an envelope, a packet of envelopes, a jiffy bag, could I have ..., please?

how many would you like?, how many are there in a book?, I'd like to send this to ...,

I'd like to send this parcel to, how much will it cost to send this letter to ...?,

Can you put it on the scales, please?, I'd like to send this letter by ...

where's the postbox?, what's the last date I can post this to ... to arrive in time for Christmas?

12.2 English Used At Airport

Arrival (*noun*): arrive.

Aisle seat (*noun*): the seat closest to the area that runs down the centre of the plane in-between the seats.

Departure (*noun*): leave.

Duty-free shop (*noun*): a shop in an airport where you do not have to pay tax.

Land (*verb*): Arrive - the plane stops flying and touches the ground on the runway.

Runway (*noun*): the type of road planes use to take off.

Stop over (*phrasal verb*): to stay at a place for one night or a few nights on the way to somewhere else.

Take-off (*noun / phrasal verb*): to leave the ground and start to fly. **cheat sheet**: a small piece of paper with answers or hints that you have with you

departures: flights that are leaving this airport

arrivals: flights that are landing at this airport

e-ticket: a ticket you purchased online and printed from your computer

aisle seat: a seat next to the long walking path on the plane

boarding pass: the ticket you give at the gates (has your seat number)

belt: clothing item that holds up pants (sets off metal detector)

metals: items such as jewellery, coins, belt buckles, knives, keys

liquids: beverages

expired: no longer useful (the date has passed)

check-in: show your ticket and ID and hand in your baggage

connection: the point where your plane lands and you must catch another plane

domestic: in the same country as the airport

international: in a different country than the airport

XIII. WE COMMONLY FIND TEN EXPRESSIONS WHILE SPEAKING AND WRITING AT AIRPORT

- [1] What is the purpose of your trip?
- [2] Did you pack this bag yourself?
- [3] Please do not leave any bags unattended.
- [4] Do you have anything to declare?
- [5] Flight BA333 is now boarding.
- [6] Flight UA666 has been cancelled.
- [7] Flight SA999 has been delayed.
- [8] Would passenger Jo Page please come to...
- [9] This is the final call for flight BA111 to
- [10] ...please make your way to Gate 99.

XIV. HOW TO USE THESE PHRASES IN YOUR ENGLISH

- [1] You hear phrase 1 when you arrive in the UK. The answer can be 'business', 'study', or 'pleasure' if you are visiting for a holiday.
- [2] Phrase 2 is asking about who put things into your bags. You should always pack your bag yourself and you should always answer 'yes' to this question.
- [3] Phrase 3 is asking you to keep your bag with you all the time. If you put it down and walk away, people will maybe think it is a bomb.
- [4] Phrase 4 is asking if you have anything in your bags that you need to pay tax to bring it into the UK (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, carpets).
- [5] Phrase 5 means that if your flight is BA333 you can now go to get onto the plane. Listen and they will tell you which gate to go to e.g. Gate number 16.
- [6] Phrase 6 means that this flight will not go. The airline has stopped it. If this is your flight it is very bad news.
- [7] Phrase 7 means that the flight is going to be late. Look at the information board and wait for new information.
- [8] Phrase 8 is asking for one person to go to an information desk. If it is not your name, don't worry about it.
- [9] Phrase 9 means that this flight will go very soon. If it is your flight, you must go quickly to plane.
- [10] Phrase 10 is telling you to go to Gate 99.

XV. ENGLISH USED AT RAILWAY STATION

15.1 Functional Diction of Railways

Acceptance (Of Rolling Stock) , Accommodation Bridge, Active Suspension, Air Bags, Air Brake, Alignment Angle Cock, Automatic Train Control (ATC),Automatic Train Monitoring (ATM),Automatic Train Operation (ATO), Automatic Signaling, Balancing Speed, Banking Locomotive, Battery Locomotive, Blocking Back, Bogie, Breakaway, Buffer, Centering Device,

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Check Rail, Chopper Control, Coach, Conductor, Dispatching, DMU, Driving Trailer (DT), EMU, Floating Slab Track, Gangway, Grade, Grade Crossing, Guard Irons, Paid Area, Pilot man, Running Rails, Rail Fare, Sand Box, Signal semaphore Signals, Signalman

XVI. ENGLISH USED AT BANK

16.1 Functional Diction of Bank

Bank Draft, Bank Statement, Bips, Bond, Borrower, Banker's Draft, Banker's Draft, Banker's Order, Bank Balance, Balance, Bank Rate, Cardholder, Chips, Commission, Credit, Credit, Credit Limit, Credit Rating, Deposit, Depositor, Direct Debit, Discount Rate, Draft, Interest Rate, Lending Rate, Money Market, Mortgage, Overdraft, Overdrawn, Passbook, Vault, Vault

16.2 Significance of The ESP

- Functional ESP provides a link to understand the global attitude
- It provides the gravity of technicalities of English language
- It motivates towards functional diction

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