From Scientific English to English for Science: Determining the Perspectives and Crossing the Limits

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Abstract

This paper contributes to the didactic foundations of an epistemology of specialized English from a French perspective. Scientific English will be the content domain which will serve this purpose. While its transverse features (e.g. discourse, genre) have been widely investigated, it continues to lack a comprehensive approach to what is a multifaceted object, namely: 1) scientific content; 2) expressed in a foreign language; 3) which needs to be appropriated by student-learners. Another concept is needed. The transition from scientific English to English for science is regarded in terms of territory, domain and disciplines and from various perspectives and limits. Scientific English is envisaged as a narrow domain focused on linguistic aspects. To remain relevant, scientific English needs to be both broadened and enriched, and its scope delimited. These weaknesses lead to the design of English for science. The meta-concept of English for science has been forged to overcome these gaps, by crossing boundaries that limit an epistemological approach. It is then necessary to trace the method which consists in setting the boundaries for the new territory of language teaching and learning, which overlaps two domains – English and science – to develop a new domain – English for science –.

Key words: didactics, English for science, epistemology, languages for specialists of other subjects (LANSAD), specialized languages

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