

Teodora Popescu, The Business English Language Curriculum, 2017. Pp. 232, ISBN 978-606-543-858-3, ISBN 978-973-109-693-3

Abstract:

The book authored by Teodora Popescu is the result of research conducted along a twenty year time span of teaching ESP and business English and it bears fruit within the project Universals and variants of English and Romanian business metaphors. A corpus-based conceptual mapping of contemporary journalese, headed up by the author of the book.

The book was conceived with the aim of empowering business English and ESP teachers with know-how and skills necessary in teaching English for specific purposes, at the same time it raises future teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching language for specific purposes.

Its approach, content and topicality turn it into an instrumental tool for the ESP teacher. The book fills a theoretical and practical gap in the Romanian ESP and ELT landscape, its uniqueness also lies in the skilful combination between theory and practice. The book is very well documented, for each chapter and sub-chapter the author consulted a solid bibliography. Yet, the author does not limit herself to provide a very well-documented perspective on ESP, she also resorts to her rich teaching experience to complement theory with practice. The book is laden with practice, yet sometimes advice given is very subtle. Besides the pedagogical vein which permeates along the book, there is also the author's international experience which comes into play here. The author's rich experience in internationalisation impacts positively on the content, structure and insight the book provides. In her capacity of Erasmus institutional coordinator, the author had to align ESP courses taught at the University of Alba Iulia with the European practice.

The book is divided into four chapters, it is preceded by an Introduction, at the end of the book the author provides an alphabetical index of terms which are used in the book. In the Introduction the author announces the main topics each chapter deals with as well as the approach starting from general to specific, from the concept of curriculum to business language curriculum.

Chapter 1 Curriculum. A history of the concept tackles the concept of curriculum diachronically. It provides a theoretical and practical approach to the concept of curriculum as a key notion modern pedagogy operates with. The author starts by providing various definitions of the concept of curriculum, she continues by giving a detailed account of the main theorists who have been preoccupied by curriculum research, then she analyses the current status of curriculum studies. Subchapters Learning situations and experiences integrated in the curriculum and Educational programmes from a curricular perspective deal with the practical facet of the curriculum. The main actors who play active or less active roles in implementing the theory of curriculum as well as the various types of curriculum are referred to.

Chapter 2 The Language Curriculum clarifies the terminological difference between two main concepts curriculum – syllabus. The author makes an inventory of specialist literature studies which deal with the difference between these two concepts, mainly insisting on types of language syllabi, their components, criteria for selecting syllabi.

Chapter 3 The Business Language Curriculum integrates business language teaching into English for Specific Purposes education. The first subchapters focus on different aspects pertaining to English for Specific

Purposes Education ranging from origin to purpose and development. Among the components ESP encompasses, special space is allocated to business English, the author mentions the categories of business English learners and the two basic divisions of business English.

Subchapter 3.4 ESP development stages analyses the reasons which triggered the development of ESP, while sub-chapter 3.5. ESP nowadays portrays the current status of ESP.

Special heed is paid to the novelty of the 21st century, the author sees CLIL as one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century and minutely analyses the history of the concept as well as the elements supporting it. As member of the academic community, Dr. Teodora Popescu could not leave EAP aside. Mention should be made of the objective, unbiased perspective the author adopts when classifying EAP.

The author acknowledges the importance of corpora in the study of language, highlighting their importance in the process of teaching English for Specific Purposes.

In sub-chapter 3.7 General English vs. Business English the difference between general English and business English is tackled from a linguistic perspective, the author pinpoints the metaphoricity and the idiomaticity of the business English genre.

Subchapter 3.8 Business English materials design enumerates the options a teacher choose from as well as the stages this one has to follow in order to provide students with learning material adapted to their needs, skills, objectives. The issue of materials design is objectively tackled with reference to the Romanian and international landscape, as the author is an ESP contents designer herself. Yet the approach is not only objective, but also well-documented as in her capacity of contents designer the author has thoroughly studied all aspects pertaining to contents design of business English courses.

In subchapter Business English and culture the author stresses the importance of culture in business English courses, as well as in the business arena and she insists that it is vital to empower business students with cross-cultural communication skills.

A topic which has been less tackled by Romanian researchers, despite the plethora of international research, the metaphoricity of the business language is dealt with in sub-chapter 3.10 Metaphoricity of Business English. To prove the metaphoricity of the business English language the author resorts to research conducted in the field of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, but she collects her own examples, stressing the role of cultural motivation in the use of metaphors.

In the last subchapter A possible business English program paradigm, the author focuses on the ingredients which are necessary in learning a foreign language. The topic is dealt with from a double perspective that of ESP contents designer and practising teacher. The authors provides a strategy for empowering students with proficiency, at the same time she provides helpful advice to academics involved in teaching business English.

Chapter 4 Practical Applications puts together the practical components which come to support and complement the theory presented in the three previous chapters. In this chapter the author advances a structure of a business English textbook which she created as part of the course We're in business, published by Aeternitas Publishing House. The course consists of six general business topics which successfully integrate all business skills. The author carefully selects the content and structure of the six units she proposes, which makes the course an attractive option for teachers who teach business English at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Mention should be made of the originality of the tasks the author designs in order to empower business students with reading, listening, writing, speaking skills. The author provides the learners with a list of formulae to be used in different situations of communication. Throughout this chapter the author pleads for the use of authentic material in the business English class.

The sub-chapter 4.1.5 Building language structures focuses on lexical and grammar structures used in the business genre. The author designs a set of drills meant to enforce students' use of lexical and grammar structures, in designing the drills the author resorts to authentic material.

Subchapter 4.2 Translation in the business English class tackles an underexplored aspect in the Romanian

landscape, that of business translation. The experiments conducted by the author position business translation on the map of translation studies. Special heed is paid to the translation of figurative business language as well as to errors students make when translating business journalese. In order to empower students with translation skills the author designed a bilingual dictionary of business collocations. It is an extremely useful tool for students in business and economics, students in translation and interpreting as well as for professional translators and interpreters in various professional settings.

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