
Poster Presentation

Developing ESP Users' Information Literacy

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This article presents proposals for a series of classes aimed at developing information-seeking skills of ESP users. The scenario of the classes is based on the results of a large observation study into students' information-seeking behaviour. The classes could possibly be integrated into most ESP classes.

Information-seeking Skills in the Context of ESP

In today's information-saturated reality, even the most comprehensive ESP course cannot be expected to cover the entire range of knowledge in a specialised field. Moreover, with the development of sciences, the fields of expertise are becoming increasingly specialised, resulting in the constant creation of new terminology. Thus, it is probable that in their future careers the students will have to deal with topics that exceed the content of standard ESP classes.

One may argue that the current generation of students is tech savvy and as such does not need to be taught how to look for information. However, as existing research shows (Madden, 2005; Margaryan, Littlejohn, & Vojt, 2011 ; Nicholas & Rowlands, 2008), there is "little evidence in the literature generated for claims that young people are expert searchers, or even that the search prowess of young people has improved with time" (Williams, Rowlands, & Fieldhouse, 2008, p. 170). As Kamińska-Czubała (2007, 2013) explained, this is because information-seeking behaviour in various situational contexts is not governed by the same rules. Moreover, it seems that the search strategy applied by a particular person might not necessarily be the most efficient one. Subsequently, teachers

may expect students to be adept at using social media or email but have limited knowledge of specialist programmes or webpages that contain information related to ESP translation.

Moreover, according to Béjoint (1981), Atkins (1998), and Chi (2003), traditional dictionaries are also not handled well by the majority of students. Chi (2003), in her strong comment, provides an explanation why:

It is chimerical to believe that ... N[on] N[ative] English-speaking users first would, without training, have the initiative, ability and knowledge to search through the many new dictionaries available and find one to suit their needs. This would imply that they understand the innovative features found in current dictionaries, are able to identify their own needs and match them with the claims made by various dictionaries, and then successfully pick the right one(s). The assumption goes further: that users will teach themselves how to use a particular dictionary by referring to the introductory pages at the front of the book, and be able to use the dictionary to solve their problems. Finally, they will be so satisfied with the dictionary that they will continue using it in their learning [or translation]. Such assumptions are unrealistic. (p. 2)

Taking the above into consideration, it seems that education in the area of information seeking is necessary. Such education may aim to make students more self-reliant during the learning process, which is especially important once they leave their educational institutions and face new challenges related to the use of ESP on their own.

Accordingly, what should such education look like? This paper herein describes a series of proposals for classroom activities aimed at developing information skills. The scenarios of these classroom activities are based on the results of a large observation study into students' information behaviour (Sycz-Opoń, 2015). The study aimed to discover the typical behaviours related to looking for information during translation of a legal text, and at the same time reveal common mistakes and problems encountered by the students. During the observation sessions, the participants were divided into pairs. One person in each pair was assigned the task of translating a legal text with the use of available sources of information (printed, desktop, and online). Their conduct was

observed by the other participant in each pair sitting nearby, who were asked to record their colleague's information behaviour by filling in a special Observation Protocol (Appendix). The experiment sessions were also registered by means of a screen and audio recorder. After statistical analysis of the results of the study, recommendations related to teaching information-seeking skills were formed. The recommendations constitute the basis of the following teaching scenarios.

Scenarios for Classes Developing Information Literacy of ESP Users

Class 1: Presentation of Dictionaries

Class aims: to broaden students' (usually superficial) knowledge of dictionary content and structure

Teaching method: inductive learning, task-oriented approach

Duration: 1 hr 30 min

Scenario of the class:

1. The students are presented with various dictionaries available on the market, with special focus on specialist dictionaries.
2. Students do a quiz containing questions referring to the macro- and micro-structures of various dictionaries (e.g., Are phrasal verbs located within a dictionary entry, or do they constitute separate entries? What does C/UC abbreviation stand for, and which dictionaries provide that information?).

Class 2: Presentation of Other Sources of Information

Class aims: to familiarise the students with unconventional sources of information, especially websites that contain specialist linguistic knowledge. Moreover, to present advanced search options offered by the sources, which facilitate the information-seeking process (e.g., use of asterisks or inverted commas).

Teaching method: workshop, practical approach

Duration: 3 hr

Scenario of the class:

1. The tutor presents various online sources and demonstrates how to use

them on an interactive whiteboard or projector. The students copy their moves and practice navigation of the sources on computers. Presented sources: machine translators, professional translators' forums (proz.com), encyclopaedias, online text corpora (e.g., Google Books, Google Scholar), online parallel texts (e.g., Glosbe, Linguee), and websites devoted to specialist subjects (e.g., legal matters) that can be treated as ESP corpora or a source of specialist knowledge.

2. Homework: students are asked to prepare the list of lexical items they believe are difficult to find. At the beginning of the following lesson, the students are divided into groups and asked to compete against each other. One group gives the other group a word or phrase that they have to locate in available sources and measures the time until the task is completed. The winner is the group that has been able to look up lexical items in the shortest time span.

Class 3: Strengths and Limitations of Various Sources of Information

Class aims: to make students realise that there exists no source of information that would contain answers to all their linguistic dilemmas, especially in the context of ESP. The students should discover differences between various sources, so that they would know which one is most likely to contain required information.

Teaching method: inductive learning (i.e., students test the effectiveness of various sources through trial and error).

Duration: 1 hr 30 min

Scenario of the class:

1. Students are divided into groups
2. They are asked to find equivalents to several terms in the sources made available to them. Each group uses different sources.
3. The results of their search are compared and evaluated in classroom discussion.
4. The class ends with students forming conclusions about the strengths and limitations of the sources that they were able to test.

5. Test (next class): students are provided with several terms and phrases (embedded in a particular context) and asked to find definitions, collocations, and equivalents.

Class 4 (Optional): Practicing Use of a Particular Type of Source

Class aims: motivating students to use new sources of information. Observations of students during classes revealed unwillingness to try out new sources, even when they realise that it might be beneficial for them in the long run. According to Zipf (1949), people are generally reluctant to use a new solution, because that requires effort at the beginning before one learns how to use it. If a tutor observes such attitude among their students, it is a good idea to prescribe the use of one particular source during several lessons. When given no other option, the students would use a given source and hopefully soon master it and appreciate its functionality.

Teaching method: process-oriented classes

Duration: 4 hr 30 min

Scenario of the class:

1. Students are assigned exercises involving ESP
2. They are asked to use only a certain type of source (e.g., only parallel texts) when they need to obtain information required to complete the assigned task.

Conclusion

The above-presented classes mostly involve experimenting with the sources of information in order to learn their structure and form opinions about their functionality. It is crucial that this *experimenting phase* is followed by the phase of *habit formation*. During the remaining ESP classes, the students should form good information-seeking habits, so that in the future they could automatically apply effective search techniques when faced with linguistic problems. In order to achieve that goal, the topic of consultation of sources should be regularly raised during classes (e.g., by asking the students: *where did you find that information?*). Moreover, it is recommended that the teacher discretely observe the students when they work on ESP exercises and step in when they exhibit wrong search

techniques or encounter problems. The combination of the two aforementioned approaches (experimenting/ discovery phase and habit-formation phase) should bring satisfactory educational results (i.e., make ESP students efficient information researchers), which may help them pursue their future careers in ESP-related professions.

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Appendix

Fragment of the Observation Protocol translated into English

Consulted Term/Phrase:

| Source | Why Is This Source Consulted? | What Info Is Being Sought? | Look-Up Result |
|--|--|---|---|
| Name (author): | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speed of search • easy-to-use • convenient • specialist • reliable • well-known | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equivalent of the term from the original text • meaning of the term from the original text | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfactory • not satisfactory, why? • partly-satisfactory, why? |
| If a dictionary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bilingual • monolingual • printed • computer • internet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at hand • no particular reason • other, what? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meaning of the equivalent provided in a bilingual dict. • confirmation of info • definition • collocation • context of use • grammatical properties • does not know • other: | |
