

Introduction

Preparations for the First National ESP/EAP Conference started in May 2004 when preliminary sessions of the Academic Committee were held at the Foreign Languages Department of SAMT, and some early decisions were made on how to conduct the program. Five months later, a call for papers was sent to universities and other related centers. Two months after the announcement, abstracts of papers and proposals of sample lessons were received by the Conference Secretariat via mail and e-mail.

On March 13, 2005, a total of 96 paper abstracts and sample lesson proposals were distributed to the jury for assessment. Each item was judged by at least three referees. 46 papers and 11 sample lessons were approved to be presented at the conference. The papers themselves were assessed and graded by several Academic Committee members. The received sample lessons were also evaluated by some Academic Committee members. This is the third (last) volume of the proceedings of the conference containing 14 papers and 5 annotated sample lessons.

The Academic Committee held a panel discussion on April 24, 2005 and the members' views were later published in SAMT's newsletter. Meanwhile special programs were broadcast on national radio and TV where some of the Academic Committee members elaborated on the conference. Other executive tasks were dealt with in parallel by the respective officials in SAMT. We hope that the outcomes of this conference will be followed up by concerned academics and students to upgrade the status of ESP/EAP in the country.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this conference. I would like to thank SAMT President, Dr. Ahmad Ahmadi, Deputy for Research Affairs, Dr. Seyyed Taha Merghati, and Deputy for Executive Affairs, Mohammad Reza Saeedi for their support and encouragement. I would also like to express my gratitude to the following for their partnership: The Center for Research and Development in Humanities (affiliated to SAMT); The English Language and Literature Association; The English Language Department of Tarbiat Modarres University; and The Faculty of Foreign Languages of Tehran University.

Special thanks should go to the conference Academic Committee whose names are listed on a separate page (IV) in this book. I appreciate the assistance of SAMT's Public

Relations Department, directed by Simin Hashemi, for taking care of the information dissemination. The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) provided media coverage before and during the conference, so we feel indebted to them as well. I also thank all those who offered services to the participants on the day of the conference or helped in the executive phase of the conference in any way.

And last but not least, I should specially thank my colleagues at the Foreign Languages Department of SAMT without whose devoted efforts and concern it would have been impossible to hold such a program: Nooshin Ghabdian served as Executive Secretary of the conference; Majid Khayyamdar copyedited the papers; Mojgan Zarghamy carried out the formal editing; Leila Khaknegar Moghaddam took care of proof reading; Seyyedeh Soghra Mirzahed did the typesetting and page design; and Roohollah Tavakolian served as assistant to the Executive Secretary. The conference owes to them all.

As a final note, it is worth mentioning that although we did our best to avoid any pitfalls, there might have been some faults beyond our control for which we would be so sorry. Such possible shortcomings are hoped to be compensated in the next conference.

Overview

Papers

“Reflections on and Directions for ESP Materials Development in SAMT” by Hossein Farhady discusses ESP parameters, namely needs, materials, method, learner, teacher, and context. Farhady begins with a brief history of materials development in SAMT and concludes by a series of suggestions to improve ESP in Iran such as carrying out thorough needs analyses, changing the designs and concepts of the materials, training qualified teachers, and reforming the testing procedures.

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Hossein Shokouhi in “A New Discourse Plan for the Iranian University ESP Textbooks” criticizes traditional approaches to ESP materials development. He mainly favors a rhetorical framework, covering discursual aspects of texts. It consists of certain strategies and techniques for skimming and scanning information based on a procedural reading model.

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“Incorporating Critical Thinking Activities in Content Areas” by Behruz Lotfi is about ways of implementing the critical thinking pedagogy, which draws largely on problem-posing and problem-solving strategies, in ESP courses. Lotfi explores the relationship

between critical thinking on the one hand and language skills and materials on the other.

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Parviz Ajideh in “Autonomous Learning and Metacognitive Strategies: Essentials for the ESP Class” focuses on the learner-centered approach. He argues for learner autonomy, goal-orientedness, process-orientedness, and metacognition, and touches upon TEFL in Iran to see how much it relates to these factors.

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“Towards the Development of a New ESP Taxonomy” by Reza Khany and Mohammad Hassan Tahririan reviews traditional, chair-driven approaches to taxonomizing ESP and pushes a new, research-based one. The authors criticize those taxonomies on both philosophical and empirical grounds. They try to replace the notion of task with task-technique, and that of cognitive style with learner variables and learning processes, in a bid to take more account of the dynamic nature of learning.

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“A Shift of Emphasis in English for Specific Purposes: Rhetorical and Genre Analyses” by Reza Nejati is, for the most part, a review of scholarly comments on the need and rationale for text-based approaches to ESP, namely rhetorical and genre analyses. Nejati says learners should be given the chance to learn genres, learn about genres, and learn through genres.

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Fatemeh Haji Seyyed Abolghasem discusses “The Impact of Rhetorical Functions on Comprehending the EST Text by Medical Students”. Assuming that neither lexicon nor syntax fully account for the communicative competence of language learners, she has carried out an experimental study to see if knowledge of rhetorical functions helps in comprehending EST texts. The findings of her research confirm the hypothesis.

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Mohammad Reza Mozayn talks about “The Effect of Semantic Mapping on the Improvement of EAP Reading Comprehension Ability of Iranian Medical Students”. He emphasizes the use of diagrams (semantic mapping) to reinforce text comprehension. Mozayan lends empirical support to his argument through a pilot study.

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In his paper “Teaching ESP in the Faculties of Medicine and Related Fields: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice”, Samad Mirza Suzani turns the spotlight on the weak points of ESP courses and materials for a specific group of students. He then offers general suggestions to come up with more productive ESP classes for the students.

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“Can ICT Be a Powerful Means for Communication and Education in ESP Learning?” This question is addressed by Fatemeh Alipanahi. In the paper, she is mainly concerned

with the attitudes of students toward the Internet's potential contribution to their ESP learning. She presents detailed graphs to illustrate her subjects' views.

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“The Role of Web Resources in ESP Classes” by Maryam Farnia shows that ESP vocabulary learning on the Internet is more effective than that by the traditional text-based approach. She has done this by means of a pilot study.

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Zohreh Eslami Rasekh investigates the relationship between “Discourse Markers and EAP Listening Comprehension”. Motivated by a perceived lack of experimental research on this subject, she has two groups of students listen to different versions of the same text, one with discourse markers and the other without. Eslami obtains a positive correlation.

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“The Linguistic Features of Scientific and Specialized Texts in English, and the Way They Should Be Translated” is the theme of Ali Alizadeh's paper. He identifies the characteristics of scientific and literary as well as Persian and English texts. Alizadeh draws noteworthy conclusions for translators of these text types.

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Hassan Soleimani takes up an interesting yet important topic: “EAP in Iran: Drawbacks of SAMT EAP Textbooks”. Although too narrow in the choice of materials to critique, the paper refers to some weak points of ESP books published by SAMT, and has some comments on recent improvements. However, it stops short of practical suggestions, which would be welcomed and appreciated.

Sample Lesson Proposals

“The Theory and Practice of Designing a Business English Course” by Zia Tajeddin deals with the underlying principles, aims, and course content of English for Business Purposes. It contains a sample lesson of *English for Business Communication*. The lesson components are described in their full variety, including previews, consciousness-raising activities, and “speechwork”.

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“Developing User-friendly English for Specific Purposes Materials: A Strategy-oriented Approach” by Javad Horabadi offers a sample lesson for students of erosion and sedimentation control. The lesson, he notes, is based on the self-reported preferences of some of the students and their teachers concerning cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

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Mohammad Reza Mozayan presents “An ESP Lesson Proposal for Students of

Medicine”. His proposal includes a complete lesson, interpolated with instructions and explanations for each particular section. Mozayan mentions the theoretical foundations of almost every part of his lesson proposal.

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“Developing ESP Curricula: A Sample Lesson” by Ayyob Jodairi shows in theoretical and practical terms a way of producing ESP materials. He presents a task-based and skills-based lesson for Business English to illustrate his notion of good materials.

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Nasrin Sayfour in “Interactive Activities and EMP Textbooks in Iran” introduces a novel way of teaching reduced adjective clauses (RACs). This follows her call for better (appropriate, authentic, user-friendly, and colorful) materials.

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