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# Exploring for Excellence in English for Medical Purposes at TESOL 2012

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#### **Abstract**

This report describes the author's participation in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages) International Association's annual convention held in Philadelphia, USA, from March 28-31, 2012. The author attended the convention under the Foreign Dispatch Training (Gaikoku Haken Kenshu) program at Kagawa Prefectural University of Health Sciences. The report focuses on the following main areas of participation: 1) Chairing and moderating a session on English for Medical Purposes (EMP); 2) Making a plenary presentation at the above session; 3) Serving as a discussion leader in a roundtable session on EMP; 4) Presenting a paper on innovation in EMP materials; and 5) As Chair of TESOL's English for Specific Purposes Interest Section (ESP-IS), attending the Interest Section Leaders' Workshop, and Steering Board and Open Meetings of ESP-IS. The report gives a brief introduction to TESOL International Association and ESP-IS and summarizes the salient features of the author's participation in each of the five areas listed above. In addition, a brief account of the author's participation in an educational site visit organized by TESOL International Association during the period of the convention is also given.

**Key Words:** TESOL, ESP, English for Specific Purposes, EMP, English for Medical Purposes, ESP-IS

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#### Introduction

This article is a report of the author's participation in the annual convention of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) International Association (hereafter referred to as TESOL), held in Philadelphia, USA, from March 28-31, 2012. A major part of the report is related to the author's affiliation with TESOL and a subspecialty of the association, called ESP-IS (English for Specific Purposes Interest Section). Therefore, a brief introduction is first provided to both TESOL and ESP-IS before describing details of the actual participation.

#### Introduction to TESOL

TESOL is the largest organization in the world focused exclusively on English language teaching to speakers of other languages. The organization represents more than 12,500 English language educators from 156 countries, and has more than one hundred affiliates worldwide<sup>1)</sup>.

TESOL's mission is to advance professional expertise in English language teaching and learning for speakers of other languages worldwide. Toward this goal, the association offers a wide range of opportunities that include: TESOL's official journals, newsletters and other publications, Interest Sections, affiliates, a Resource Center, an annual international convention, online courses and virtual seminars, symposia and academies, certificate programs, leadership training, career development programs, and a lot more<sup>2)</sup>. The author joined the association in 2006, has thus far attended 6 of its international conventions; has made more than 8 presentations at the attended conventions; and currently holds a leadership position in the organization's sub-group ESP-IS.

#### About ESP-IS

ESP-IS is one of the 21 sub-groups of TESOL called Interest Sections (ISs)<sup>3)</sup>. ISs are special interest groups within the organization that represent sub-specialties under the broader field of TESOL such as Adult Education IS (AE-IS), Elementary Education IS (EE-IS), Intensive English Programs IS (IEP-IS), and so on. A complete list of TESOL's 21 ISs and their details can be found under the Interest Sections part of the organization's homepage<sup>4)</sup>. The ISs offer its members

a supportive community of practice where they can share insights or solicit guidance on the professional issues that arise every day.

The ESP-IS of TESOL focuses on research and teaching in the area of ESP (English for Specific Purposes), a subspecialty of English language teaching (ELT) that aims to develop English language skills of the learners in specific areas of study and employment<sup>5</sup>. Included in this subspecialty is EMP (English for Medical Purposes) that focuses on teaching of English to doctors, nurses, and other personnel in the medical profession<sup>6</sup>.

ESP-IS fosters the sharing of ideas, expertise, and specialized curricula among ESP practitioners to promote quality research, education, and professional-development in ESP. The governing body of ESP-IS consists of a Steering Board on which the author held the position of EAP (English in Academic Settings) Representative from 2010-11 and Chair-Elect from 2011-12; and currently (2012-13) heads the group as its Chair.

#### Participation in 2012 TESOL Convention

Each year, TESOL holds a convention that brings together English language educators for learning, networking, and sharing in an effort to advance the field of ELT. With more than 6,500 attendees, 700 education sessions, and 150 exhibits, it is the largest professional development event in the TESOL field that offers professional development opportunities to English language educators at all levels from around the world.

The 2012 TESOL Convention in which the aut-hor participated, was held from March 28-31, 2012, in the historic city of Philadelphia in the state of Pennsylvania of the United States of America. The convention theme was "A TESOL Declaration of Excellence" and participants were "invited to reflect on their practices, voice their opinions, and declare their pursuit of excellence in the English language teaching profession" <sup>7)</sup>. The author's participation in the convention is summarized in this report under the following main categories: 1) Chairing and moderating the ESP-IS Academic Session; 2) Making a plenary presentation at the ESP-IS Academic session; 3) Serving as a discussion leader in a roundtable session on EMP; 4) Presenting

a paper on innovation in EMP materials; and 5) As the Chair of TESOL's ESP-IS, attending the IS Leaders' Workshop, and Steering Board and Open Meetings of ESP-IS.

#### Chairing and moderating the ESP-IS Academic Session

Each of the 21 ISs of TESOL is charged with the responsibility of organizing an Academic Session at the association's annual convention. The academic sessions are 2 hour and 45 minute long each and represent one of the major highlights of the convention's academic program. The responsibility for organizing the Academic Sessions falls to each IS's Chair-Elect in the year preceding the given convention. Thus, being the Chair-Elect of ESP-IS from 2011-2012, it was the author's responsibility to organize the ESP-IS Academic Session at TESOL 2012 Convention.

In organizing the Academic Session, the Chair-Elects have the prerogative to select the theme of their choice. Accordingly, the theme of ESP-IS Academic Session at TESOL 2012 was based on the author's main area of teaching and research, namely, EMP. The session, titled "Exploring for Excellence in English for Medical Purposes" was by far the biggest such session in the history of TESOL. It featured 5 plenary speeches, 10 poster presentations and a panel discussion, with a total of 18 presenters from seven countries, and examined current practices in EMP in several EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language) settings while exploring strategies for improving EMP pedagogy globally and aiming for excellence in the profession, as envisioned in TESOL 2012 theme. The session was divided into three sub-sessions: a Plenary Session; a Poster Session; and a Panel Discussion. A detailed handout of the session giving: an outline of the program; complete titles and summaries of all presentations; and names and biographies of all presenters, can be accessed at the ESP-IS Community Library<sup>8)</sup>.

### 2. Making a plenary presentation at ESP-IS Academic Session

In addition to organizing, chairing and moderating the Academic Session, the author was also one of the Plenary Session speakers at the Academic Session. The plenary presentation given by the author was titled: Defining EMP excellence in the Japanese EFL context, and focused on differences in EMP learner needs in EFL and ESL settings. The presentation described the rationale why from both teaching and learning perspectives, ESL and EFL contexts are very different and, therefore, EMP teaching and learning needs in the two settings also differ. In addition, the presentation looked at complexities of EMP practice in Japan and reasoned that excellence in the field be defined differently in ESL and EFL contexts. The major PowerPoint slides of the author's Plenary Session presentation are shown in Appendix 1.

#### 3. Serving as a discussion leader at a session on EMP

The author was invited to host as a leader a roundtable session named: "Tea with TESOL's Best." A number of such sessions were offered at TESOL 2012. The sessions were 45 minutes in length each and their purpose was to provide an opportunity for participants to talk informally with an expert about topics such as research, practices and theories in the field of TESOL. The Tea with TESOL's Best session that the author hosted was titled: The Challenges and Strategies in Teaching EMP. In the session, the author joined an assigned table of nine participants, gave a brief introduction to the session topic, invited questions from the participants and facilitated the discussion. In introducing the topic, the author highlighted the difficulties in developing effective EMP materials while many of the participants showed interest in starting a career in the field.

#### 4. Presenting a paper on innovation in EMP materials

This paper was presented under the category of Practice-Oriented Sessions. The presentation described innovative materials developed for an EMP course for nursing and medical technology majors in an EFL context. Currently there is a dearth of suitable materials for teaching EMP in EFL settings. Most commercially available materials are targeted toward learners in ESL contexts. However, needs of EMP learners in EFL and ESL settings are very different. Unlike their counterparts in ESL environments, the EMP learners in EFL settings are not exposed to English in their daily lives and have a much lower level of general English proficiency. Accordingly, teaching materials and approaches designed to teach EMP in ESL environments are not applicable to EFL settings. The presentation described materials for an EMP course developed in response to the challenge of teaching a combined class of nursing and medical technology majors in an East Asian EFL context.

The situation demanded availability of materials that could cater to the needs of both groups of students in a jointly held class. Toward this goal, a set of medical cases based on real-life clinical scenarios were selected from Delmar's Case Study Series. The cases, containing ample vocabulary and situations related to both nursing and medical technology disciplines, were adapted for the course to correspond to learner level and ability. Pedagogical approach focused on developing all five language learning skills: comprehension, reading, writing, listening, speaking. As part of written and spoken genre, students also composed dialogues based on case studies and acted them out in the class. Student responses to a survey at the end of the course showed that they found the material motivating and easier to learn because of its relevance to their future workplace and the story format of cases. The session participants were shown samples of lessons developed and had an opportunity to learn about delivery methods employed. The presentation concluded that the described innovation in EMP materials represents an attempt at aiming for excellence in meeting the needs of learners in EFL settings. The PowerPoint slides of this presentation are shown in Appendix 2.

### 5. Attending the organizational meetings as Chair of ESPJS

In addition to participating in the academic program, as Chair of ESP-IS, the author attended the following organizational meetings: 1) An Interest Section (IS) Leaders Workshop; 2) Steering Board Meeting of ESP-IS; and 3) The Open Meeting of ESP-IS.

The IS Leaders Workshop was three-hour long and its objectives were to provide IS leaders with opportunities to:

- 1. Review key meetings for the week
- Meet key people: IS/ISLC leaders, TESOL senior staff, TESOL Board liaison and others in charge of TESOL conventions
- Learn about the resources for IS leaders that the Central Office staff, ISLC members, and Board liaisons provide
- Plan for TESOL 2013, getting questions about the proposal review process answered and networking to begin intersection planning
- 5. Identify and share best practices and discuss ways to strengthen the ISs

According to the Governing Rules of ESP-IS, its Steering Board must convene at least once during the annual TESOL convention and before the annual ESP-IS Business Meeting. The meeting is typically two hours in length and its purpose is to approve all decisions and establish policies as necessary for the operation of ESP-IS and such projects as required to achieve the goals of TESOL and of ESP-IS.

The annual ESP-IS Open Meeting is typically held on the last day of the TESOL convention and following the Steering Board meeting. The main objective of the meeting is to present the Annual Report of the IS, hold elections for the Steering Board positions to be filled, and to pass the baton from the outgoing Chair to the incoming Chair. At the TESOL 2012 ESP-IS Open Meeting, the author took the charge as the new Chair of the IS for 2012-13.

#### Other activities

In addition to the main participation categories described above, the author also took part in an Educational Site Visit during the period of the convention. The Educational Site Visits are organized by TESOL in order to offer convention registrants the opportunity to visit schools, universities or other institutions and facilities in the convention host city that have large numbers of English language learners enrolled or are involved in teaching/learning of the language. Among the Educational Site Visits offered at TESOL 2012, the one that the author joined was the visit to the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) Clinical Skills Evaluation Center.

The ECFMG Clinical Skills Evaluation Center in Philadelphia is one of the six centers is the United States that administers the Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) part of the Unites States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). All foreign medical graduates must pass the Step 2 CS examination in order to fulfill the clinical skills requirements for ECFMG certification. The examination uses standardized patients to evaluate foreign medical graduates' ability to gather and interpret clinical patient data and communicate effectively in the English language. Thus, the examination content and procedures are of great relevance to teaching and learning of EMP and the site visit to the Philadelphia ECFMG Clinical Skills Evaluation Center coincided nicely with the ESP-IS

Academic Session that included several presentations on EMP for foreign medical graduates.

The site visit to the center included an introductory lecture to the Step 2 CS examination together with an explanation of how the exam is conducted, followed by a tour of the testing facility. The visitors were also shown video clips of the Step 2 CS exam, presented with a CD of USMLE Orientation Materials, and given information on ECFMG Acculturation Program that aims at identifying and meeting the informational needs of foreign medical graduates who come to the United States for graduate medical education or medical practice.

#### Acknowledgements

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#### 抄録

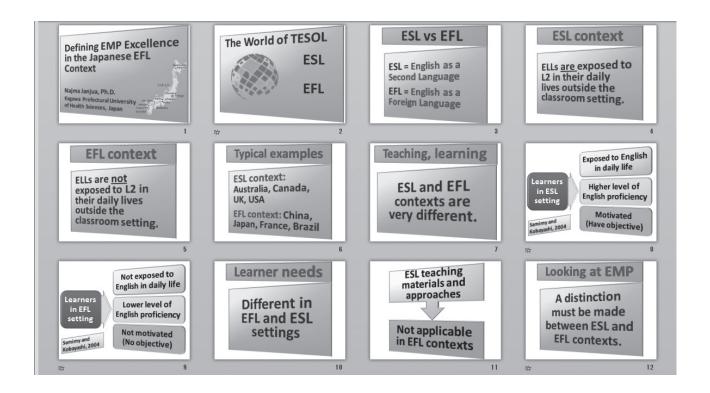
TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) 国際協会の年次総会 (Philadelphia, USA, March 28-31, 2012) に参加したので報告する. 会議には香川県立保健医療大学の外国派遣研修プログラムの一環として参加した.

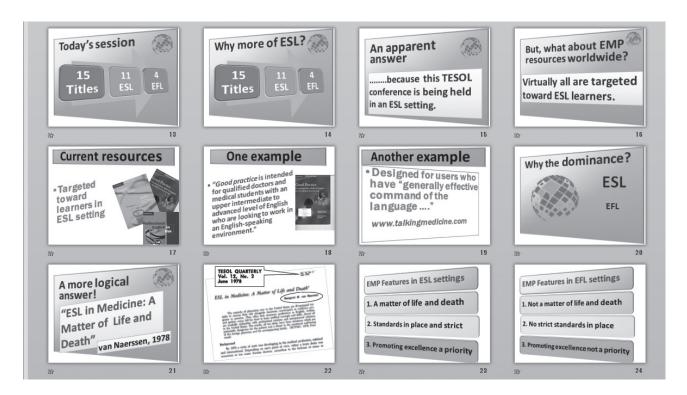
報告者は、当総会において、主として以下にあげる項目の活動を行った。

- 1) EMP(医療目的のための英語)をテーマとしたアカデミックセッションの議長を務めた.
- 2) 上記セッションにおいて、基調講演を行った.
- 3) EMP 議題でのラウンド・テーブル・セッションにおいて議論リーダーを務めた.
- 4) 革新的 EMP 教材に関する論文を発表した.
- 5) 特定の目的のための英語教育部門(ESP-IS)の議長として、TESOL専門部門リーダーズワークショップ、 又ESP-ISの運営委員会およびオープンミーティングに参加した。

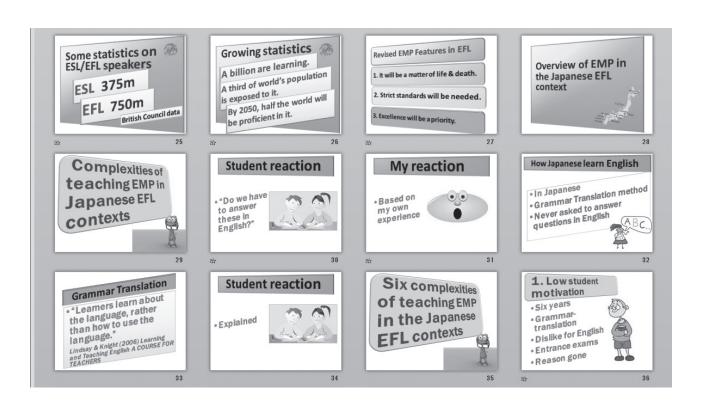
本報告では、TESOL 国際会議および ESP-IS について 簡潔に紹介し、上記5つの項目の主な特徴を要約する.

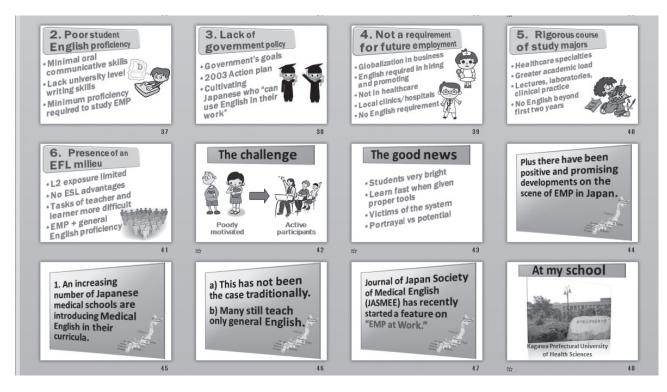
## Appendix 1. PowerPoint slides of the author's Plenary Session presentation



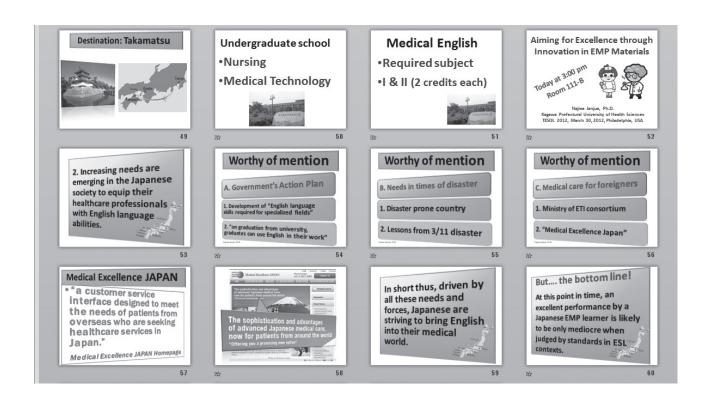


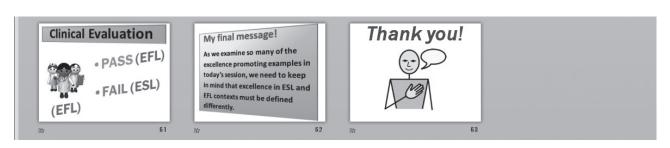
Appendix 1. Continued...



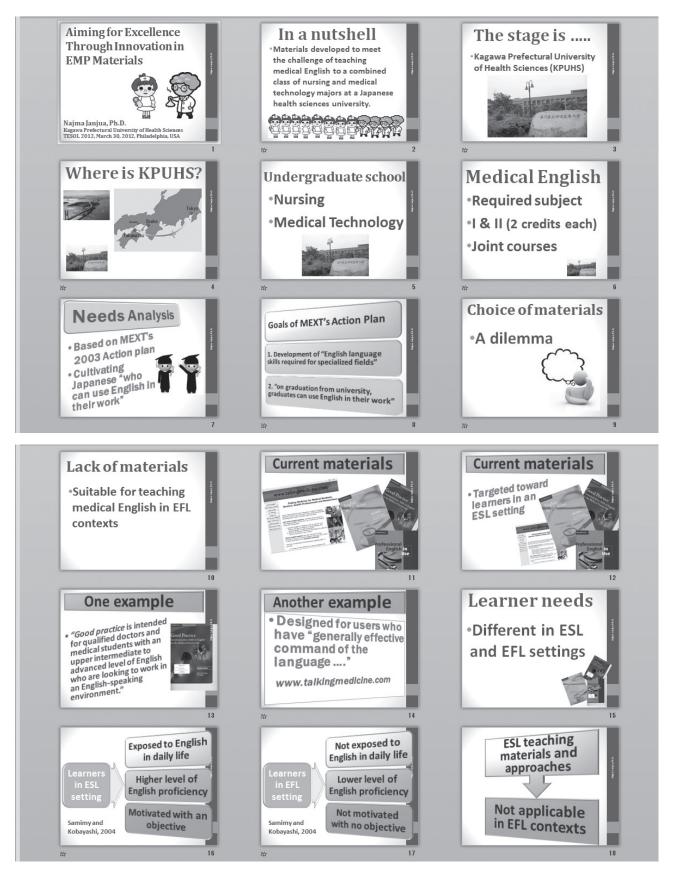


Appendix 1. Continued...

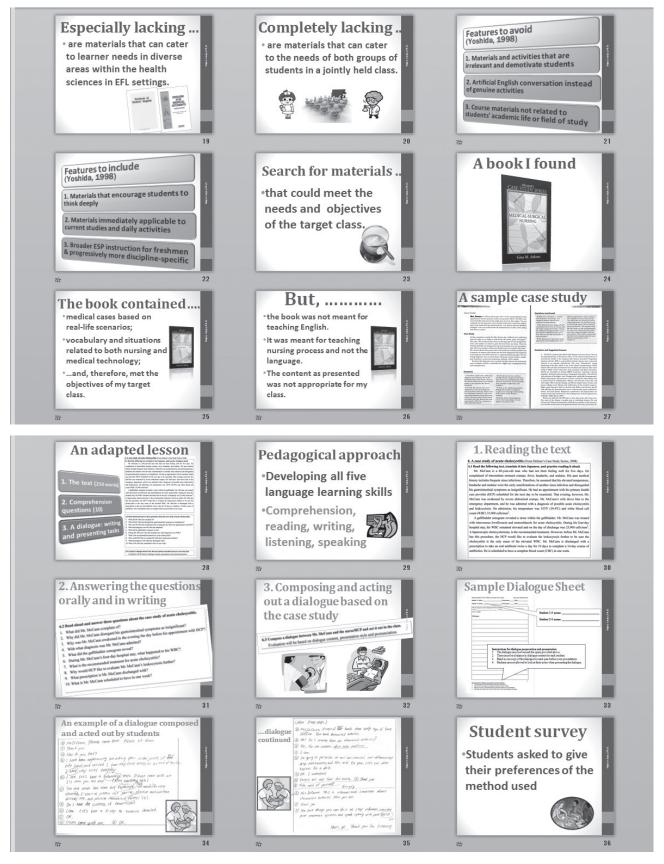




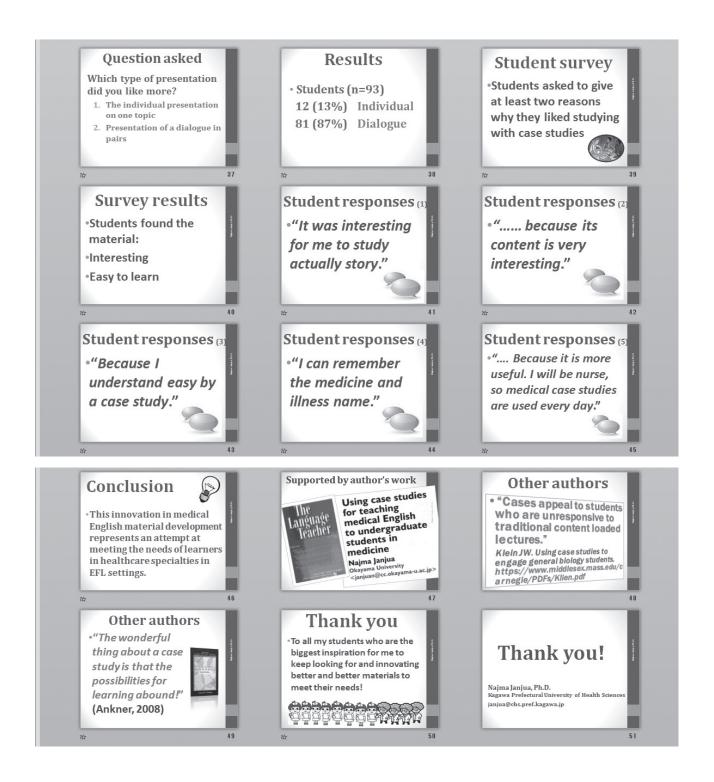
# Appendix 2. PowerPoint slides of the author's research paper presentation



Appendix 2. Continued...



Appendix 2. Continued...



受付日 2012年10月31日 受理日 2013年1月22日