

TEACHING ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC LEGAL PURPOSES:

DIFFERENT BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN
THE UK AND GREECE

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PRESENTATION ORGANISATION

- ◉ How the English teacher gets familiar with the subject matter.
- ◉ The materials for EALP courses
- ◉ Types of liaison between the English teachers and subject-matter lecturers.
- ◉ Contexts of teaching Legal English.
- ◉ The views of English teachers on teaching English to students of law in the UK and Greece.
- ◉ The views of English teachers on working together with law lecturers in the UK and Greece.

GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER

- ◉ It depends upon the language teacher to do a research of his own in order to “speak the same language” with the law school (Howe, 1993).
- ◉ Chen (2000) reports that she got acquainted with the subject matter by participating in situational decision making and professional involvement in the disciplinary culture and by getting acquainted with the discipline.

RESEARCH ON TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF LAW

- ◉ A genre based approach (Bhatia,1989,2002,2003,2004; Badger,2003; Howe,1990,1993; Jensen,2002) has been developed so that the uninitiated EALP teachers can:
- ◉ understand the generic structure and the language used.
- ◉ understand the pedagogic implications of law specific genres.

MATERIALS FOR EALP COURSES

- ◉ Depending on the aim of the English course and the EALP teacher's personal research, the materials designed for the EALP course could be either:

- ◉ Published

Or

- ◉ In-house (perfectly tailored to the students' needs)

PUBLISHED TEACHING MATERIALS

- ◉ Candlin et al (2002) who focused on writing published materials state that EALP books:
- ◉ Include chapters which cover a legal content area (e.g sources of law).
- ◉ Include a “Word Study “section (e.g how to use conditional clauses/write an argumentative essay).
- ◉ Are written for a specific audience in a particular country

IN-HOUSE TEACHING MATERIALS

- ◉ Some EAP teachers opt to design their own in-house materials which are perfectly tailored to students' needs.
- ◉ English for law is a field that presents particular difficulties for the EAP teacher, due to the close interplay of content and language (Gibbons, 1999; Tiersma, 1999).
- ◉ Here is an example drawn from Howe (1993)
- ◉ “‘Of immemorial antiquity’ does not mean ‘older than any person’s memory, it means ‘before 1189 [...] ‘You teach them the English, Mrs. Howe, and we’ll teach them the law’” (Howe, 1993: 148).

LIAISON BETWEEN EALP TEACHERS AND LAW LECTURERS

- ◉ To design materials that are tailored to the needs of the students there should be a kind of liaison between the language teacher and subject teacher.
- ◉ “Working together” with the subject teachers could be of three forms.

LIAISON BETWEEN EALP TEACHERS AND LAW LECTURERS

Co-operation: It exists between the language teacher and the department. It includes:

- the provision of information
- the provision of reading lists
- assistance with materials
- recording short talks on audio/video cassette for teaching and self-access purposes
- guest lecturers on EAP courses and follow-up seminars

Collaboration: It exists when the language teacher and the subject teacher **work together outside** the classroom

Team-teaching: It is referred to the **joint-teaching or sharing of teaching**, attempted by both the subject specialist and the English tutor.

- The main role of the language teacher is to prepare the material for the session in co-operation with the subject teacher and to run the session together. (Dudley-Evans:2005, 225-226).

LEGAL ENGLISH CONTEXTS IN THE UK

UK Law Undergraduates

- ◉ Attended by UK students.
- ◉ Need to improve their General Academic English and the Law specific skills.

LLM Students (Masters of Law)

- ◉ Attended by international graduate students and lawyers.
- ◉ Need to participate and contribute on individual basis to more legal systems

(Northcott, 2009)

LEGAL ENGLISH CONTEXT IN GREECE

- ◉ The students are law undergraduates or recent graduates.
- ◉ The courses are based on the use of published textbooks of Legal English.
- ◉ Students are interested in using English in the international environment (studying or working on international, commercial and contract law).

(Northcott, 2009)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ◉ What are the perceptions of UK EALP teachers in teaching EALP?
- ◉ What are the perceptions of Greek EALP teachers in teaching EALP?
- ◉ What do UK EALP teachers think of working together with the Law Department?
- ◉ What do Greek EALP teachers think of working together with the Law Department?

EALP TEACHERS IN THE UK

Three English Teachers for Academic Legal Purposes (EALPTUK) in the UK Universities:

- Had a 3 year experience in teaching English for Academic Legal Purposes
- Were qualified English Teachers with University Degrees or holders of certificates. One of them had a first degree in Law
- Two of whom belonged to the same University and taught to the same group of students.
- Taught the pre-sessional English course for the students who are about to attend the LL.M (Master of Law) course.

EALP TEACHERS IN GREECE

Two English teachers for Academic Legal Purposes in Greece (EALPTG).

- ◉ One of them belongs to a Greek University and the other to a private Institution.
- ◉ Both of them have been teaching English for Law for more than three years.
- ◉ One of them holds a degree in Law (from a UK university).
- ◉ Both of them are qualified English teachers.
- ◉ Both of them teach undergraduate students.

DATA COLLECTION

- Semi-structured interviews on the informants' perceptions about teaching English for Academic Legal Purposes.
- Prompt cards, which were used to direct and allow space for the informants to express their opinion.

PROMPT CARD EXAMPLE

Does acquaintance with the English Legal System constitute prerequisite for the international students to attend your course?

- No. Therefore some of the course hours are devoted to introduction to the Legal System with the use of published materials that contain units devoted to this area.
- No. Therefore some of the course hours are devoted to introduction to the Legal System with the use of in-house materials that contain units devoted to this area.
- No. Nevertheless, the introduction to the English Legal System is taught by the Law Lecturer.
- Yes. The course doesn't have any involvement with teaching Introduction to the English Legal System.
- Other (please specify)

TEACHING EALP IN THE UK

- ◉ “We expect students to **read specified texts** in preparation for class sessions and to be ready to discuss and explore ideas and language in those texts. (EALPT1)
- ◉ “Firstly, I talk to students, just to get a good idea of what they want, before coming into contact with the law lecturers. On the basis of this talk, their specific needs are revealed and consequently the course is designed. [...]The course is focused on Maritime Law. The development of **in-house materials** is to the needs of the students”. (EALPTUK2,EALPTUK3)

TEACHING EALP IN GREECE

- ◉ “The focus of the course is on the general knowledge of the English jurisdiction. **Texts from published materials** are selected and used for their relevance to the study of common law and as springboards for language exercise. Students are often asked to compare aspects of law in their own jurisdiction with those presented in the text.” (EALPTG1)

EALPTG2 who is a lawyer first states:

- ◉ “Being a lawyer, gave me the prerogative to use **my own materials**. The texts are focused on the common law jurisdiction, emphasizing to materials that lawyers may come across (warrants, legal letters, contracts). The course aims at developing translation skills, which is something that most Greek lawyers may come across during their career.” (EALPTG2)

DISCUSSION ON TEACHING EALP IN THE UK AND GREECE

- ◉ As Northcott states (2009) the courses designed for the LLM students in the UK are very specific. Therefore the teachers design their own in-house materials after exploring the students' needs.
- ◉ In Greece, where the students are taught the common (UK/USA) jurisdiction in general, the EALP teachers rely on published materials and focus on the language forms (Candlin et al, 2006) in order to prepare the students for their potential future studies or work in common law countries.
- ◉ The Greek English teacher who holds a degree in law though, being a lawyer first, uses his own in-house materials and prepares students for their potential future career by focusing on purely professional law genres like legal letters and contracts following a generic approach.

EALP TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON WORKING TOGETHER WITH LAW LECTURERS IN THE UK

In order to design a specific EALP course, EALPT teachers in the UK Universities state:

- ◉ “I am grateful and thankful to the Law lecturers who provided me with authentic materials and their perceptions and insights on the needs of the Law Students”. (EALPTUK1)
- ◉ “The course has been developed in a collaborative fashion, between the EALP teachers and the Law Lecturers. There is a mutually supportive relationship.[...] We love being over there (in the Law Department) and working together.” (EALPTUK2)
- ◉ “You have to familiarize yourself with the students’ subject in some part ...the guidance from Law Lecturers is very important [although] I hold a degree in general legal study”. (EALPTUK3)

EALP TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON WORKING TOGETHER WITH LAW LECTURERS IN GREECE

English teachers in Greece mentioned that they do not work together with the law lecturers.

- ◉ “Nowadays, there are fortunately some good textbooks, which provide invaluable help. However, I sometimes feel I need an expert help concerning explanations or clarifications of legal theories or terms that are unknown to me even in my mother tongue. [...] Our contact with the law lecturers is very rare. Our offices are detached from the law lecturers’ offices. We feel that we do not belong there.... Suffice it to say that many are the times that we find law lecturers ignoring our course and instructing in the classrooms when the English course was supposed to take place.”

EALP TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON WORKING TOGETHER WITH LAW LECTURERS IN GREECE

EALPTG2 who holds a law degree adds:

- “If a teacher is not lawyer, it would take a long way to reach a satisfactory level of knowledge. Greek law lecturers are either not familiar with the UK legal system, or they do not speak English. The English teacher should at least be a law graduate.”

DISCUSSION ON EALP TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE LAW LECTURERS

- ◉ In the UK context the EALP teachers work together with the law lecturers, by collaborating with them in order to develop the specificity of the course.
- ◉ In Greece, nevertheless, the EALP teacher, unless a lawyer, relies on the published textbooks and hesitates or abstains from seeking for help from the law lecturers since (s)he experiences feelings of isolation just as Howe reported in her experience with the law lecturers.

DISCUSSION ON EALP TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE LAW LECTURERS

- ◉ In the UK, even when an English teacher holds a degree in law, (s)he finds liaison with the law lecturers essential.
- ◉ In Greece, being a law graduate gives a prerogative to the English teacher, since any kind of liaison between EALP teachers and law lecturers is absent.

CONCLUSIONS

- ◉ EALP teachers in the UK have the option to design a specific law course based on their own in-house materials after consulting the law lecturers so that the specific needs of the LLM students are met.
- ◉ EALP teachers in Greece rely on the published textbooks since there is not the option for them to work together with the law lecturers experiencing isolation from the law department.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study

- ◉ Could be used as a starting point for the uninitiated teachers who would like to design a EALP course.
- ◉ Could introduce the design of law-specific courses perfectly tailored to the needs of the students, provided that there is a kind of liaison with the law lecturers.
- ◉ Nevertheless, if there is no assistance in part of the law department, then the EALP teacher could design a course based on published materials.

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