

S. Gollin-Kies, D. R. Hall and S. H. Moore. *Language for Specific Purposes*.

Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. Pp. 276.

Language for Specific Purposes is a book written by three senior academics in the field of linguistics (based at Australia's Macquarie University at the book's inception), who each have decades of experience in the teaching and research of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). Sadly, one of the authors, David Hall, passed away in 2014 prior to the completion of this book. The key argument of *Language for Specific Purposes* is the interdependent nature of theory, teaching, and research in LSP. For example, it posits that the planning of classroom teaching should be based on theory and data while research should be driven by theory and by teaching. The authors emphasise a multidirectional flow between theory, practice, and research in LSP such that each aspect should inform and be informed by the others. The book argues that the relationship between these three factors is more complex than previously considered and aims to explore the relationship between theory, practice, and research through detailed examples, discussion of theories and methodology, case studies, published research, and research ideas. Overall, the book is successful in achieving its aims.

The book is structured into four main sections: theory, teaching, research, and resources. Part I provides an overview of historical and conceptual issues of LSP as well as discussing the relationship between key trends in the field, globalisation, authenticity, and digital technology. Part II explores LSP in practice in the classroom and provides insight into course planning, design, implementation, management, assessment, and evaluation. Part III discusses research in LSP and focusses on research methods in the field, case studies, and eighteen ideas for future research projects. Part IV contains useful resources including books, websites, LSP journals, and conferences. References and indices are also included. *Language for Specific Purposes* is part of a series of books (*Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics*) which have been designed for students, researchers, and professionals concerned with applied linguistics, language and communication. However, according to the preface to Part II on LSP in the classroom, the primary intended audience is people who have "at least a basic language teaching background" (p. 75) but not necessarily those with experience in LSP.

Of particular interest is Chapter 6 (pp. 104-117) which examines language testing and assessment in LSP as part of the discussion of LSP teaching and practice. Topics explored include validity, reliability, high-stakes and standardised testing (such as professional competency or university entry tests), 'other purposes testing' (including in-class assessment of student progress or program evaluations), and placement tests.

In this chapter, the authors emphasise the consequences of testing and assessment for all stakeholders (such as students, teachers, sponsors, employers, and universities), the difference between assessment and evaluation, face validity, perspectives of purpose in LSP testing, and the need for methodologically-appropriate testing (especially matching testing and teaching methods) specific to the field of LSP to obtain authentic data. In addition, language testing and assessment in LSP is considered briefly in other sections such as computer-based testing and computer-adaptive testing (pp. 66-67) and in a researchable project (p. 220).

The authors of *Language for Specific Purposes* have clearly gone to considerable effort to provide interesting examples and well-researched content in what is a comprehensive discussion of a broad topic and should be applauded for their dedication and hard work. The major strength of this book lies in the level of research and diversity of evidence provided. In particular, the authors provide specific and unique examples from all over the world, from both English and non-English speaking contexts (including Europe and Asia) as well as from both academic and professional contexts (such as international call centres and business meetings). These examples are a highlight of the book and are insightful and persuasive. Furthermore, in addition to well-written descriptions of key theories and opposing viewpoints, the authors often provide useful critique (both positive and negative) on the differing arguments or methods. Crucially, the interplay between theory, practice, and research was a clear focus both between and within individual chapters of the book. The use of bordered sections containing definitions, examples, and quotes (particularly to highlight differences between arguments) was very effective in emphasising important information while serving to break up the text to increase readability. As a result, the book can appeal to students, teachers, and researchers from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds. With its detailed examination of topics and engaging examples, this book can be valuable to readers who are new to LSP as well as those more experienced in the field.

However, from this reader's point of view there were times where the relevance of certain issues discussed was not clearly defined or emphasised, such as in the outline of theory-driven approaches in the historical and conceptual overview (pp. 18-24). There were also occasions where topics or research that were implied to be significant were not explored in depth. One example is the sentence: "the pioneering and much-cited work of Dudley-Evans and Johns at Birmingham University was an early example of this; one of the reasons for its frequent citation is that nothing much else of the same kind was done for the next two decades" (p. 27). Despite the authors emphasising the importance of this work, the research is not discussed in detail at this point, a specific reference is not provided, and readers are not referred to any other section of the book (or elsewhere) for further information. On another note, abbreviations were often used without having been properly introduced. Examples include EAP, RAPAL, ELT, FL, NS/NNS/NNES, IELTS, TOEFL and OET. Ideally, in

the first instance that an abbreviation is presented to the reader, the term should be written in full, followed immediately by the abbreviated version of the term in parentheses, or a list given at the front of the book which explains the main abbreviations used in the book. Given the abundance of (often-interchangeable) abbreviations in this field, the varied background of readers, and the introductory approach in the first section of the book, this stylistic choice reduces the readability of the text.

Furthermore, while *Language for Specific Purposes* covers significant territory in a broad field, the issues examined in individual chapters may not be deep enough to challenge more advanced readers or those seeking specific (technical) information. For example, for readers interested in language testing and assessment in LSP it is worth noting that comprehensive information about the specific content or scoring of individual tests (such as the Occupational English Test [OET] and International English Language Testing System [IELTS]) is not provided. This is likely due to such details being either outside the scope and objectives of the book or unable to be published for reasons of test security. In this case, such omissions are entirely understandable and this point is not intended as a criticism but rather as an issue of which to be aware. On the other hand, the value of the book is not lost for advanced readers because it provides a wide context about LSP, diverse and insightful examples as well as helpful research, references, and resources which the reader can investigate further to bridge any gaps in content knowledge.

Despite these issues, *Language for Specific Purposes* is an excellent resource for readers interested in LSP from the perspective of study, practice or research. With its well-researched discussion of key topics and unique examples from all over the world, this book has something to offer for both novices and those with previous knowledge of LSP. Overall, the interdependent nature of theory, teaching, and research in LSP is a central focus throughout and *Language for Specific Purposes* achieves its aims. In addition, although language testing and assessment was not the primary focus of the book, *Language for Specific Purposes* remains a valuable resource for those interested in language testing and assessment within the field of LSP.

Review by Adam Koschade

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