

MODERN TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING ESP LESSONS

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ABSTRACT

The article talks about the modern techniques helds by the teaching ESP lessons. It is therefore worth examining how ESP can precisely benefit from ICT affordances, the combination of ESP and ICT leading to an emerging field of learning/teaching and research, that of Technology-mediated ESP Learning And Teaching (TESPLAT).

Keywords: ICT, CALL, LSP, GE, innovative, target language use situations.

INTRODUCTION

The way Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been integrated into language teaching and learning has evolved considerably since the 1980s (Leffa 2009), moving from Higgins's 1988 conception of Computer- Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as a metaphor for the magister to Bax's 2003 concept of technology "normalization", that is to say a stage of technological integration that is such that technology almost goes unnoticed (for example, using a videoprojector/beamer in the classroom). Still, the literature consistently points to the slow adoption of ICT by language teachers, be it teachers of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) (Zourou & Torresin 2019), and, more specifically, of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Kumar & Rani 2016, Li 2018). If this can probably be attributed to the lack of specific training received by LSP teachers (Howard 1997, Master 1997, Basturkmen 2014, Braud et al. 2015, Brudermann et al. 2016), it is certainly not due to the fact that LSP/ESP cannot benefit from ICT affordances as several authors have noted to what extent LSP teaching can make the most of ICT integration (Delcloque 1997, Mamakou & Grigoriadou 2009, Belcher 2017, Li 2017, Muñoz-Luna & Taillefer 2018). It is therefore worth examining how ESP can precisely benefit from ICT affordances, the combination of ESP and ICT leading to an emerging field of learning/teaching and research, that of Technology-mediated ESP Learning And Teaching (TESPLAT). To this end, the characteristics of ESP will first be discussed with special emphasis on the traditional – but outdated – dichotomy between ESP and what has been termed "General English (GE)". The predominant language learning theory in ESP teaching will then be examined as well as its methodological operationalization in relation to ESP objectives, before discussing the "special relationship" between ESP and ICT and outlining some key principles to successful ICT integration in ESP learning and teaching, the goal being to match ICT affordances to pedagogical considerations in an attempt to design pedagogy-driven ESP courses rather than technology-driven ones.

ESP must be seen as an approach not as a product. ESP is not a particular type of language or methodology, nor does it consist of a particular type of teaching material. Understood properly, it is an approach to language learning, which is based on learner need. The

foundation of all ESP is the simple question: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language?

Why teach ESP? We can indeed wonder why we should teach ESP at all in Higher and Adult Education settings in particular. Besides the obvious need for the training offered in Higher Education to lead to successful integration in the world of work, which applies to language training as well (Braud et al. 2017), the first practical reason for teaching ESP is that learners in these settings often have a limited amount of time to learn the language: “As students in ESP classes often have restricted time to learn English, it makes sense to teach them only the bits of English they need” (Basturkmen 2006: 18). It is precisely because time is counted that ESP teachers need to be selective in what they want to teach: “As it is not possible to teach all of a language, teachers and course designers must be selective. Nowhere is this more so than in ESP teaching, with its emphasis on specific purposes and the limited duration of most ESP courses” (Basturkmen 2006: 23). In short, ESP teachers are faced with a sense of urgency and accuracy (Mangiante & Parpette 2004), which means that ESP teaching is usually geared towards “target language use situations”

First, it is interesting to note that ESP and ICT seem to have a number of specific affinities, a phenomenon we could call a “special relationship”. Indeed, if we first focus on the most common ESP teaching and learning contexts, it has been shown that Higher Education and Adult Education settings offer teachers more freedom, that is to say more opportunities to experiment (with different ICT tools, for example) than other educational contexts as ESP teaching is sometimes qualified as “innovative” (Mémet & Petit 2001: 8; Hyland 2006: 35). Besides, in terms of specific constraints attached to ESP learning and teaching, large class size and the varying degrees of learner motivation (Sarré & Whyte 2006) call for a more pressing need for online or blended classes, which is one example of ICT integration. In addition, the typical ESP learner often has a more advanced proficiency level and is more autonomous (cf. the Higher Education and Adult Education settings), which means they are more able to cope with fewer face-to-face (F2F) sessions and can be offered more online/blended learning opportunities. When it comes to course objectives, ESP teaching can make the most of tools and environments that make it possible to recreate and simulate real-life work and academic environments and tasks. Finally, in terms of course content, using ICT in ESP teaching means it will be more in tune with the learners’ specialist domains for those involved in computer science.

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