

Language for Specific Purposes An Overview of Language for Specific Purposes Norris (2006, p. 577) states that the goals of most foreign language (FL) instruction in higher education within the United States are built around three main components: (a) the acquisition of the knowledge of language skills for general communication use; (b) exposing learners to other cultures and ideas; and (c) fostering an appreciation of differences in cultures and ways of thinking. An adequate career guidance, which always takes place either implicitly and/ or explicitly in an ESP course, will always take into account the harmonious conjunction of personal and social factors at the time of educating the personality of the students for the achievement of the conscious self-determination of their professional interests at the time of choosing a profession or consolidating their motives of election. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 8). Concepts such as students' needs and interests took relevance. That propitiated the elaboration of courses based on what was important for the student, tailored to his needs with the underlying idea that in such way motivation and performance of the student would improve. English for Specific Purposes is related, then, to applied linguistics and discourse analysis, pragmatics, socio-cognitive theory, communicative language teaching, the student-centered teaching trend, rhetoric and critical literacy. It is, by all means, a direct result of the world evolution in those fields of knowledge. The work –The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching,? These authors consider that the term specific is used to refer to the varieties of the language that is used in a professional activity. In 1975 the British Council, under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, made the first attempt of classification of ESP. Researcher Imola Katalin Nagy splits the history and development of the –ESP Movement? in four phases (2014, pp. 262– 272): a first phase, between the decades of the 1960s and the 1970s, in which ESP teaching focused on the sentence-level. According to Strevens, the essential characteristics of specific purpose instruction are that it: Consist of [teaching] which is: designed to meet specified needs of the learner; related in content (i.e., in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations, and activities; centered on the language appropriate to those activities, in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc; (1988, pp. 1–2) In other words, LSP (or ESP) incorporates both linguistics and content area knowledge that is specific to a particular context based on the needs of the learners. Syllabuses can be synthetic or analytic (Long & Crookes, 1993, pp. 11–12), grammatical, lexical, grammatical-lexical, situational, topic-based, notional, functional-notional, mixed or –multi-strand?, procedural or process (Ur, 2002, pp. 178–179), based on goals and objectives, competencies, standards, tasks and follow a comprehensive approach (Nunan, 1988, pp. 55– 65), among others. In more detail this definition means that the process of gathering information about the needs of a particular program or course requires that this information come from several different sources and perspectives (e.g., different stakeholders, such as potential or past learners, instructors, administrators, employers) and that this information should be gathered using a variety of complementary methods (e.g., interviews, surveys, document analysis, focus groups). The historical reasons behind this trend have been well documented and are beyond the scope of this volume (for a more detailed account, see Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Mackay & Mountford, 1978; Johns, 2013), but nevertheless, this rise has placed considerable value on ESP as a field of study, and as such, the majority of research on LSP has been carried out in English learning contexts.ese characteristics become essential at the time of defining what

a teaching based on English for Specific Purposes is and constitute the framework of reference for identifying it. In other words, English for Specific Purposes refers to the teaching of this language with markedly utilitarian purposes, with the objective of attaining specific abilities of the language making use of real situations, so that students can use it in their future profession or understand issues related to their area of specialization. Narrower views of LSP believe that the curriculum should be focused upon a fixed and limited set of language uses and features (Hyland, 2002; Johns & Dudley, 1980), fearing that a wider scope places LSP too close to general purposes curriculum and thus defeats the purpose of qualifying it at specific in the first place. The theoretical foundations that lay the ground for its significance, its history, its distinguishing features, its evolutionary developmental stages, its objectives, the roles of the practitioner, the stages for its teaching and the required elements for syllabus design are discussed in this article in order to contribute to its knowledge and later implementation in the teaching of English in specific contexts. Their theoretical and methodological contributions deal with the features and essential issues of ESP teaching, the definition of its categories, competence models and methodologies for teaching, exercises, tasks, techniques, methods and procedures, among others. A model that could be useful to implement, without excluding others which may be equally valid, is offered by Castillo, Corona, Macola and Pena (Corona & Terroux, 1997, pp. 25– 49), who argue and exemplify exhaustively the four stages of an operational model proposed by R. Mackay of Concordia University of Montreal, Canada. Likewise, in assessment terms, a study by Elias and Lockwood (2014) showed that while an LSP course assisted learners in gaining the skills to pass their interviews and secure employment, it lacked a connection to other tasks in the workplace and thus limited their ability to be successful at their jobs. Brown (1995, p. 36) defines needs analysis in the following way: The systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation. M. Gotti (1991) abounds on the topic and points out the conditions for the language to be specific: emphasis on the user (didactic sphere), in the reality of reference (pragmatic–functional sphere) and in the specialized use of language (linguistic–professional sphere), (cited by Gratton, Francesco, 2009, p. 14). They broadened the concept by adding more variable characteristics taking into consideration factors such as (a) in this approach teaching shares terms and abilities among the disciplines of study and the business activity and (b) its teaching must always reflect the underlying concepts and the activities of the discipline which is object of study. ESP as we know it today began in part as a reaction to the notion of TENOR as a way for curriculum developers to respond to the call for English education internationally in a way that was manageable and sensible for learners in EFL/ESL contexts (Abbot, 1981; Carver, 1983). Within ESP, several branches of study have emerged over the years, the best known and most frequently researched of these are English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Science and Technology (EST), and to a lesser extent, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). It is commonplace in courses devised for professionals of engineering, tourism, health care, aviation, informatics and business contexts.