A LEXICAL ANALYSIS IN THE WRITTEN DISCOURSE OF SEMI-TECHNICAL VOCABULARY IN PSYCHOLOGY: AN ESP PEDAGOGIC PERSPECTIVE

BY

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ABSTRACT

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has received greater attention than general English from curriculum experts and materials designers in view of the specificity of the work. In the area of ESP, vocabulary development has also received special emphasis, particularly in terms of semi-technical vocabulary. A review of the literature indicates a much needed investigation on semi technical vocabulary in introductory psychology written discourse. This study was undertaken to examine semi technical vocabulary in introductory psychology texts and provide a pedagogical framework in designing an ESP course for psychology students using semi-technical vocabulary. A combined framework of Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) of semi technical vocabulary and Widdowson (1983) framework of designing an ESP course, and the framework of McEnery and Wilson (2001) of using corpora to provide specific materials for language learning and teaching were utilized for the purpose of this study. A qualitative study was conducted on a sample of 30 students with three lecturers from the department of Psychology, of a public institution of higher learning in India. A variety of qualitative tools were employed for eliciting information, namely, discourse analysis of the authentic writing samples of the students, content analysis by language and psychology experts, and text analysis of the authentic psychology textbook used by the students and teachers. The data obtained highlights the semitechnical vocabulary from the written discourse of psychology. The discourse and content analysis findings reveal the semi-technical vocabulary used by the students and the understanding of the students of those words. The text analysis findings reveal the semi-technical vocabulary list according to the frequency of its occurrence in the text obtained by a word count and frequency statistics software. Based on the findings of the study, a pedagogical framework is recommended for designing lexical syllabus using semi-technical vocabulary for psychology students. The framework includes the approach for the lexical course, the syllabus organization, the frequency and range of the words, teaching methods, scope and sequence, and the assessment method for lexical based ESP syllabus using semi-technical vocabulary. The proposed lexical course addresses the immediate needs and interest of the ESP teachers in designing the course, while keeping in mind the course organization, teaching methods and content organization for the vocabulary needs of the students because of its relevance to their specialization and English language.

خلاصة البحث

تلقى مادة "الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة — أو الإنجليزية المتخصصة" اهتماما أكبر من خبراء المناهج ومصممي المواد الدراسية، نظرا لخصوصية العمل وتخصصه، ففي هذا المجال يلقى "تنمية المفردات اللغوية" تركيزا خاصا، ولاسيما من حيث المفردات شبه الفنية. ويشير استعراض موجز للأدبيات إلى أن القليل جدا من البحوث تناولت قضية "المفردات شبه الفنية" في الخطاب المكتوب لعلم النفس التمهيدي. لقد استهدفت هذه الدراسة بحث "المفردات شبه الفنية" في نصوص علم النفس التمهيدي، وتقديم إطار تربوي لتصميم خطاب "الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة" المقدم لطلاب علم النفس باستخدام المفردات شبه الفنية. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف، استخدمت هذه الدراسة إطار العمل المشترك "للمفردات شبه الفنية" الذي طوره (هتشينسون وواترز، ١٩٨٧؛ دودلي–إيفانز وسانت جون، ١٩٩٨؛)، وإطار العمل الخاص بتصميم "الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة" الذي طوره وودسان (١٩٨٣)، وإطار عمل استخدام المجاميع لتوفير مواد محددة لتعلم وتدريس اللغة الذي طوره ميكنري وويلسون (٢٠٠١). وقد قامت الدراسة أيضا بإجراء دراسة نوعية على عينة تضم ٣٠ طالبا مع ثلاثة مدرسين مساعدين من قسم علم النفس بمؤسسة حكومية للتعليم العالي في الهند. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، استخدمت الدراسة مجموعة متنوعة من الأدوات النوعية لاستخلاص المعلومات من أفراد العينة، وهي على سبيل التحديد تحليل الخطاب في العينات الأصلية المكتوبة من قبل الطلاب، وتحليل المحتوى من خلال خبراء في اللغة وعلم النفس، وتحليل نص علم النفس الأصلي في كتاب علم النفس المقرر الذي يستخدمه الطلاب والأساتذة. وكشفت نتائج تحليل الخطاب والمحتوى عن المفردات شبه الفنية المستخدمة من قبل الطلاب وعن فهم الطلاب لهذه المفردات؛ بينما كشفت نتائج تحليل النص عن قائمة المفردات شبه الفنية وفقا لمعدل تكرارها في النص (وقد تم الحصول على هذا المعدل من خلال برمجيات خاصة بحساب عدد الكلمات وبإحصاءات التكرار). بناء على نتائج الدراسة، توصي الباحثة بوضع إطار عمل تربوي لتصميم المنهج المعجمي باستخدام المفردات شبه الفنية لطلاب علم النفس، على أن يضم هذا الإطار منهجا لمادة معجمية، وتنظيم المنهج، وتكرار ونطاق المفردات، وطرق التدريس، ونطاق التسلسل، وطريقة تقييم الثروة اللغوية القائمة على أساس منهج "الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة" الذي يستخدم المفردات شبه الفنية. يتناول هذا المقرر الدراسي المعجمي المقترح الاحتياجات الفورية ومصلحة معلمي مادة "الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة" في تصميم المنهج أو الدورة الدراسية، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار تنظيم هذا المنهج وطرق تدريسه وتنظيم المحتوى بحيث يلبي احتياجات الطلاب للمفردات اللغوية نظرا لأهميتها لتخصصاتهم بصفة خاصة ولإجادتهم للغة الإنجليزية بصفة عامة.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion; it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English for Specific Purposes.

        …………………………………..
        Isarji Bin Haji Sarudin
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English for Specific Purposes.

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        Afiza Mohamad Ali
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This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Languages and Management and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English for Specific Purposes.

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        Nuraihan Mat Daud
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to highlight the importance of the contribution of vocabulary to courses and teaching materials in English for specific purposes. The study attempts to discover the semi-technical vocabulary present in the written sources of psychology, as semi-technical vocabulary seems to offer an organizing principle for a lexical based ESP syllabus. Hence, psychology is a discipline which consists of bundles of semi-technical lexis in its written form which can be useful for ESP teachers in developing a curriculum and materials for psychology students. This study is concerned with the effort to provide ESP teachers/practitioners with authentic semi-technical lexical content from the discipline of psychology and develop lexical based curriculum and materials for ESP teaching by using a combination of different written sources of the discipline of psychology containing semi-technical vocabulary. Based on the semi-technical lexis, a lexical based syllabus and materials are developed for teaching English to psychology students. This study attempts to minimize the difficulty of ESP teachers dealing with technical material and developing lexical based courses using authentic semi-technical vocabulary. The results of this study will provide ESP teachers a pedagogic perspective of using semi-technical vocabulary in developing materials for psychology students. The results will highlight the teaching approach and syllabus, the organization of the syllabus, teaching methods, task development and assessment for designing a lexical based ESP syllabus. Even though this study focuses on psychology, the pedagogic recommendations can be used by ESP teachers in teaching any discipline.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In recent years, there has been growing international interest in designing second and foreign language courses specific to work-related needs or academic objectives of well-defined groups of learners, generally adults who have studied general English in school but who need to demonstrate on the job proficiency in either a specific skill area such as reading or in a specialized content area such as technical English. The impetus for the specialization of English as a Second language course objectives and content is one consequence of the role that English has taken on as an international language in fields such as science, technology, business, or commerce (Christopher DeMarco, 2011).

According to Far (2008, p.3), "ESP is as recognizable activity within the broader professional framework of English language teaching (ELT), with implications for the design of syllabuses and materials as well as its presentation and then evaluation." Brunton (2009, p.2) states that "ESP has increased over the decades as a result of market forces and a greater awareness amongst the academic and business community that learners' needs and wants should be met wherever possible." The learners not only should possess the general knowledge of the language use but also the use of specific vocabulary in relation to their subject matter. The need of the learners is to be exposed to material relevant to their specific field in order to be able to develop their language skills and knowledge. Hutchinson & Waters (1987, as cited in Brunton, 2009) explain three reasons for the emergence of ESP. They are, the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics and a new focus on the learner. This concept highlights the principle that the English of a specific science differs from each other in terms of the grammatical and lexical features of different registers. Register analysis in ESP is tailored for the pedagogic purpose.

1.1.1 Register Analysis

The notion of ESP came up in the 1960s and it was often associated with a special language or register. At that time, register analysis was used to design ESP courses but the results failed to meet desired outcomes (Brunton, 2009). Hutchinson et al. (1987, p.19) states that, "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". English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has received greater attention than the more general term from curriculum experts and materials designers.

Varieties of language used in specific situations and in specific contexts are referred to as 'registers' in linguistics (Atkinson & Biber, 1994; Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, &Finegan, 1999; Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 1978; Leckie-Tarry, 1993). The main motive behind register analysis is a pedagogic one of making the ESP course more relevant to learners' needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). The assumption behind register analysis is that, while the grammar of scientific and technical writing does not differ from that of general English, certain grammatical and lexical forms are used much more frequently (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). However, according to West (1998), it restricts the analysis of texts to the word and sentence level (cited in Haseli Songhori, 2007, p.16). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) also argue that most materials produced under the banner of register analysis follow a similar pattern, which begins with a long specialist reading passage which lacks authenticity (cited by Massouleh and Jooneghani, 2012, p.63). Register analysis can be used to determine authenticity of language in relation to lexical and grammatical features. (DeMarco, 2011). Therefore, the content of an ESP syllabus should be based on an approach of communicative language teaching i.e. interactive in nature.

1.1.2 ESP Material Design

Hutchinson and Waters argue that the course design process should be more dynamic and interactive. In particular, factors concerned with learning must be brought into play at all stages of the design process. Materials Development in ESP courses is very crucial and it shows the effort and creativity of the course designers as well as the teachers. Authentic materials that are used in the real world are the best materials that should be used in any English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) courses. This would give the students an overview on the real world that they will be entering once they have graduated. It will also motivate them to learn English as learning English for second language learners has always been a problem due to lack of vocabulary knowledge and lack of confidence to name a few (Nor, Mahdun & Abudhahir, 2014, p.110).

Nor, Mahdun & Abudhahir (2014, p.110) cited Sysoyer (2000) who said that, "Materials in ESP are tailored to meet the needs and interest of a specific group of learners. Taking into account the issue of centrality of the learner's needs analysis is said to be the main features that many authors in the field of materials design agree of". The course designers as well as materials designers should be able to reach to different target audiences with a variety of materials in order to cater to the different needs of the different learners. It is necessary for the course and material designers to focus on developing materials with suitable methods and teaching approaches such as involving lexical, task based, communicative activities and problem solving which incorporate the needs of the learners. The ESP approach has often been compared favorably to English for General Purposes (EGP) approaches, and its proven effectiveness has been attributed to its focus on the needs of learners in a specific discourse community and its attention to grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse, and genre training (Anthony, 2009) (cited in Anthony, 2011, pp.1-2)

1.1.3 Vocabulary in ESP

The area of English for Specific Purposes, which according to Hutchinson & Waters (1987) is not different from other forms of language teaching, has emphasized the role of vocabulary in language learning. Dudley-Evans & St John (1996, p.80) suggest, " the teaching of technical vocabulary is not the responsibility of EAP teachers and that priority should be given to the teaching of 'semi-technical' or 'core vocabulary'". A major concern in ESP courses, as Dudley Evans & St John (1996) state is the so-called semi-technical vocabulary. Semi-technical vocabulary by definition refers to " a whole range of items which are neither highly technical nor specific to a certain field of knowledge, obviously general in the sense of being everyday words which are not used in a distinctive way in specialized texts"(Baker, 1988, p.91). Semi-technical vocabulary is formed by lexical units from common language which have acquired one or several new meanings within a knowledge field (Alcaraz, 2000). This vocabulary is polysemic, as it keeps its original meaning while adding the one belonging to the specific context.

The methodological approach used in the analysis draws on corpus linguistic method. Various theoretical concepts and frameworks such as Hunston and Francis' (2000) Pattern Grammar or Hoey's (2005) concept of Lexical Priming have emerged from corpus-linguistic approaches to language (Wulff and Romer, 2010). Corpus linguistics is a research approach to investigate the patterns of language use empirically, based on analysis of large collections of natural texts. While corpus-based analysis has had relatively little influence on theoretical linguistics, it has revolutionized the study of language variation and use: what speakers and writers actually do with the lexical and grammatical resources of a language (Biber and Rippen, 2011). The basis of using corpora in language teaching and learning is the rising awareness that learners

need to understand that there is variability in language use (Stern, 1992) (cited in Menon and Mukundan, 2010, p.242).

Andriani (2014) clearly highlights that "In the Asian educational context ESP has turned into a trend and a reality".Teaching English in higher education should be directed to the specific purpose in relation to its major. By studying ESP, it is hoped that students will learn specialized vocabulary so that they are able to read and find information in English in their respective field.

Rasekh and Simin (2011, p.2) assert that:

> A significant aspect of language instruction at a tertiary level is learning English for a given purpose, with the specific aims of getting to know specialized vocabulary, enlarging one's knowledge of the subject matter by reading in English and being able to use the language in the prospective profession or study areas by becoming prepared for some common situations such as carrying out higher level studies, going for an interview or conducting professional correspondence (Rasekh & Simin, 2011, p.2) (Cited in Andriani, 2014, pp.31-32)

Teaching vocabulary especially in ESP courses is becoming a challenge for English Language Teachers. Vocabulary is an inseparable part of any teaching syllabus and vocabulary should be taught in a well-planned and regular way. It is essential to carefully decide what vocabulary will be selected for teaching, and what approach or activities will be used to teach it to the students. McCarthy (1990, p. viii) points out that "No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way" (McCarthy 1990, p. viii). Schmitt (2000, p.131) emphasizes that "the object of vocabulary learning is to transfer lexical information from short-term memory, where it resides during the process of manipulating language, to permanent long-term memory." (Xhaferi, 2010, pp.231-232)

1.1.4 Problems in Teaching ESP

A study conducted by Ho (2011), revealed that course designers and teachers encountered problems related to the design of the course, the tasks, assignments and the teaching methods.

Problems in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) could be categorized into five broad problems (Gita Andriani, 2014, p.36). They are (1) teaching pedagogy (2) the teachers (3) the design of the course (4) students' ability and (5) students' needs. The problems are explained by Andriani (2014) in detail as follows.

According to Andriani (2014, p.36), "in teaching pedagogy, it involves the unclear theoretical basis of ESP, whether ESP should be viewed as a tool or a discipline or whether ESP should be considered a practical skill or knowledge capital." ESP should reflect the fact that many ESP teaching, especially where they are linked to a particular profession or discipline, makes use of a methodology that is different from the methodology used in the teaching of General English (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) (cited in Nor, Mahdun and Abudhahir, 2014, p.107). Jendrich & Wisniewska (2011) argue that a task is a tool that makes language teaching more communicative. They propose how to design tasks to make teaching more meaningful for learners. One of the tasks is a group project by taking advantage of technology. They further argue that students enjoy interacting with peers and engage willingly in meaningful communication.

The second problem according to Andriani (2014) is concerned with teachers. She said about the problem that "it is in relation to identity crisis of the teachers. There is an argument about who should teach ESP, whether it is language teachers or subject teachers. Language teachers sometimes do not understand the material fully, so they will face difficulty in explaining the content of, for example, a reading text. Meanwhile, the subject teachers sometimes have language problem which will restricts them in

teaching English for Specific Purpose" (pp.36-37). Andriani further explains that "the target products that learners require can vary dramatically and evolve rapidly over time, especially after the learners enter the workplace" (Anthony, 2011, p.3). So it is better to train the learners in the processes of observation, recording and analyzing texts since this will result in skills they need in the real world. Anthony (2011) argues that the best positioned to teach the learners are non-specialist ESP practitioners. Therefore, developing product-oriented knowledge skills of a narrowly defined, highly specialized discipline will provide learners with skills that they will be likely in need for the real world. On the other hand, training learners in the processes of observation, recording, and analyzing texts will result in a set of skills that are much more regular and stable, and more importantly, highly valued in the modern workplace. These are exactly the same skills that ESP practitioners themselves use when developing effective traditional ESP courses. It follows that ESP practitioners are the most qualified people to teach learners these skills in an ESP classroom setting (p.3). Andriani (2014) said that the third problem is about the design of the course. "Sometimes there are too many materials to be mastered in a very little time. The design of the course should be made in such a way as to cover this problem." As has been stated at the beginning of the chapter, needs analysis plays an important role in ESP.

Therefore, before designing a course, the authority should conduct needs analysis first in order to discover what the goals of the students are. Dudley- Evans and St. John, 1998, as cited in Songhori, 2008) offer a comprehensive concept of needs analysis which includes environmental situation, personal information about learners, language information about learners, learners language deficiencies, requirements from the course, language learning needs, professional information about learners and how to communicate in the target situation" (p.37). "The next problem, according to Andriani (2014), deals with the student's ability. He said that, "The language teachers

should avoid conducting ESP courses too early. This will lead to difficulties since the students have not mastered their subject fully, let alone being able to understand their subject in English. It would not be in accordance with the learner's needs which should be considered first. The program provider should also consider the time and also the amount of workload of the students. It is useless to have many materials but not enough time to cover them all. It is better for the program provider to take the most important parts of the material which meet the learners need to be designed in ESP course" (p.37). This study is an attempt to provide authentic content which can be included according to the needs of the students into different language teaching materials. The ESP practitioner gets full authority to add or subtract information according to the needs of the learners from the whole bundle of content information.

Finally, findings from the study mentioned by Andriani (2014) highlighted that "the studies explained before have proved that learners encountered problems in reading, vocabulary, writing and grammar. This was due to lack of knowledge of basic language use which resulted in more problems in ESP in terms of content. In relation to this, cultural differences which lead to negative transfer sometimes become a factor in an unsuccessful ESP course. Teachers should pay attention to the teaching methodology in order to be able to help learners to be successful in the ESP course" (p.38).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

ESP research on semi-technical vocabulary and lexical based syllabus design has covered many areas such as electrical English, engineering English, computer science, science textbooks and so on. However, the semi technical vocabulary from the written discourse of psychology has not been investigated in the context of ESP teaching. This study focuses mainly on lexical analysis and materials development for English for psychology. The reason for choosing psychology is mainly that ESP practitioners need

authentic content from the discipline itself for pedagogic purposes. Currently there is a lack of a specific syllabus or materials that can be used as a guide in the teaching of English for psychology. Materials designed for English for psychology (EP) should be carefully designed so that they have an impact on the students and create an interest in them to learn English. In the past years, lexical level has been neglected because lexical syllabus has been under rated over functional and situational syllabuses for ESP teaching. It becomes a primary concern to produce a list of semi-technical vocabulary items which can be used in designing and teaching a lexical syllabus in ESP for psychology.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to identify the frequently used semi-technical vocabulary in psychology discourse. The study focuses on the understanding and knowledge of semi-technical vocabulary of undergraduate students of psychology. An understanding of semi-technical vocabulary is crucial as it plays an important role in writing. The research also focuses on highlighting the importance of semi-technical vocabulary and its implications for teaching a lexical syllabus in the field of ESP.

Recommendations for teaching a lexical syllabus and its implications in an ESP class are also given for ESP practitioners.

For the purpose of this study, the following research objectives and questions have been formulated.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the semi technical vocabulary used by the students.

2. To investigate the students understanding of the semi-technical vocabulary.

3. To examine the semi-technical vocabulary in an introductory psychology textbook.

4. To provide recommendations for designing an ESP course for psychology students using semi-technical vocabulary.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions based on the research objectives are:

1. What is the semi technical vocabulary items used by the students?

2. What is the students' understanding of the semi-technical vocabulary?

3. What are the semi-technical vocabulary items present in the introductory psychology textbook?

4. What are the pedagogical implications of the results of the study for designing an ESP course for psychology students using semi-technical vocabulary?

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on a combined theoretical framework of Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) of semi-technical vocabulary. The area of English for Specific Purposes, which according to Hutchinson & Waters (1987) is not different from other forms of language teaching, has also emphasized the role of vocabulary in language learning The analysis of the English of Psychology in this study follows the tradition of register analysis of ESP, which aims to identify grammatical and lexical features of special languages and use this information in developing materials (Hutchinson & Waters 1987, pp.91). Hutchinson & Waters (1987) refer to register analysis in ESP as a stage which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, and