The Language of Architecture and Civil Engineering

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English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has traditionally been defined as concerned with the teaching and learning of academic or professional discourse by specific communities. Strevens (1988: 1-2), for example, views ESP as oriented to meet the specific needs of the learners, and thus centered on the language appropriate to carry disciplinary activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre. Also in this line is Hutchinson and Waters' (1987: 19) claim that the intrinsic goal of ESP lies on its accommodation to "the learner's reason for learning".

This is what *The Language of Architecture and Civil Engineering* does: it depicts the language of the Architecture and Civil Engineering (ACE) discipline in the light of its pedagogical application, whether for students or for professionals of the discipline. The volume is thus written to respond to the one of the main reasons learners of the ACE community have for learning, that is, to be able to successfully communicate in academic and professional settings. This socio-cognitive dimension of disciplinary communication supports this work, meant to meet the specific needs of these learners while rooted on the underlying theoretical assumption that, as a discourse community, ACE practitioners create their own discourse, shaped by sets of culturally-influenced discoursal conventions concerning their intended audience and the communicative purpose to be achieved.

Arranged in a number of independent, yet interrelated, chapters, the volume is set to explore how ACE discourse is created and which generic, rhetoric, cognitive and lexico-grammatical conventions characterize their texts. Yet this discourse-analytical purpose is interwoven with its pedagogical purpose, since the ultimate goal of this work is to help members of the ACE community to develop appropriate, convincing and engaging discipline-specific communication skills. It is this applied linguistics perspective of the volume that provides it with texture.

Chapter 1 deals with the message organization in the language of ACE revising the most common academic and professional genres and exemplified in the exploration of the typical structure and moves of two of these genres, the abstract and the report. The analysis is extended to the rhetorical functions and communicative intentions of ACE texts (descriptive, narrative, instructive, expository and argumentative), focusing on the most frequent text-type markers of the function and on the text types in which they are used. In a final step the chapter also explores the typical features of ACE texts which determine their characteristic style, particularly the use of text and visual information.

The approach of Chapter 2 focuses on the expression of meaning, on how it develops and can be expressed in scientific-technical discourse. The authors interpret technical communication in terms of the contextual relations established between the linguistic and extra-linguistic components of discourse – the audience, the speaker/writer relationship, the genres used and the different disciplines – which intervene in communication and which may affect meaning de-codification. Factors such as the textual, generic and social links which characterize every discipline, the authors conclude, are particularly important for technical communication.

The most common genres and types of texts which are specific of ACE communication are explored in Chapter 3. Directly rooted in the concept of genre proposed by genre theory, the aim of the chapter is to provide a repertoire of the most common ACE genres: formal e-mailing, summaries and abstracts, case studies, experimental research reports. By identifying typical errors and by providing advice, tips, examples and templates on how and when to use the genre, the chapter provides learners with pedagogical orientation when writing academic genre, ultimately when developing their generic literacy.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the use of electronic corpora and illustrates the application of corpus linguistics to the analysis of architecture and engineering texts. Addressing students, the volume aims at guiding them through the compilation of a discipline-specific linguistic corpus as a key resource for the learning of specific vocabulary. The authors offer advice on the compilation of electronic corpora as well as on the use of software applications for their analysis.

In Chapter 5 the authors analyze the cognitive and strategic reasons which are behind communicative strategies employed in ACE texts. The

communicative effectiveness of disciplinary discourse is linked to such discipline-specific aspects as the preference for the thematic progression of the text, the high rate of occurrence of hedging as a rhetorical device used to modulate the academic and professional discourse of this discourse community or the extended use of the passive voice.

Finally, Chapter 6 turns around the role of metaphor and metonymy in ACE texts. Drawing on the cognitive linguistics concept of conceptual and linguistic metaphor, the chapter provides a comprehensive overview of metaphor, which is then illustrated with its application to the ACE domain.

With the double-fold purpose of exploring the language of Architecture and Civil Engineering and of approaching it to the novice members of the discipline, each chapter has a straight-forward, clearly pedagogically-oriented layout, which opens with an overview of the necessary theoretical background and closes with a summing up section meant to highlight the basics of the chapter. A follow-up section is included after each chapter to provide the reader/learner with further practice, scaffolding the learning process with references to online resources, both professional and academic. Tips, templates, checklists or questions are used not only to foster independent learning but also to raise the learner's awareness of the language acquisition process.

As the authors themselves claim in the introduction, the volume is written with three concentric audiences in mind: linguists and LSP practitioners, architects and civil engineers, and students. For students it is a tool for learning the specific language of their future discipline; for professionals it is a vehicle to improve their communicative literacy and thus to succeed in their profession, and for linguists and LSP practitioners it is a practical exemplification of the applied character of academic and professional discourse studies. For all of them *The Language of Architecture and Civil Engineering* is a very helpful resource to learn about the language of this discipline.

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