

LSP IN NORTH AFRICA: STATUS, PROBLEMS AND, CHALLENGES

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a survey of recent developments in teaching Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) in North Africa¹ and discusses current issues and future challenges. It devotes more space to ESP in this francophone environment given the greater demand for English, as opposed to other languages, and the more abundant ESP activity in terms of practice, research, and publications.

In Northern Africa, the challenges for the next decade and beyond are considerable but exciting: First, while the demand for LSP, and ESP in particular, is clear and the political discourse which reflects such a demand is unequivocal, there is a lack of policy and planning commitments to ensure the professional development and delivery of LSP services. The obstacles, in this case, include central control, institutional inertia, and, with respect to ESP in particular, continuing resistance to the spread of English in a French-dominant educational and economic system. Second, current ESP/LSP practice is largely ad-hoc, lacking in course design, teacher training, sufficient instruction time, and proper evaluation. The challenges, in this respect, involve developing true specific-purpose curricula (based on learners' needs) which would provide the appropriate context for sustainable language programs. Third, as in other parts of the world, there is an increasing demand for language training for occupational business and vocational purposes added to the established instruction in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The additional challenges, in this case, include the provision of good teacher-education programs (necessarily post B.A.) which require that the universities that offer such training open up to the professional and vocational sectors and learn to work with them. This demand will, of course, have an impact on the content and methodology of applied linguistics degree programs. Fourth, there are theoretical challenges which will keep applied linguists who are interested in ESP/LSP oscillating between theoretical pursuits and practical applications.

Theoretical frameworks for ESP course design and teaching, in particular, have to be adaptable to the local contexts where LSP programs are needed. At the same time, localized LSP practice, which is socioculturally embedded, must inform theoretical developments. In all of these challenges, mainstream (Anglo-American) and local ESP practitioners have every reason to work together.

THE NORTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The language of everyday communication in North Africa is the oral dialect of the country (Tunisian, Algerian, and Moroccan Arabic), together with Berber in Algeria and Morocco, where the Berber population is around 15 percent and 30 percent, respectively. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is taught at school, is the language of instruction in elementary and early secondary education. It is later restricted to teaching the humanities and social science subjects through college. French is well established as a second language, although it is officially labeled the first foreign language. It is taught no later than the third year of elementary education and becomes the medium of instruction of math, science and technology, and business subjects in late secondary education and at the university level. Thus, it competes with, or predominates over, both MSA (in government administration, private business, and the media) and the local dialects, particularly among the educated (Battenberg 1997, Daoud 1991b, Walters 1999).

English is taught as a foreign language for up to six years in secondary education at the rate of 2-4 hours a week; then it becomes a required subject in all the tracks of vocational training and higher education. Other foreign languages (e.g., German, Italian, Spanish) are taught as additional optional languages in late secondary education and the university level, but their spread is not at all comparable to English.

ESP practice started in North Africa in the early 1960s, much as it may have arisen in other countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America, with expatriates teaching English to engineering students. The first major ESP event on record in North Africa was *The Hammamet Conference on English for Special Purposes*, held in Tunisia in February 1975 (Payne 1979). It brought together over fifty ESP practitioners including teachers from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya; expatriate teachers from Egypt and Sudan; specialist speakers from Britain and the U.S.; and aid agency representatives. In the conference resolutions, the local participants commented: "We recognize the increasing role of English in our countries and the urgent need for a shift towards more appropriate language programs, tailored to the needs of the area." However, they noted with regret that "no North African scholars read papers at this conference, which was at times too theoretical and not immediately relevant to this area" (Payne 1979:95).

The last remark remains, although to a lesser degree, a characteristic of ESP in this EFL context and a challenge to mainstream and local ESP practitioners. For even though ESP instruction is now assured by local teachers, the

region continues to draw heavily on guest speakers, research references, and textbooks from the U.K. and the U.S. Local practitioners, who are mindful of the linguistic and sociocultural characteristics of local learners and their educational/work environment, are acutely aware of the need to develop ESP locally to ensure a reasonable degree of effectiveness and professionalism.

The next major development was the establishment in the early 1980s of ESP resource-center projects (ESPRCP) which were funded by the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) (Bencherif 1993, Kennedy 1985, Thomas 1993). Such projects helped set up advisory units for in-service teacher training and materials design and encouraged local discussion and research of ESP through seminars and conferences (e.g., *the Maghreb ESP Conference*, a biennial event held in 1993, 1995, and 1997) and publications (*Tunisia ESP Newsletter* and conference proceedings).

The measure of success of these projects was the development of long term sustainability through local staffing and funding (Kennedy 1985, Seymour and Bahloul 1992). The Tunisian ESPRCP has survived. With the end of ODA funding in 1995, it gained official recognition as a department for the promotion of ESP and has now grown to reach a large ESP teacher/researcher population (over 600 regular users) and to help sustain an M.A. program in Applied Linguistics/ESP (Daoud, *et al.* 1999). The Algerian ESPRCP faded in the mid-1990s in spite of the hard work and commitment of local practitioners (see separate reports by Meliani, Belkenshir, and Bensouiki in *Maghreb ESP Conference* 1993) as a result of political instability in the country. ESP activity in Morocco was judged not substantial enough (El-Haddad 1993, Najbi 1997) to receive ODA support for a similar project.

Thus, ESP has been growing, although in jumps and starts. In Tunisia, it has become a required subject at various levels of education and vocational training (Daoud 1996a; 1998a; 1998b). It is also in great demand in the public and private sectors (Daoud and Labassi 1996).² However, questions remain about whether what is being offered is true ESP given the lack of proper needs analysis, teacher training, and evaluation (Daoud 1999, Seymour 1993). It seems that these questions will stand for the foreseeable future for a number of reasons which are explored later in this chapter.

It is important to note, however, that ESP is not the sole issue in LSP concerns in North Africa. Issues involving other languages also need to be reviewed in order to assess fully the role of LSP in the region. The reader will soon realize that the current problems and future challenges relative to ESP readily apply to other languages, which lag far behind in terms of practice and research.

THE CURRENT STATE OF LSP

The experience of the *Institute Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes* (IBLV) in Tunis, in terms of developing LSP, is unique in North Africa and may, therefore, be described as the best case scenario for LSP development in the region. Since its founding in 1964, this institution has taught several foreign languages to the general public as well as to clients with specific needs from the public and private business/industrial sectors. It even developed B.A.-level programs combining at least two languages and focusing on business communication skills and translation (*Maîtrise combinée de langues, M.C.L.*). These languages include Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese, in addition to French and Arabic for professional and business purposes.

Given the greater demand for these languages, the M.C.L. (which was abandoned in the 1980s) was reborn in 1996–1997 as the *Maîtrise de langues vivantes appliquées (M.L.V.A.)* [B.A. in modern applied languages³], with specific application to business communication and practices (Department of Languages 1996). The curriculum involves language and discourse practice, translation, cultural awareness raising through lectures and seminars run by language and business specialists, on-site visits and training, and case studies. In the same year, the IBLV also started a diploma program in translation involving the three main languages (MSA, French, and English), with an applied orientation to market demands.

The main justification for these programs is twofold: 1) to supply businesses with operational language users in specific domains as Tunisia gears up for economic partnership with the European Union (which takes effect in 2007), and 2) to help language-degree holders find jobs in the socio-economic sector (government, banking, tourism, NGOs, etc.) as opposed to joining the saturated ranks of language teachers. ESP practitioners should note with interest that English is required in all of these LSP programs.

The IBLV has also proposed to offer a professional diploma in French for Specific Purposes (FSP) [*Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (D.E.S.S.) en français à des fins spécifiques*], which departs from the traditional literature/civilization track prevailing in the university system. The degree program has four goals:

1. Address learners' needs for French for professional purposes,
2. Help employees secure promotion through a higher level of functional literacy in the language,
3. Promote the teaching of French for academic and occupational purposes in the educational system, and
4. Develop appropriate teaching materials for FSP.

The proposal concludes with the blunt statement that “the specific framework for the mastery (of FSP) and for research leading to this mastery is non-existent” (Department of French 1999:2, translation from the original French). The French department has already taken steps to model this program after the ESP program already in place since 1995 and to support it with an FSP resource center.⁴

POLICY AND PLANNING FOR ESP

ESP in North Africa has always suffered from a status problem. It has been sustained through the commitment of ESP teachers, the enthusiasm of certain deans and subject-specialist teachers, and the financial assistance of foreign aid agencies representing U.K. and U.S. interests. The official attitude, although unstated, is something like the following: ‘It’s their (U.K. and U.S.) language; if they want to promote it like the French promote their language, they will help us financially.’ Paradoxically, the official discourse has been unequivocal about the need for English, but there has never been an official provision to structure ESP activity in the various higher education institutions. The Tunisian government has probably gone the furthest in the region in generalizing the teaching of English in the educational sector; however, it has failed to provide the resources to design proper ESP curricula or the incentives to motivate ESP practitioners to teach ESP and investigate it. Over 95 percent of the ESP teachers are on loan from secondary schools and thus receive little or no recognition from university faculty, while those who undertake postgraduate studies in ESP are promoted out of ESP instruction and into traditional English departments (Daoud 1998b; 1999, Daoud, *et al.* 1999; but note that such a state is not uncommon elsewhere, cf. Swales 1984; 1994).

This situation stems from a lack of policy and planning commitments to ensure the professional development and delivery of ESP services, which may be explained by several factors, including central control, institutional inertia, and continuing resistance to the spread of English in a French-dominant educational and economic system. With respect to central control, the agencies in charge of curriculum planning have a top-down approach. They do not listen to the practitioners in the field, allocate too little time for ESP instruction, and set common examination criteria that are at odds with the nature of ESP practice.

As for institutional inertia, it is reflected in the statements, beliefs, and perceptions of many top decision makers, deans, and even university faculty relative to ESP: 1) ‘*anybody with an English degree can teach ESP*,’ 2) ‘*learning ESP takes a short time*,’ and 3) ‘*designing ESP course materials is easy and costs nothing*.’ In the private sector, where the notion of a long-term language program is not palatable, the common practice is to hire someone with an English degree, expect him/her to quickly learn about the business, and then act as a translator/communication facilitator with English speaking clients, rather than invest in training the relevant personnel in ESP. Inertia also leads to poor planning such that, when the teaching of ESP was generalized to all students in the latest reform of higher education in Tunisia (Daoud in press b), no measures were taken to

design ESP courses, retrain practicing teachers, or recruit enough new ones. Instead, the Ministry required practicing teachers to teach 50 percent more hours and instructed deans to hire part-time teachers for the remaining groups.

A further explanation for the lack of commitment to ESP may be a resistance to the spread of English, especially from the *Centre culturel français*, which seems to counter efforts that may undermine the position of French in the region (Battenberg 1997). This resistance is also felt among French-educated administrators and faculty who seem to be concerned about losing their influence (Daoud 1991b). However, what is sometimes perceived as resistance to English may simply be linguistic realism relative to the promotion of other languages, given the greater economic activity between Tunisia and other non-English speaking countries in the European Union (France, Italy, Germany, etc.), with the U.K. and the U.S. coming later in order of importance (cf. Kaplan and Baldauf 1997, ch.6, on the language policy and planning dichotomy).

It is interesting to note that the mainstream ESP literature hardly addresses these issues. In the last seven years, *English for Specific Purposes: An International Journal* published no articles on the matter and only one book review (Kaplan 1998). Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991), and Robinson (1991), the defining references on ESP, do not discuss these important obstacles in the way of ESP as an international movement. In his review of Robinson's book, Markee (1993) notes this oversight and states:

...[O]ne of the most useful current developments in ESP which is showing signs of being picked up by the wider profession is the interest in treating language curricula as innovations whose development has to be carefully managed. I predict that by the time Robinson writes the third edition of this book in the year 2000, an entire chapter on this topic may well be necessary (1993:265).

The year 2000 is upon us and yet ESP teacher-training programs are only beginning to address these issues. Among the twelve ESP degree/certificate programs listed in Holden (1998), only one offers a language policy course, while another offers a course on the management of change in teaching situations. Daoud (1999) discusses some of the obstacles to ESP growth in Tunisia in terms of the management of innovation and concludes by questioning the commitment of Tunisian educational policy makers to ESP development:

One is led to wonder whether English is truly desired in the official school system in spite of official and semi-official (media) pronouncements about its importance. If English is desired, even as a commodity in this global business and technological era, then there is an urgent need for a clear policy, a coherent structure and adequate resources for curriculum development and innovation (1999:135).

These issues are occasionally addressed by international ESP guest speakers in local contexts (e.g., Grabe 1996, Swales 1993; 1994); however they are given more attention in the language policy and planning literature (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997, chapters 6 and 9, and Hornberger and Ricento 1996) and in references dealing with the management of change, innovation, and quality control in ELT (cf. Christison and Stoller 1997, O'Dwyer 1996, and the literature stemming from the *Best Practices* work on EPP/EOP, Lomperis 1997).

The challenge for ESP practitioners is to influence language policy and planning, with the bulk of this responsibility falling to local practitioners who are more attuned to the political culture of their country rather than to the occasional guest speaker or foreign aid agency representative. Local ESP program coordinators and project directors need to learn the appropriate communication and negotiation skills to get through to decision makers and curriculum planners. This goal requires understanding that the decision makers may not necessarily be opposed to ESP, but simply working under their own political, financial, and other constraints. The practitioners' negotiating positions would be strengthened by the professionalism they would show in doing their work; however, this professionalism may not be easy to achieve because one is rarely afforded the resources for self-improvement (e.g., attending management courses and professional conferences).

CURRENT ESP PRACTICE AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Current ESP practice in this part of the world is largely ad-hoc, lacking in proper needs analysis, appropriate course design, materials production resources, teacher training, sufficient instruction time, and assessment and evaluation guidelines. Daoud (1999) finds that while general EFL practice in basic and secondary education benefits from an established institutional structure in the Ministry of Education, ESP is left in the hands of individual teachers who may be appropriately called "islands." Seymour, who managed the ESPRC in Tunisia from 1989 to 1995, draws their profile:

Most are Tunisians who have Tunisian degrees in 'English' studied through the medium of English. However, few have been trained as teachers and most have never studied TEFL at all, let alone TESP. Many have traditional attitudes to teaching and learning and tend to concentrate on reading and *explication de texte*. This seems to consist mainly of giving students *textes*, chosen only because of their subject content, and setting comprehension questions. There is rarely any real teaching, just practice (Seymour 1993:19).

As the number of ESP teachers grow in several higher education institutions, coordinators are designated to run what are called *ESP sections*, for they were refused departmental status. With a few exceptions, coordination remains cosmetic, leading to the production of sketchy syllabi of little relevance to

the learners' needs. This probably arises because the coordinators are not trained for syllabus design, nor are they given the authority and resources to do it.

Nonetheless, the ESPRCP has succeeded in establishing and sustaining an in-service training scheme for ESP teachers in higher education through professional events (three national ESP seminars per year, a summer school program, and the Maghreb ESP Conference) as well as the provision of up-to-date reference materials and on-site advice. It also helps sustain pre-service training in two advanced degree programs offered by the IBLV—*D.E.S.S.* [specialized higher education diploma in ESP] and the *Diplôme d'études approfondies (D.E.A.) en linguistique appliquée* [M.A. in Applied Linguistics/ESP]; it awards scholarships to do postgraduate studies in ESP; and it makes available to students adequate research references as well as a computer station with statistics and concordancing software and an Internet connection (Daoud, 1998a, Daoud, *et al.* 1999).

This coordinated effort is shoring up the professionalism of practicing teachers and producing a new generation of trained practitioners and able researchers in such areas as genre analysis (e.g., Labassi 1996; to appear), classroom research on reading strategies (Dhieb-Henia to appear), writing processes (Mahfoudhi 1999), contrastive lexical research (Annabi 1997), program evaluation (Oueslati 1998; see Daoud, *et al.* 1999), as well as materials production and evaluation (Daoud, *et al.* 1998/1999). The postgraduate program in ESP and the ESPRCP have helped to create a research environment suitable for informed discussion of ESP and the promotion of teamwork. Nevertheless, more work remains to be done.

Local experience has shown that the availability of international ESP textbooks for teachers to photocopy for their students only helps to promote ad-hoc ESP practice. It often happens that a textbook off the shelf quickly supplants a sketchy syllabus which may have taken much effort to produce. Because individual ESP teachers are the ones who deliver the teaching in the classroom, they are ultimately the ones who determine the success or failure of ESP courses. Thus, teacher (re)education will remain a condition for the promotion of ESP in North Africa, for it will allow ESP teachers to make informed decisions at every level of practice, including the adoption or adaptation of international textbooks.

The English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) textbook series, which was designed for the Ministry of Professional Training and Employment (Daoud, *et al.* 1998/1999) has, for example, proven to be a suitable context for promoting several aspects of ESP practice in the local environment, which makes it worthy of duplication for higher education. It has served as a context for, among other things, 1) improved communication and negotiation with policy makers, 2) better collaboration with subject specialists and a deeper understanding of their discourse communities and communicative culture, 3) hands-on teacher education concerning theoretical developments in ESP research which informed materials design, and 4) constructive feedback on teachers' classroom performance while the materials were

being piloted, bearing in mind that most of the teachers were co-authors of the textbook series.

This work was inspired by mainstream genre analysis research, task-based curricula, and strategy training, and by more recent ethnographic research in specific discourse communities (see references below). This approach is in line with the *Best Practices* literature (Lomperis 1997), which sets the trend for future curriculum design, particularly in light of the growing demand for English for Occupational Business Purposes (EOBP), English for Professional Purposes (EPP), and EOP, in both pre-employment vocational training and workplace retraining (cf. Dudley-Evans and St John 1998). The *Best Practices* work sets specific criteria for planning, implementing, and evaluating EOP/EPP curricula, but it also incorporates non-traditional aspects of ESP practice from the business and management culture, such as communication and negotiation skills, market research, marketing, and independent consultancy.

The evolving branches and sub-branches of ESP and the incorporation of business principles in the planning and delivery of ESP services present enormous challenges for practitioner training programs. (I would even argue that the label 'ESP teacher' no longer seems appropriate for anyone involved in the field, because of the multiple roles required by this job, which in turn requires multidisciplinary knowledge and a variety of skills.) ESP practitioner training, then, requires that the universities offering such training open up to the business and occupational sectors and learn to work with them. These issues are addressed by Eustace (1996) on changing business communication practices vs. classroom practice, Louhiala-Salminen (1996) and Lumley (1998) on language-trained vs. occupational experts' ratings of EOP proficiency, and Jacoby and McNamara (1999) on the variable assessment of communicative ability in EOP and on the use of peer training for academic presentations. This expansion will, of course, have an impact on the content and methodology of Applied Linguistics/ESP degree programs.

THE FUTURE OF ESP: INTERNATIONAL SCOPE, ANGLO-AMERICAN PARADIGM, LOCALIZED PRACTICES

There is a general consensus in the ELT profession and in the broader field of Applied Linguistics that ESP is international in scope (Johns and Dudley-Evans 1991), regardless of whether English is called an *international language*, a *world language*, or a *lingua franca* (Kachru 1997). Initial ESP practice in the early 1960s, together with some of the earliest textbooks and research on English for Science and Technology (EST) (see Swales 1988), all attest to this international outlook (e.g., the predominant use of English in international journals of science and technology and medicine [Gibbs 1995], as well as the more recent surge in Business English [St John 1996]).

In North Africa, no one questions the international *scope* of ESP, but many question its international *nature*. There are two concerns in particular: 1) the relevance of ESP ideas and practices from the “inner circle” to this part of the world in the “expanding circle” (Kachru 1997), and 2) the local contribution to these ideas and practices.⁵ The appraisal of the first ESP conference in North Africa—regretting that no local practitioners presented papers and commenting that the conference “was at times too theoretical and not immediately relevant to this area” (Payne 1979:95)—is still echoed by local ESP practitioners even though 99 percent of the teachers are now North African and a growing number of local practitioners are producing appropriate teaching materials and reliable research.

Rather than blaming mainstream ESP experts for failing to adapt their theories and practical solutions to the North African context, this appraisal is meant to call local practitioners to the task of contributing to ESP research and practice. There is a heightened sense that local awareness of learners’ linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds (Daoud 1991a; 1996b, Hemissi 1987; 1993, Labassi 1995; 1996, Lowe 1992; 1996), together with knowledge of the local political, financial, and administrative constraints (Daoud 1998b; 1999), favors the design of appropriate responses by local ESP practitioners.

It should be clear, though, that just as such responses draw on the mainstream ESP/Applied Linguistics research literature, it is possible that mainstream research is augmented by the localized responses and the processes underlying them. This interaction is, in fact, what would make ESP truly international in nature. International ESP experts often testify to the superior quality of localized ESP projects and practices and regret that they never appear in international publications (e.g., Johns and Dudley-Evans 1991). Local practitioners must publish then and let the so-called gatekeepers do their duty.

There are legitimate reasons for local practitioners to question the relevance of mainstream ESP research and practice, and they would be unwise not to do so. For instance, (Hemissi 1993) argues that the linguistic background of North African ESP learners results in a variable degree of proficiency in MSA and French, but no native speaker mastery or awareness of either one. For this reason, mainstream ESP materials and teaching approaches that were originally designed for ESL audiences may be helpful, but not necessarily suitable for these learners, and they would have to be adopted only with great caution and flexibility.

For other local practitioners, *in situ* investigations of needs indicate that the literature and materials produced in the U.K. and the U.S. may not suit these needs. Local studies have called for teaching specific skills and strategies such as translation skills⁶ to help researchers read and publish in English (Labassi 1995; 1996). These skills include: 1) raising awareness of the variable use of symbols and other non-verbal devices in English and French scientific discourse (Lowe 1992; 1996) as well as prefixes in medical discourse (Annabi 1997), 2) promoting cross-linguistic rhetorical and genre awareness in processing EST discourse (Daoud

1991a; 1996b), and 3) developing metacognitive strategies to aid expeditious and careful reading (Dhieb-Henia to appear, cf. Weir 1997). On the other hand, Daoud (in press a) shows that subject-specific teaching, learning, and evaluation practices in this educational environment have an impact on the motivation of ESP learners, and these practices require specific training for ESP teachers if teachers are to motivate not only their students but also their subject-specialist colleagues and deans.

On a more abstract level, the theoretical paradigm for ESP research⁷ seems to us very Anglo-American (or rather “American-Anglo”), always with English as the language of reference (see Swales 1993; 1997). This emphasis is true of the growing number of EAP studies on dissertation writing which promote the Anglo-American model of exposition. Yet we know that in academic contexts, as well as in professional and occupational ones, interlocutors are more and more likely to be non-native speakers of English (Johns and Swales 1998).

ESP, and applied linguistics in general, would gain from a truly international investigation of ESP learners’ communicative uses of the languages they already know (see Johns 1997, Barbara, *et al.* 1996) in order to inform ESP research and practice. The international nature of ESP would only be strengthened if more projects involved American/British and international ESP practitioners. This partnership would help us all understand, for instance, how multilingual discourse communities function in specific academic/occupational domains, how sociocultural variables in NNS-NNS domain-specific interaction in English influence communication (e.g., in terms of amount and patterns of communication, degree of accommodation to the interlocutor, etc.), how the nature of strategic behavior can vary in oral/written interaction, and how the transfer of strategies can be promoted across language backgrounds.

These complex questions will keep applied linguists who are interested in LSP oscillating between theoretical pursuits and localized practical applications. Theoretical frameworks for LSP program design and implementation have to be adaptable to the local contexts where LSP is needed. At the same time, localized LSP practices, which are socio-culturally embedded, must inform theoretical development.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This survey has discussed issues of language policy and planning and the viability of the ESP/LSP movement in North Africa more than the pragmatic aspects of ESP research and practice. Some of the more pragmatic theoretical issues that will retain our attention in the next decade include further investigation of such common notions as communicative competence, genre, and discourse community. These notions are still in need of empirical definition and socio-cultural validation. Subject specialists have perceptions of communicative competence and ratings of language proficiency that are different from ours (cf.

Jacoby and McNamara 1999, Lumley 1998). They may belong to a specific discourse community, but they also participate effectively in other communities based on shared goals, cultural norms of communication, and the principle of interdisciplinarity, indicating an overlap of communities and an extensive use of strategies for switching discourse modes and communication styles (Bazerman 1998). Subject specialists also use/produce genres with a degree of flexibility that is only beginning to be examined in current applied linguistics research (Atkinson 1999, Bhatia 1997).

Improving our understanding of these notions for the sake of adequate application will require collaborating with subject-specialist informants and, when possible, doing ethnographic textography (Swales 1998). This evolution will also require further research at the macro-level (even though the macro/micro distinction is somewhat artificial) along the lines of contrastive rhetoric (cf. Mauranen 1993, Swales, *et al.* 1997), sociocultural literacy (Johns 1997), diachronic studies of genres (Salager-Meyer 1999, Labassi to appear), and critical discourse analysis (Huckin 1997); at the micro-level, research will focus on grammar (e.g., Biber, *et al.* 1996) and vocabulary (Coady and Huckin 1997).

On the instructional side, classroom based research and reflective teaching will be more significant in the next decade and beyond in order to achieve a reasonable match between theoretical approaches and actual course design and teaching. Current reading research, for instance, is just beginning to address strategy training issues in real ESP teaching contexts (cf. Dhieb-Henia to appear, Grabe 1996, Weir 1997). With respect to teacher education, much remains to be done to help teachers incorporate in their lessons insights from research on grammar and style (e.g., Biber, *et al.* 1996) and vocabulary (Coady and Huckin 1997). On the other hand, practitioner education, particularly for ESP program coordinators and project managers, will receive more attention along the lines set out in O'Dwyer (1996) and Christison and Stoller (1997), although there again, the predominance of the Anglo-American model of management will have to be more sensitive to local political and educational cultures around the world.

This brief survey shows that the current theoretical and practical concerns of ESP practitioners are truly within the realm of applied linguistics, for they embrace issues of language policy and planning, language teaching and practitioner training, functional literacy skills in specific discourse communities, language assessment, program evaluation, and language program administration. Looking forward to the next decade and beyond, the multidisciplinary, and increasingly multicultural, nature of ESP will keep it in the forefront of applied linguistics research and maintain its trail-blazing role for general ELT and for the teaching/learning of other languages for specific purposes. North African applied linguists will play their part in the global growth of ESP by designing localized solutions to present and future language-related problems.

NOTES

1. The label “North Africa” designates three countries in the Maghreb in particular: Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, because they have a very similar linguistic profile and educational structure. There has been substantial ESP activity in this region for more than three decades, particularly in Tunisia and Algeria, although in the latter country it has been affected by the unstable political situation since 1991. In Morocco, ESP has not yet reached the same degree of official recognition and public awareness as in Tunisia and Algeria (El-Haddad 1993, Najbi 1997).
2. The demand for English is so unprecedented that the numerous providers are turning back clients. In Tunisia, providers include the *Institute Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes* (IBLV) which has branches countrywide, the British Council, AMIDEAST, the Tunisian American Chamber of Commerce, as well as many private educational institutions which are thriving on courses in English for business and management. This demand is also indicated by the increasing number of job ads appearing in English in a leading Tunisian newspaper published in French (Labassi in press). There is a project underway to survey the ESP needs of several business organizations, carried out by a group of graduate (M.A. level) students (Jabeur 1999).
3. Programs in other languages used around the Mediterranean are possible in the future, depending on public demand and the availability of qualified instructors: Greek, Turkish, Persian, Hebrew, Portuguese, etc.
4. The programs described in this section are now run by the *Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis* (ISLT) which separated from the IBLV in September 1999.
5. In North Africa, most ESP practitioners hold the moderate, pragmatic view that English is *the* international language of communication, particularly in science, technology, and trade. It should be promoted as a service language in as professional a manner as possible, but not to the exclusion of other languages (Walters 1999). A few hold an ideologically strong view which associates English with the hegemonic power of multinational/American companies and the impoverishing policies of the World Bank and the IMF (cf. Mchala 1999, Pennycook 1997). However, nobody really accepts the simplistic views that ESP/EAP is neutral (Allison 1996) or that English is innocent (Widdowson 1998).
6. Translation has received scant attention in mainstream ESP research, and in the collection of over 1000 recently published ESP textbooks available at the ESP Resource Center in Tunis, I have not found any translation activities. This is an area worthy of attention as ESP practitioners feel the need to develop basic translation skills: University students often use English references, but they write their exams and papers in French. More advanced researchers who want to publish

in English or give presentations at international, and even national, conferences often write their papers in French then ask English teaching colleagues to translate their drafts. Those who feel confident enough to write originally in English often produce French-sounding prose (Daoud in press a, Daoud and Labassi 1996, Labassi 1996). Translation training is also critically needed by business professionals and administrators, as demonstrated rather dramatically by the Tunisian president's 1995 visit to South Africa with leading Tunisian businessmen, only to discover that they did not have the adequate English proficiency to achieve the aims of the visit.

7. Shulman defines a paradigm in terms of "principles of regularity and canons of evidence" (Shulman 1988:9).

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Daoud, M., *et al.* 1998/1999. *English for professionals*. Tunis: CENAFFIF, Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi.
Level one: English for professionals; Level two (a): English for professionals: Introduction to technical culture, Level two (b): English for professionals: Introduction to business culture; Level three: (5 volumes) English for professionals: Electrical engineering, Civil engineering, Mechanical engineering, Textiles and leather, and Business administration.

This is a 100 percent Tunisian EOP textbook series for students seeking to obtain a vocational certificate or diploma for employment in more than 150 different specialties. The series includes eight volumes, three for the first year (levels 1 and 2), and five for the second year (level 3). This product is unique in Tunisia not only because of the quality of the materials (which are in some respects superior to international textbooks), but more importantly because of the process that was involved in producing them. This process started with needs analysis and syllabus design (in 1996–97), and is now concluding with materials evaluation and revision in light of classroom observation and teacher feedback. This project has served as an appropriate context for interacting professionally with the various stakeholders in the Tunisian vocational training system, and for educating teachers about the various roles they have to play in course design, lesson planning, classroom practice, learner assessment, and materials evaluation. The project has had the added advantage of promoting team work.

Dudley-Evans, T. and M. J. St John. 1998. *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book is a state-of-the-art volume on ESP, long-awaited after Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Robinson (1991). Its main strengths include: 1) updating the reader on major developments in the field which has become more multidisciplinary than ever before as it continues to seek distinction within ELT, and 2) defining the various roles that the ESP teacher/practitioner must perform professionally. Its main weakness, though, is that it avoids language policy and planning issues and avoids an ideological stance on ESP as an international phenomenon.

Kaplan, R. B. and R. B. Baldauf Jr. 1997. *Language planning: From practice to theory*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Two sections in this book are of special interest to the applied linguist/ESP practitioner (chapters 6 and 9). However, the rest of the book makes very interesting reading as well for those who want to understand the wider political context which constrains practice. The book defines the discipline of language policy and planning, discusses various international examples of practice, and from a review of practice attempts to define a theory: Hence the subtitle, *From practice to theory*. In this sense, the book sets the ground rules and techniques for the localized investigation of language policy and planning and for writing a series of books on the subject in various parts/countries of the world.

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