

Book Review

Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes

Series Editors: Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield

Author: James Dean Brown

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With introductions of the Routledge publisher together with the biographies of the author—Professor Dr. James Dean Brown and the series editors—Professor Dr. Brian Paltridge and Associate Professor Dr. Sue Starfield, *Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes* is a book for curriculum development in the area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

In the book, three parts with seven chapters are structured and presented in chronological order according to the needs analysis process implemented in the ESP curriculum development. Of these three parts, Part I, *Getting ready to do an ESP needs analysis*, is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1, entitled *Defining needs analysis in English for specific purposes (ESP)*, defines the terms of needs analysis (NA) and ESP. The chapter also categorizes types of ESPs, explains how specific ESP should be, and presents the initial options in ESP needs analysis. The next chapter, entitled *Focusing the ESP needs analysis*, begins with scale and scope of the NA, then discusses all possible aspects of constraints on ESP NA and ends with more discussion of types of syllabuses and their importance to NA. Chapter 3, entitled *Selecting and sequencing ESP needs analysis data collection procedures*, explores the characteristics of successful NAs and factors affecting information-gathering choices. The chapter also presents 32 alternative NA procedures and ends with discussion of useful strategies for blending the procedures through sequencing kinds of procedures and utilizing the case study approach.

The second part of the book is presented under the theme *Doing the ESP need analysis*. This part consists of two chapters. Chapter 4, entitled *Collecting ESP needs analysis data*, suggests NA data collection process and strategies. Chapter 5, entitled *Analyzing and interpreting ESP needs analysis data*, suggests how to analyze and interpret NA data. As for quantitative or numeric data, statistical analysis techniques and presentation are described while matrices and corpus analysis techniques and presentation are recommended for qualitative data. In addition, applications of triangulation and mixed method research techniques are also suggested in the chapter.

Part III is of *Using the needs analysis results*. The two final chapters included in this part are Chapter 6, *Using the NA results in the rest of the ESP curriculum*, and Chapter 7, *Reporting on the ESP needs analysis project*. In Chapter 6, key issues of student learning outcomes are suggested to be defined, interpreted, and presented in the NA results. Strategies for revising and organizing student learning outcomes and for having teachers utilize student learning outcomes to link the NA with all other curriculum elements are also included in the chapter. Additionally, the last part of the book includes Chapter 7, which explains how to organize and present the results in an NA reports. The chapter also raises some important issues for having NA report published and highlights some useful ideas for thought-provoking NA.

Being specifically designed with the provision of the author's relevant experience and realistic examples with research back-ups, I found this book as a contemporary and accessible handbook to be applicable to not only the ESL but also the EFL, as in Thailand, contexts. After the integration of the world economy such as the connections between Asia and Europe (Rothermund, 2001), and regional groupings such as the ASEAN Economic Community (Fredrickson, 2016), English has evidently become a much more important language as a medium for communication among ASEAN nations, the native languages of which are different. The English language needs for academics and careers, particularly in the EFL contexts, have entailed an increasing awareness of the teaching and learning of ESP. However, according to Bhatia (2005), there are still problematic issues of new graduates' competence in English language

communication in workplace settings. He also traced back to the issues of challenging tasks for teachers to provide their students with integrated knowledge between the language itself and the disciplinary communication in ESP courses. Brumfit (1984) also raised another issue of an ESP training course difficulty to sometimes relate an academic context in the classroom with a professional context in the real world. Richards & Schmidt (2010) described that since ESP is practical for different disciplinary groups of learners, it is inevitable to conduct needs analysis as a prior basis of the ESP curriculum development. Due to these issues and one of the specific features of ESP previously mentioned, it can be argued that the know-how of conducting the needs analysis in ESP courses should be introduced and widely be promoted to teachers and curriculum developers of ESP courses.

Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes could help resolve such aforementioned issues as the idiom, “You Reap What You Sow.” Initially equipping students with adequate skills of the English language and communication through provision of ESP courses for which curricula were systematically developed based on learners’ and stakeholders’ needs analysis data suggested in this book could be an appropriate alternative. This alternative could, to some extent, assist educational institutions to produce newly-graduated students with competence in English and communication skills in response to stakeholders’ needs for academic and professional aspects in the future.

Furthermore, since the content of this book was provided in the scope of ESP which covers English for a number of professions, the minimal usage of jargon and other academic conventions, such as e.g., i.e., and cf., as claimed in the book is a good idea to facilitate the understanding of the interested readers who are involved in different settings. In the book, the provision of theoretical background of ESP could deepen the understanding of the readers. Without the provision of the theoretical background, the readers may be misled into the relationships among the terms ESP, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English for Occupational purposes (EOP) based on the categories of ESP on Page 7, for instance. Practical tasks introduced in each chapter such as task 1.2 on Pages 17 to 18, can also help readers to check whether they comprehend the

theories and/or the concepts of ESP. In addition to the support of helpful theories and useful tasks presented in individual chapters, the readers' comprehension can be rechecked through personal reflection exercises placed at the end of important concepts in all chapters.

With such thoughtful design of this compact-sized handbook, it is also found that all that the author provides in the book should suit its target groups of readers, who are curriculum developers, pre-service and in-service teachers as well as postgraduate students in Applied Linguistics, Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), TESOL and Education. All in all, this book provides an earnest and worthwhile contribution to its professional development value in the teaching of ESP.

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Reviewer

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