The Value of a Systemic Functional Approach to ESP or Rather LSP

Carys Lloyd Jones

Abstract. This paper argues that a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) approach to Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) is worth considering as a useful means of enhancing target language use. The universal aspects of SFL for this purpose and within this context will be highlighted thus revealing links among language, culture and thought. English will be used as an example, in other words: ESP, and the term ESP will also be discussed. References will be made to language in use from both reader and writer perspectives through examining a study based on one UK government initiative. At present the UK government is encouraging a range of initiatives to attract students from non-traditional backgrounds into the university with issues about language being regarded as high priority. The underlying nature of these issues will be discussed in order to draw out the often-unappreciated complexity of what constitutes as language drawing on examples taken from the study. This will lead to pedagogical considerations of the role of DT in language development and, hopefully, to stimulate discussion about how SFL might be helpful in LSP. Spoken text will not be considered in this presentation.