

Ling 3-581: English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Lecture 1: Introduction

Reading:



- Dudley-Evans & St John (1998): Chapter 1
- Hutchinson & Waters (1987): Chapters 1 & 2

Lecture outline

- A. Definition of ESP
 - B. Characteristics of ESP courses
 - C. Types of ESP courses
 - D. Carrier content and real content
 - E. Origins of ESP
 - F. The roles of the ESP practitioner
 - G. The role of specialized knowledge in ESP.
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Preliminaries

1. What do you think ESP concerns/refers to?
 2. How many types of ESP courses do you know/can you think of?
 3. How does an ESP course differ from an EGP (English for General Purposes) course?
 4. Have you ever taught an ESP course?
 5. Do you anticipate teaching an ESP course in the future? Why?
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A. Definitions of ESP

Definition (1)

- "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning"

Hutchinson & Waters (1987:19)

Definition (2)

- An extended definition of ESP in terms of '**absolute**' and '**variable**' characteristics (Dudley-Evans & St John 1998: 4-5).
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B. Characteristics of ESP courses

Absolute Characteristics

(Dudley-Evans & St John 1998: 4-5)

1. ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learners.
 2. ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.
 3. ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.
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Variable Characteristics

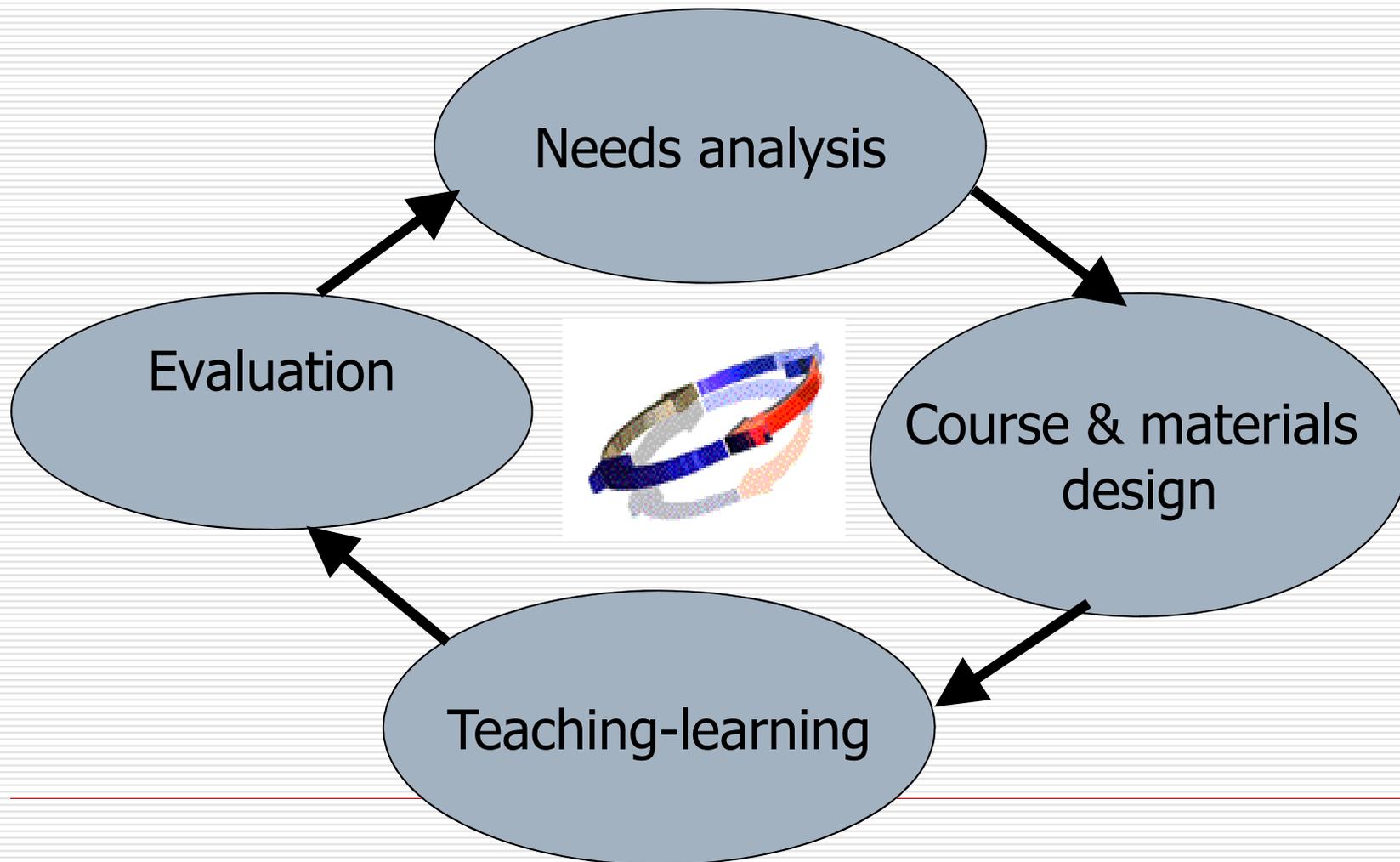
(Dudley-Evans & St John 1998: 5)

- ❑ 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 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 systems.

An ESP course...

...is based on a **NEEDS ANALYSIS**, which aims to specify what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English.

Stages in needs analysis



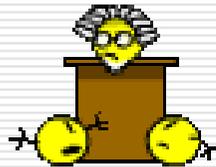
C. Types of ESP courses

Main divisions in ESP

□ English for Academic Purposes



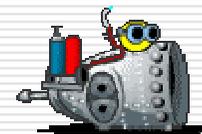
□ English for Professional / Occupational Purposes



□ English for Occupational Purposes

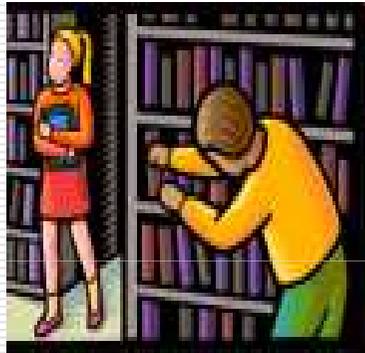
Examples of EOP

- ❑ Hotel and catering fields
- ❑ English for Tourism
- ❑ English for pilots / air traffic controllers
- ❑ English for Secretaries
- ❑ English for Technicians
- ❑ English for Legal Purposes
- ❑ English for Medical Purposes
- ❑ English for Business Purposes

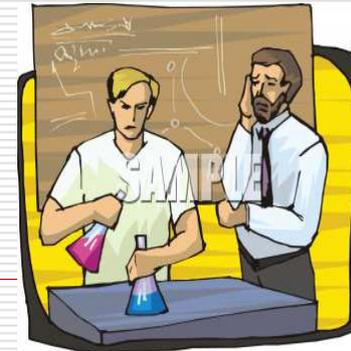
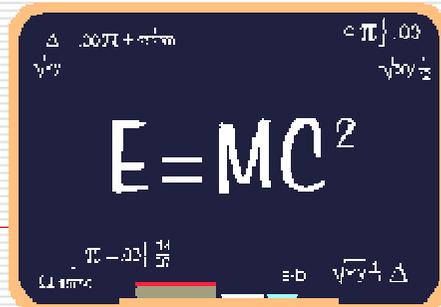


A main division in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

- ❑ English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)



- ❑ English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)



Another main division in EAP

- ❑ EST: English for Science and Technology
 - ❑ EBE: English for Business and Economics
 - ❑ ESS: English for Social Sciences
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Summary: Areas of ESP teaching

Branch	Sub Branches	Example
English for Academic Purposes (EAP)	English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)	English for academic writing
	English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)	English for law studies
English for Professional Purposes (EPP)	English for General Professional Purposes (EGPP)	English for the health care sector
	English for Specific Professional Purposes (ESPP)	English for nursing
English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)	English for General Occupational Purposes (EGOP)	English for the hospitality industry
	English for Specific Occupational Purposes (ESOP)	English for hotel receptionists

Discuss whether the following
are ESP courses.

(From Dudley-Evans & St John 1998: 5)

Are these ESP courses?

1. A course in remedial grammar for business people, with each unit based on a particular grammatical weakness identified by tests. **NO**
 2. A course that teaches undergraduate engineering students from various branches (civil, electrical, etc.) to write reports on design projects. **YES**
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Are these ESP courses?

3. A course in reading skills for postgraduate students from a range of disciplines, studying in a British university. The texts used are of a general academic nature, but are exploited to teach specific reading skills. **YES**
4. A course preparing students for the Cambridge FCE examination, based on a careful analysis of the contents of the test.

NO

Are these ESP courses?

5. A course designed to teach social English to a group of business people at intermediate level.

NO

6. A course team-taught with a subject lecturer, that helps postgraduates of a particular discipline understand departmental lectures.

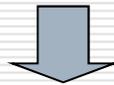
YES

Continuum of ELT course types

(*Dudley-Evans & St John, p. 9*)

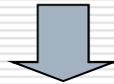
Position 1

English for Beginners



Position 2

Intermediate to advanced EGP courses with
a focus on particular skills



Position 3

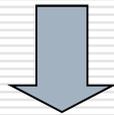
EGAP/EGB courses based on common-core
language and skills not related to
specific disciplines or professions.

Continuum of ELT course types

(Dudley-Evans & St John, p. 9)

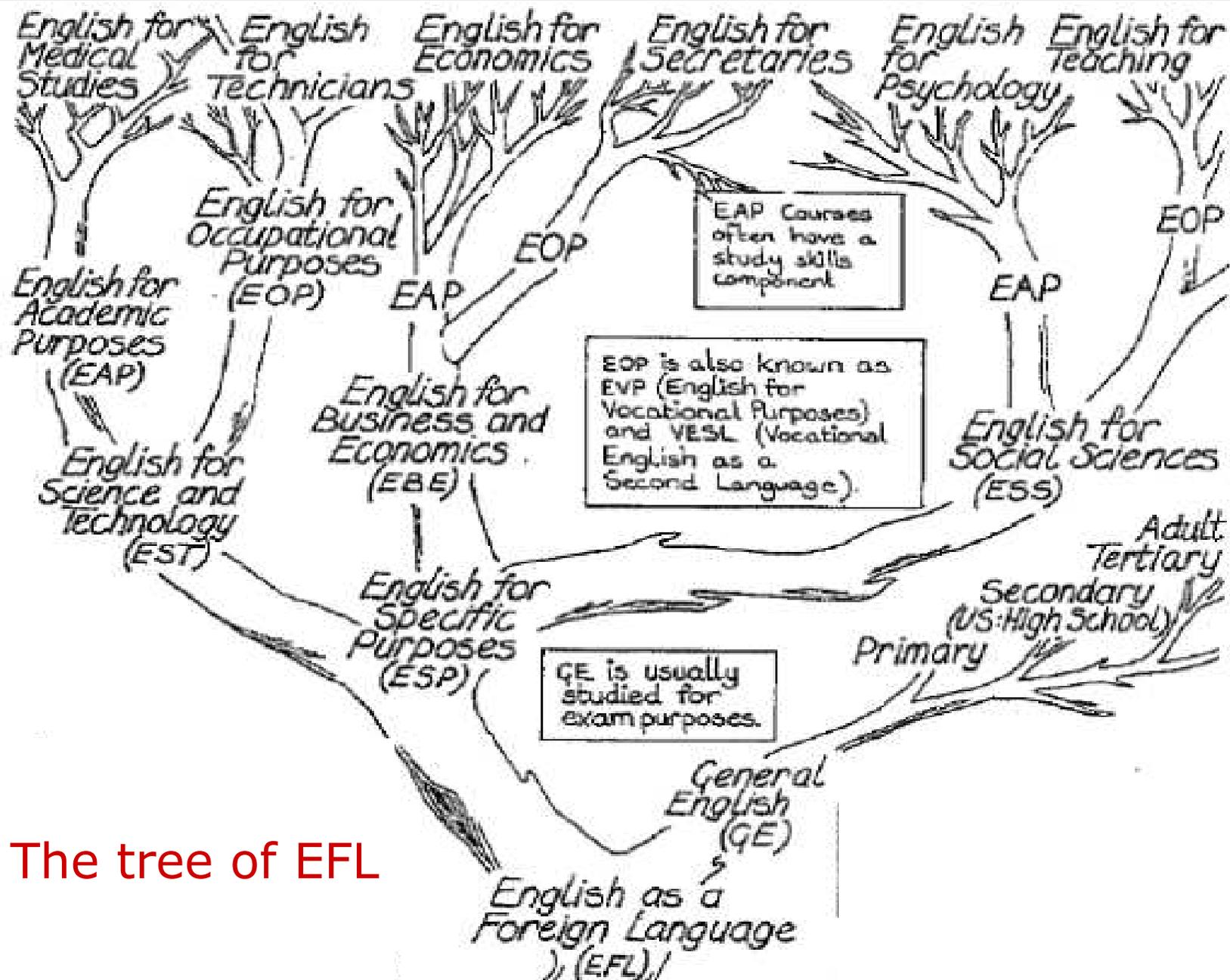
Position 4

Courses for broad disciplinary or professional areas, e.g. Report Writing for Scientists and Engineers, Medical English, Legal English, Megotiation/Meeting Skills for business people.



Position 5

- An 'academic support' course related to a particular academic course.
 - One-to-one work with business people.
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The tree of EFL

D. Real content & carrier content

- In ESP, all teaching activities are presented in a context. The specific language teaching point is the **real content** of the material and the context is the **carrier content**.
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Activity

- Have a look at the following extracts from ESP coursebooks and decide what the **real content** of the material is and what the **carrier content** is.
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Exercise 1. Make some true sentences from the tables below:

Decomposition of plants under pressure	results in	respiration.
Release of CO ₂ into the atmosphere		photosynthesis.
Decomposition of dead animals	results from	the formation of teeth and bones in animals.
Formation of hard water		the formation of rocks.
Absorption of CO ₂ by the sea	leads to	the formation of coal.
Production of carbohydrates		the release of CO ₂ into the atmosphere.
		the formation of shells.
		the combination of rain and CO ₂ .

Real content?

Carrier content?

Exercise 2.

A device that scans bar codes is called a *bar code scanner*. What name is given to:

1. A unit that gives a visual display of information on a screen?

visual display unit

2. A device that reads magnetic cards?

magnetic card reader

3. A device that plots graphs?

graph plotter

4. A unit that holds magnetic disks?

magnetic disk unit

Real content?

Carrier content?

Exercise 3

Find the word, or words, that the words in the rectangles refer to.

It is logical to suppose that things like good labour relations, good working conditions, good wages and benefits, and job security motivate workers. But it is argued that **such conditions** do not *motivate* workers. **They** are merely 'satisfiers' or, more importantly, 'dissatisfiers' where they do not exist. **'Motivators'**, on the contrary, include things such as having a challenging and interesting job, recognition and responsibility, promotion, and so on.

Real content?

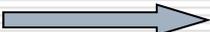
Carrier content?

E. Origins of ESP

(Hutchinson & Waters, Unit 1)

- ❑ The phenomenon of ESP begins in the 60s.
 - ❑ 3 main reasons for the emergence of ESP.
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1. Socioeconomic reasons

- ❑ WW2: Economic power of USA
- ❑ 1970s: Oil Crises  massive flow of funds and Western expertise in oil-rich countries.
- ❑ Expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity.

(1986: Of the 700,000 articles in the Science Citation Index 87,8 % were in English)

- ❑ Technological change ('information explosion')
(English web sites dominate cyberspace)
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1. Socioeconomic reasons

- ❑ English became the international accepted language of technology, science & commerce.
 - ❑ New generation of learners who knew specifically why they wanted to learn English.
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2. New trends in linguistics

- Shift from focus on usage (grammar) to focus on real communication (use).
 - Concept of distinct varieties of language according to use: Register-Discourse-Genre
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3. Focus on the learner

- Focus on the learners' needs and interests



- Needs analysis
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