

AUTHENTIC EU DOCUMENTS AS A PRODUCTIVE HOMOGENOUS DISCOURSE IN TEACHING EU ENGLISH

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Abstrakt: Článok poskytuje prehľad zdrojov dokumentov inštitúcií Európskej Únie (EÚ), pretože kurzy a materiály založené na výsledkoch korpusového výskumu môžu presnejšie uspokojiť špecifické potreby študentov jazyka pre špecifické účely, pokiaľ ide o používanie jazyka v cieľovej situácii. Korpusy autentických a odborných textov EÚ môžu poskytnúť aj kontextové znalosti, t. j. informácie o cieľovej profesionálnej kultúre a normách diskurznej komunity. V rámci výučby jazyka pre špecifické účely by sa malo úsilie vynaložiť na vytvorenie skutočne užitočného kurzu, keď je pre učiteľa dôležitá rola aj ako výskumníka. V článku preto uvádzame aj pedagogické dôsledky a konkrétne využitie autentických textov EÚ vo vyučovaní angličtiny EÚ.

Kľúčové slová: EÚ žargón, angličtina pre špecifické účely, autentické dokumenty, skratky

Abstract: The article provides a summary of the EU documents' sources as courses and materials based on findings of corpus research can more precisely cater for specific needs of ESP learners as regards target situation language use. Corpora of the EU authentic and specialised texts can also provide context knowledge, that is, information on the target professional culture and norms of the discourse community. Linguistic researchers seem to agree that authentic language has to be brought to the students' attention and that the teachers need to take time to study how the language has to be brought to the situations in a given ESP context. The effort should be put on creating a genuinely useful course. Thus, pedagogical implications and specific usage of the EU authentic texts in teaching EU English are presented.

Keywords: EU jargon, English for specific purposes, authentic documents, abbreviations

INTRODUCTION

EU English¹ or Euro-English is a subject to constant change. EU terminology has been developed and refined over decades. It is crucial that EU professionals whose first language is not English have excellent English skills for professional communication in decision and policy making (Fischer, 2010; Truchot, 2002). Despite the fact that the UK has left the EU, it is highly likely that English will continue to play an important role when negotiating new policies and drafting EU documents and will, thus, in all likelihood still remain a powerful language as a lingua franca in many EU contexts. As Modiano (2017, p.315) states: “English within the EU now has extensive governmental, educational, informational, and work-related functionality, as well as increasing utility in the creation of intellectual properties”.

EU English is gaining importance within the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). There has been a pedagogical need to teach English as it is used in the EU context in order to prepare not only translators or interpreters but also future euro bureaucrats, and it has been increasingly obvious in Slovak higher education.

EU English courses are offered in various institutions such as ministries, language schools and university language centres, for learners with different levels of English and educational or professional backgrounds (Trebits, 2008). As new member states prepare for their turn at the EU Council Presidency, they need to be proficient enough to understand the EU texts reliably, and to produce other EU related texts complying with the EU norms. Speaking of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2016, the Slovak government organized numerous EU English courses at the Ministries level for the staff in order to facilitate the whole process of coordination while presiding over the EU. Faculty of Applied Languages at the University of Economics in Bratislava organized a specific course on EU English for the employees of various Ministries of the Slovak Republic.

¹ We use the term EU English to refer to English language as it is used in the documents of the EU, also interchangeable with the term Euro-English. It is vital to clear up possible misconception of this specific term. In our article we analyse EU English *sensu stricto* (Jedrzejovska, 2008), i.e. the language used by politicians, jurists or staff working for the EU institutions including legislative texts. On the other hand, the term Euro-English is more broadly considered *sensu largo* (Jedrzejovska, 2008), i.e. English used by non-native speakers across European continent.

Nevertheless, the content of EU English courses is generally based on language teachers' intuitions rather than on a systematic analysis of student motivation, expectations, or linguistic needs. To our knowledge, comprehensive monolingual course books written for students of English focusing on the typical features of EU English and based on corpus analyses of EU documents are not yet available in large number.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EURO-JARGON LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

According to Trebits (2008) from an ELT standpoint analysing EU texts has at least two important implications: first of all, studying the characteristics of EU English through authentic texts would benefit professionals from a wide range of fields. Second, EU English has indeed developed into a special language featuring characteristics of political, legal, business, and even academic discourse, thus mirroring the different functions and multiple activities of the EU as a cultural, political and historical reality.

In order to establish a sound basis for language courses in English for the EU institutions, research is needed into the lexical, syntactic and discourse characteristics of the register of English used within EU institutions. Furthermore, it is necessary to know more about the target situation and the context of this register.

The most detailed analysis of the register of English in EU documents has been provided by Trebits (2008, 2009). Examining the Specific corpus of EU English, a fairly small corpus of 200,000 running lexemes containing official EU documents selected randomly and intuitively, she investigated lexis, conjunctions and phrasal verbs. Based on her study, as regards lexis in EU documents, she found that 46.5% of the word types, including several frequently used EU abbreviations in her corpus were, not in the BNC 3000 word list, and that there is little overlap between these frequent words and the words in the lists on the websites of Euro Jargon and EU Glossary on the European Union portal. Based on these findings, she concluded that EU documents pose challenges for language learners at an intermediate (B1-B2) level.

Jablonkai's (2010) study compared the lexis and lexical bundles in two EU-related registers. Comparing news texts reporting on EU-related issues, and EU texts such as press releases and legal texts issued by EU institutions, Jablonkai demonstrated that the discourse of these two registers differ considerably, and therefore, the instruction for future EU professionals should include teaching materials that are created specifically based on the analysis of official EU documents. The corpora she used contained 120,000 running words of news

texts, and the same amount of EU texts selected randomly from the time period of January to August 2007.

In our own previous research (Kaprálíková, 2016) on abbreviatory processes occurring in the specific authentic EU texts, we investigated the occurrence of the abbreviations, identifying them in the EU texts and allocated them to specific categories. The method of quantitative text analysis (content analysis) was applied to draw basic statistical inferences from the sampled EU documents. Accordingly, the qualitative, functional interpretations of quantitative patterns were included. Thus, a great deal of space is devoted to qualitative analysis, summarizing regularities and irregularities of the abbreviations processes found in the EU corpus as well as contextualizing numerous features of shortenings based on fundamental notions of extra-grammatical processes.

SOURCES OF AUTHENTIC EU DOCUMENTS

In order to demonstrate the wide range of the sources from which various specialized EU corpora can be composed and subsequently used for pedagogical purposes, short overview of division of online publicly available EU documents follows. It is important to mention that Web has evolved into the resource of first resort for lexicographers and linguists, for translators, teachers and other language professionals.

Multilingual parallel language resources of the EU

As a source of observation of the EU texts, starting in 2006, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and other European Union organisations have made available a number of largescale highly-multilingual parallel language resources in between 22 and 26 languages. These are as follows:

JRC-Acquis, DGT-Acquis and DCEP-corpora consisting of full texts with additional information on which sentences are aligned with which others.

Translation Memories DGT-TM, EAC-TM and ECDC-TM are collections of translation units (mostly sentences), from which the full text cannot be reproduced.

Digital Corpus of the European Parliament is the largest single release of documents published by an institution of the European Union. It contains various document types in 23 languages (253 language pairs).

JRC EuroVoc Indexer is a wide-coverage thesaurus with over six thousand classes that covers the interests of the European Institutions

IATE (Inter-Active Terminology for Europe) incorporates all of the existing terminology databases of the EU's translation services into a single new, highly interactive and accessible interinstitutional database.

Official Journal of the European Union (OJ), the official gazette of record for the European Union, is published every working day in all of the official languages of the Member States.

The public registers of all EU institutions are also relevant source of authentic materials. Their complete texts are provided online via their websites.

AUTHENTIC TEXTS IN TEACHING EU ENGLISH PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Coming from a specialization unrelated to the discipline in which language teachers are asked to teach, ESP teachers are often unable to rely on personal experiences when evaluating materials and considering course goals. At the university level in particular, they are also unable to rely on the views of the learners, who tend not to know what English abilities are required by the profession they hope to acquire the knowledge about. The result is that many ESP teachers become very much dependent on the published textbooks available, and even worse, when there are no textbooks available for a particular discipline, resolve to teaching from textbooks which may be quite unsuitable. With the exception of textbooks designed for major fields such as computer science and business studies, based on our own experience, many of textbooks for ESP tend to use topics from multiple disciplines, making much of the material redundant and perhaps even confusing the learner as to what is appropriate in the target field. Many ESP lecturers are therefore left with no alternative than to develop original materials. Taking into consideration such challenge, the ESP practitioner's role as "researcher" is especially important, with results leading directly to appropriate materials for the classroom.

As we have had our own experience in teaching EU English in context, even if we relied on our personal experience working with EU English for considerable time, systematic and productive linguistic input, pointing out specific features of EU English, meant a considerable challenge for us.

The effort should be put on creating a genuinely useful course, in our case EU English needs to be analysed in a similar way to the other registers in order to create meaningful and useful learning materials. One of the method to collect appropriate materials for such course is corpus analysis due to already mentioned readily available extensive registers of the EU documents.

Usually, the learners of EU English can speak English at least at B1-B2 (intermediate) levels. EU English course should consist of units based on authentic EU-related texts and documents and discussion topics of great interest to everyone involved in EU affairs. Each unit should focus on:

Career skills development: research project using Internet, EU Term builder to learn the key terms and expressions in EU terminology, small talk-developing relevant communication skills,

Language skills development

Reading- using extracts from authentic texts developing reading skills and discussing particular issues in the texts

Writing - developing writing skills that are relevant for specific type of work or study: creating summaries of complex information, reporting statistical data, preparing a report, presenting arguments, familiarising with various genres such e-mails, formal letters, CVs or using abbreviations in a correspondence etc.

Listening - practising basic skills such as note taking, listening for specific information using authentic sources such as interviews with EU employees or speeches of representatives of various EU institutions etc.

Speaking - developing speaking skills such as arguing, debating, making a presentation, persuading etc.

Language use and Vocabulary

Practising grammar patterns, and prevalent collocations and word partnerships in EU English

Moreover, it is crucial to make sure that all the activities created for particular units are in line with the modifications introduced by the latest Treaty – Treaty of Lisbon, and should be updated in the course of time adapting terminology and other activities to current content EU institutions are using.

Tandlichová (1992) points out that understanding the substance of text formation, its cohesion and coherence is prior to the teacher of English. Thus, **the first aspect is the authentic text usage in the EU English courses to demonstrate the contextualization of innovative language patterns.** Tribble and Jones (1997, p.36) outlined a methodology for using texts in the language classroom, proposing that **the most effective starting point for understanding a text is a frequency-sorted word list.** A frequency list records the number of times that each word occurs in the text. In our opinion, it is not only a word list but also the lists of any morphological units can therefore provide valuable information about those units that appear (and do not appear) in a text. These lists can be arranged in order of first occurrence, alphabetically or in frequency order. First, occurrence order serves as a quick guide to the

distribution of units in a text, as concerns the lexemes, an alphabetic listing is built mainly for indexing purposes, but a frequency-ordered listing highlights the most commonly-occurring words in the text. In what follows, a few task types will be presented, including the above mentioned aspects, to illustrate the way how frequency-sorted word lists can be applied in teaching. Tasks focus on abbreviation usage in the EU documents.

Table 1 Frequency list of 10 most commonly used abbreviations in EU corpus, 2016

<i>Acronyms</i>	<i>Definitions</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
EU	European Union	1	5189
EC	European Community	2	4804
EEA	European Economic Area	3	2833
OJ	Official Journal of European Union	4	1601
EEC	European Economic Community	5	1573
TFEU	Treaty on Functioning of European Union	6	1365
DG	Directorate General	7	1098
TEU	Treaty on European Union	8	612
EP	European Parliament	9	475
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community	10	290

Source: author's own

Task type A

Aim: to use abbreviations in the context

Instruction: Understanding abbreviations in context: It is often laborious to guess the meaning of abbreviation from the context especially if there is no explanation in the document.

- 1, *The blank rows in the table below are for you to write your best guess of the meaning of abbreviations. Compare your guesses with the glossary definitions.*

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Your guess</i>	<i>Glossary definition</i>
EU		
EP		
IGC		
MS		
EC		
ECA		
ECJ		
The Council		

2. Complete the following sentences using the abbreviations in the table above (the lines indicate the number of the letters of the abbreviation).

EU institutions and decision-making

Pooling sovereignty means, in practice, that ____ ____ (1) delegate some of their decision-making powers to shared institutions they have created, so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level. The ____ ____'s (2) decision-making process involves three main institutions: ____ ____ (3), which represents the ____ ____'s (4) citizens and is directly elected by them; _____ (5), which represents the individual ____ ____ (6); and the ____ ____ (7), which seeks to uphold the interests of the Union as a whole. Two other institutions have a vital part to play: the ____ ____ (8) upholds the rule of European law, and the ____ ____ (9) checks the financing of the Union's activities. ____ ____ (10) is the formal procedure for negotiating amendments to the Treaties of the ____ ____ (11). It is convened by the President of the _____ (12) and composed by the representatives of the governments of the ____ ____ (13).

Key to task type A:

EU European Union, *EP* European Parliament, *IC* Intergovernmental Conference, *MS* Member States, *EC* European Commission, *ECA* European Court of Auditors, *ECJ* Court of Justice of European Union, *The Council* the Council of the European Union

1 MS 2 EU 3 EP 4 MS 5 The Council 6 MS 7 EC 8 ECJ 9 ECA 10 IGC 11 EU 12 Council 13 MS

Task Type B

Aim: to recognize the acronyms, to provide students with the practice of the acronyms used in the EU context.

Instruction:

- 1 *Can you name these EU institutions?*
 - a, EESC
 - b, CoR
 - c, EIB
 - d, ECB
 - e, EDPS
 - f, EPSO
 - g, EAS

- 2 *Which of the following are referred to as interinstitutional bodies of the EU? (Use abbreviations)*

- 3 *Match the halves of the following sentences with the abbreviations above*
 - 1, represents civil society, employers and employees.
 - 2, 's task is to provide training in specific areas for members of EU staff.
 - 3, represents regional and local authorities.
 - 4, safeguards the privacy of people's personal data
 - 5, finances EU investment projects
 - 6, recruits staff for the EU institutions and other bodies
 - 7, is responsible for European monetary policy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Key to task type B:

1 a, The Economic and Social Committee; b, The Committee of the Regions; c, The European Investment Bank; d, The European Central Bank; e, The European Data Protection Supervisor; f, The European Personnel Selection Office; g, The European Administrative School; 2 EESC, CoR; 3 1, EESC 2, EAS 3, CoR 4, EDPS 5, EIB 6, EPSO 7, ECB

Secondly, one way to complement the frequency of occurrence of the abbreviations in the EU documents in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the lexical composition of written EU English discourse is **to provide collocational information for the elements frequently appearing in the EU documents**. As can be seen in examples below, the results of this kind of

analysis on a small selection of shortenings occurred in the EU texts, such information can be provided in a straight-forward manner in the form of pedagogic collocational profiles. As shown in those profiles they not only give language learners guidance on relevant collocates, but they also present frequent semantic preferences and constructions, that is, the grammatical relations the particular unit frequently forms with relevant collocates.

Task type C

Aim: to help learners identify and use frequent collocates of particular abbreviation in context

Instruction:

Study the concordance lines and list the prepositions that are likely to be used with this specific abbreviation. Create short phrases using the pattern with the listed prepositions.

consequences and its distribution within *the Union*.
The preventive and control rules applying
serious threat to animal or public health in *the Union*
and can thus, if desired, be addressed
pose a risk to animal or public health in *the Union*,
whether across the whole Union or only
diseases which are currently not present in *the Union*
require stringent measures to immediately
that may already be present in parts of *the Union*,
compulsory or optional eradication is
health, animal welfare and the economy of *the Union*,
the risk of its spreading and the availability
listed diseases that do normally not occur in *the Union*
and for which immediate eradication measures
the goal of eradicating them throughout *the Union*,
which could include diseases such as brucellosis
prevent them from spreading to parts of *the Union*
that are officially free of, or that have
spreading on account of their entry into *the Union*
or movements between Member States, which
there is a need for surveillance within *the Union*,
which could include diseases such as anthrax
disease prevention and control measures across *the Union*,
the power to adopt acts in accordance

Source: author's own

CONCLUSION

As the use of English has increased in internal communication within EU institutions, especially in written communication (Truchot, 2002), in the last couple of decades, it is essential for the EU English teachers to continually update their courses from context point of view. Sources of authentic texts of EU documents are available to the public online, and it is up to the teacher to choose appropriate methods of processing the vast amount of material available to them. Continuous research on authentic materials usage in this context can be useful for universities in Europe that offer courses in EU English in their international relations studies and translation programmes, creating updated textbooks on EU English, preparing for tests for selecting applicants for positions in the EU institutions (which can always be taken in English but not necessarily in other official languages) (for example EPSO tests) and also for in-service EU English courses offered to EU professionals.

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