
ENGLISH FOR LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS: THE STATUS OF ESP/ESAP ACROSS (DISCIPLINARY) CULTURES IN A BULGARIAN PHILOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

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Abstract

Given the proliferation of approaches, pedagogies and research on ESP/ESAP, it is difficult for a teacher to cull out and implement all the ingredients necessary to guarantee success in bridging linguistic proficiency and academic performance in foundational, theoretical freshmen courses.

In view of both the students' academic schedule and prospective careers, foundational BA courses at philological departments require the crossing of numerous cultural boundaries – disciplinary, discursive, cognitive and linguistic. The study of General Linguistics in English in the context of philological syllabi lacking ES(A)P courses is a challenge for both students and instructors. A way to cope with the challenge is to incorporate in the tightly packed content of the course an ESAP component at the expense of a certain content reduction justified by the context in which the course is conducted, i.e. as a feeder to an English philology major not to a language or linguistics major. This paper aims to outline the difficulties for both teachers and students in negotiating the process and content that will help the interested parties to find culturally appropriate methodologies and practices in the study of General Linguistics in English in the context of a Bulgarian philological department and to suggest an individual action plan for remedying problems.

1. Introduction

Language is at one and the same time (1) a necessary precondition for culture and cultural process and a consequence of cultural engagement; (2) a medium of culture and cultural process; and (3) a ‘broker’ of cultural process (Lankshear, Gee, Knobel & Searle 1997: 11).

The second and third dimensions correspond to the complex interaction in situations of cross-cultural encounters. In acquiring a culture (e.g. hip-hop culture, academic culture, or linguistics culture), besides practices and routines one also has to learn the appropriate language, mode of expression, dominant discourses and engendered value systems. This is relevant in the context of academic content courses conducted in the target language in a philological department where, besides the target language, students need to acquire the analytical/critical discipline-specific cultures and develop critical thinking.

Enculturation to a discipline-specific culture depends heavily on the mastering of the epistemology and discourses of the respective discipline. Moreover, a student's

sense of personal achievement and satisfaction and perception of participation also depend on the same factors. According to Holmes & Nesi (2009: 58), “university lecturers from different disciplines look for different attributes in the writing of their students, and describe and evaluate academic activities in discipline-specific ways”. In other words, the measurement of students’ actual achievements is also discipline-specific. Students function as cultural agents by positioning themselves as members of their discourse communities in their academic assignments. Students are assessed in terms of their performance in academic tasks of different formats, not in terms of the level of their actual learning. A basic ingredient of acquiring the culture of a discipline in practical terms boils down to learning the culture’s vocabulary (terminology) and the respective modelling of discourse practices and patterns. This has serious epistemological underpinnings as “students categorize course content simultaneously in terms of what the content itself affords and their own conceptual schemes” (Newman 2002: 67). So the epistemology of a discipline (how it views the world) interacts strongly with students’ cognitive predispositions and epistemic stances. The problem is exceptionally acute in freshmen’s introductory courses in General Linguistics framed in English and American Studies major curricula. From a theoretical perspective the problem lies in our failure to implement in our everyday teaching practices De Beaugrande’s (2002: 1) insight that “even though linguistics is about language, the major works in linguistic theory have seldom been analysed and synthesized as language, specifically: as a mode of discourse seeking to circumscribe language by means of language”. In more practical terms the problem hinges on the way the epistemology of language and that of linguistics are constructed within a curriculum or even more specifically in the linguistics classroom and how this is tailored in terms of the students’ instrumental¹ needs and their epistemic stances towards the discipline.

De Beaugrande (2002: 13.46) has succinctly summarized the following plausible scenarios for the epistemological relationship between language and linguistics:

Although it is still far from settled what the relationships between language and linguistics is or should be, we can imagine at least five scenarios (Fig. 13.3).

(1a ²) Language contains linguistics: the activity of ‘doing linguistics’ is just one more instance of language being used, not essentially different in kind from other instances.

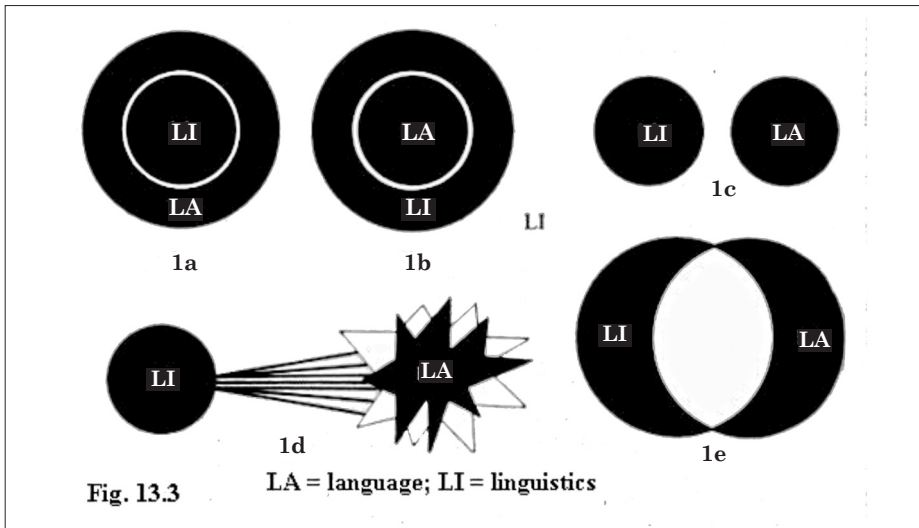
(1b) Linguistics contains language: the activity of ‘doing linguistics’ has language as one domain within its larger, more abstract study of the general formal, combinatorial, and organizational properties of sign systems.

(1c) Linguistics is independent of language: the activity of ‘doing linguistics’ is independent from language, perhaps in the way that ‘doing biology’ is separate from the coding and decoding of enzymes.

(1d) Linguistics disturbs language: the activity of ‘doing linguistics’ suspends the nor-

¹ ‘Instrumental’ here refers to the skills and knowledge students would most benefit from in view of the policies of the curriculum and the expectations and/or explicit requirements of further more focused linguistic courses.

² The ordering and numbering of the caption under the diagram have been changed to suit the current argument and violate the original’s arrangement.



mal operation or function of language in order to scrutinize, generalize, objectify, formalize, and so on, perhaps in the way that ‘doing biology’ entails starving, injuring, or killing living organisms.

(1e) Linguistics and language overlap, but neither contains the other: the two domains share some aspects, but neither can be fully subsumed by the other. Linguistics studies language in relation to other aspects, such as social organization; and yet linguistics never gets the entirety of language into its scope of vision.

(1a) to (1e) describe the five ways in which we can, for both practical and theoretical purposes, spell out the patterns via which we conceptualize and cope with the immanent reflexivity of language which affects the way in which the complex interactions between language as a means of communication interacts with linguistics which reifies the phenomenon of language for analytical purposes. The issue of reifying language seriously impacts on students’ attitudes and perceptions of what linguistics is and how studying it affects their philological education. These reifications can become perceptually real by the ways in which we engender the (dis)continuities between (foreign) language studies and linguistics in educational settings.

In reality, the natural correlation that obtains between language studies and language is (1a). However, it is extremely difficult to overcome the predisposition of students (after prescriptive school grammar classes, usually in their native language) to conceive of language studies (grammar) as unnecessary constraints and artificial constructs that disrupt their use of something taken for granted (1d). Unfortunately, syllabus design and classroom practices can instil one or the other of these conceptualizations of the correlation by severing intersubject links or by promoting them. For the sake of brevity we can call the engendering of any of these natural patterns of conceptualizing reflexivity and the epistemological links between language classes and theoretical linguistic courses ‘scenarios’. Although these scenarios have been defined *post hoc* as relations established between the object of study (language) and the

scientific enterprise (linguistics) that has taken it upon itself to systematically study the former in the works of major linguists, I think these scenarios implicitly underlie all curricula and course designs. They also describe the epistemic stances that might be engendered in freshmen students depending on the course's design, its place and significance as well as its instrumental value in the context of the overall curriculum. They can also be thought of as perspectives adopted by the particular subject instructor in identifying problems and spelling out possible solutions.

As blueprints underlying curriculum design scenarios (1a) and (1b) are impracticable. Used as curriculum/course design rationale, (1a) implies that Linguistics should be taught not as a course in its own right but as an ESAP course, which would suit the purposes of a non-philological department or if students are granted a preparatory year before embarking on their specialized major (in cases, of course, in which the language of instruction is different from the students' native one). The encapsulation of language teaching within the curriculum of a linguistics course could well do for a course in a Linguistics-only major or in cases when the instruction is conducted in the native language and the native language is the object of further studies. As such these two are not fit for a philological department where the language of instruction is the target foreign language.

The remaining three scenarios are implementable in the context specified above but each carries with it epistemic and practical commitments with different design and outcome benefits. Unfortunately, (1c) is what my students report as experiencing. Both their expectations (in the pre-course questionnaire) and their overall impression at the end of the first semester reveal that for students language study and the study of linguistics are totally independent and generally unrelated areas of academic practice. Neither the language instructors nor the conductor of the Introduction to Linguistics course (me) succeed in building the necessary bridges for overcoming the pigeon-hole approach which students perceive and apply in their education. This scenario (1c) perforce creates in students the wrong-footed feeling that linguistics is a self-encapsulated entity with higher academic merits than what is studied. It has unfortunately ruled our curriculum design for some time now and this epistemic stance has been so deeply inbred in our policy-makers that as a result students fail to see any intrinsic relation between the two or to transfer knowledge acquired in the general language course to the linguistics classroom or vice versa. Scenario (1d) adequately summarizes students' attitudes and experience with English grammar classes. They often even object by claiming that they never do the things taught in class when they use English for various communicative and educational purposes. For most students linguistics disrupts language (1d), and, while they enjoy language classes, they find linguistic classes difficult and disengaged from language, i.e. they perceive linguistics as a self-contained end in itself. The ideal case would be for the students to come to perceive the natural connection between language (classes) and the various theoretical courses as is specified in scenario (1e), where language study and linguistics studies are mutually informing and beneficial and lead to synergistic effects. This could only be achieved if a bridge is provided to help students experience the natural continuity between language classes and linguistic courses. We seem to fail to engender the epistemological mi-

lieu and educational practices that would foster such a scenario and create such an attitude and understanding in students. Besides unsatisfactory classroom practices, the overall curriculum design might be lacking the necessary glue.

The missing link for practical teaching purposes would be an ESAP course, preferably with incorporated discipline-specific writing classes. The detrimental effect stemming from the lack of such courses in the first three semesters of academic education is most strongly felt immediately after exam sessions. In the feedback session after the exam when students review their exam papers and ask why they have been awarded a specific grade, it transpires that assessors are likely to attribute poor subject-specific academic achievements to lack of intellectual prowess rather than to the lack of the necessary cross-cultural academic abilities of the students (which often relate to the absence of discourse management skills and poor subject-specific language abilities).

Students experience difficulty in grappling with distinctions between description, analysis and theory. Pieces of novice academic writing invariably fail to meet two basic criteria: subject-specific discourse management and academic writing standards. The moral dilemma of adopting as assessment criteria skills and knowledge that have not been developed or taught in the course and the compromise with the very standards that define the type of education evokes a rift in both personal and academic integrity. Students remain perplexed as to what they have done amiss and dubious as to what and how much they have learned. They are unable to discern the hidden value-laden assessment grids which come with disciplinary culture. They lack the metacognitive skills for cross-cultural agency in an academic context.

To pre-empt the raising of eyebrows at the buzzword ‘cross-cultural’, a clarification is in order. Throughout the paper, culture is understood as defined by Dahl (2004: 2) – “the modus operandi of a group of people and the shared values that underpin the modus operandi” – and by Spencer-Oatey (2000: 4) as “a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural norms, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour.” The situation to be reviewed involves the following cross-cultural perspectives which have a direct influence on the educational practices and achievements of the students:

1) the specificity of British and American Studies in Bulgaria which is a cross-cultural melting pot combining a non-Anglophone context with Anglophone content and Anglophone critical/analytical discourses. It is a peculiar admixture of disciplines among comparable departments in different countries: in the UK English Studies encompasses the following disciplines: “Modern Literature, English Language, Medieval Literature, Performance Studies, Critical Theory and Creative Writing” (Hewings 2009: 110), while in Bulgaria English and American Studies includes English Language; Literary Studies – British, American and Canadian Literatures; Linguistics – General Linguistics, Morphology, Phonetics and Phonology, Syntax, Semantics, Translation Theory; and Cultural Studies – British, American and Canadian;

2) the cultural settings in which the students use the language for the purposes of media and pop-culture consumption which shape linguistic, discourse and com-

municative values are quite distinct from those associated with the academic settings, forms of interaction and language they are requested to use in class. Admittedly, they have been immersed in the target language in their school years but in the context of a global culture they use the target language outside the classroom for various non-education-tailored activities;

3) the discipline-specific cultures in which the students are immersed without being explicitly alerted to the need to acquire the discourse practices of the discipline (including cognitive, genre and topical specificity characterizing the discipline), or taught how to structure their discourse in a literature/culture/linguistics course;

4) the linguistics culture³ (views about language and dominant linguistic discourses generally adopted in HEI) as opposed to the simplified school grammar awareness (in and about the students' native language, Bulgarian) with which the students enter the university classroom. One serious epistemological problem is their reliance on the textbook, seen as the final authority, which clashes with the multiplicity of perspectives, theoretical stances and arguments, which is the norm in the academic context. The basic cultural divide between school and university learning is exactly this epistemological underpinning – the comfort and security of the textbook and the ultimate authority are quickly shaken early into the freshman year, and more problem-oriented learning based on self-discovery procedures sneaks in. Students feel insecure and refuse or are afraid to take stands. In the linguistics classroom the transition from prescriptivism to critical and analytical awareness is what disheartens them. They need help in this transition during their first year, but we seem to feel comfortable with the misconception that skills needed for the transition will be naturally acquired via simple immersion as happens with naturally acquiring a language. What is more, even within the disciplinary and discursive uniformity associated with the study of linguistics, culture-laden cognitive dissociations abound (e.g. argument construction strategies, text-construction strategies, etc.). The core of the problem is the predominance of teacher-centred, upfront prescriptive teaching practices at school, which account for the lack of a smooth transition between the authority-based content structuring (there is a single textbook per subject) in the school context and the academic world of negotiating knowledge with active personal involvement and higher demands for ambiguity tolerance.

In view of all the issues raised above, in the remainder of the paper the most significant difficulties and areas of contention are described, reasons for the status quo are sought and possible solutions (from the point of view of a personal action plan) offered for providing in the smoothest possible way the necessary ESAP and skills components lacking in the design of the course Introduction to General Linguistics. The solutions (which involve a transition from (1c) and (1d) to (1e)) are intended to cater for the needs of students for implementing and enhancing their discipline-specific cultural and discourse practices and to promote in students the sense of natu-

³ In the school context in Bulgaria linguistics is not taught in any form. The grammar instruction in Bulgarian is mainly prescriptively-informed and targets literacy, not analyticity.

ral continuity between language classes and linguistics courses that would bring about the requisite motivation, personal engagement, sense of achievement and satisfaction on their part.

2. Theoretical background

Teaching and learning are connected with the development of meta-cognitive and linguistic skills. Discipline-specific language and writing characteristics constitute the heuristics for the particular subject-specific type of thinking. The teaching of linguistics is especially challenging in view of this heuristic as reflexivity of language. No matter whether it is first or second, native or foreign language, it posits serious difficulties and pitfalls for the creation of courses suited to meet the subject-specific requirements and create the natural environment for the development of meta-cognitive skills and subject-specific writing abilities. As language is *the* human attribute, everyone comes to study language with a conception of what language is and what commenting on one's own language or other people's language is. The discrepancy between the apparent familiarity of language (something we all use and know and talk about) and the terminological and conceptual intricacies of the systemic studying of language has a rather offputting effect which leads to lower motivation and an attitude of "why should I be bothered with all this?". One of the basic goals of a teacher of linguistics is to alert students to the five possible scenarios summarized by De Beaugrande (see above) and manage to foster in them the ability to flexibly and critically switch between these epistemic commitments, emphasizing the viability of the 'overlapping' scenario, so that they can develop a better and more engaged grasp on language as an object of study.

3. The context

The case study is the course in General Linguistics at the Department of British and American Studies at Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', Sofia, Bulgaria. The course *Introduction to General Linguistics*, as the first 'theoretical' compulsory course for first-year students⁴, has a major responsibility to bear, inevitably influencing the way students perceive the difference between school education and uni-

⁴ As of October 2010, the course is backed up by a Moodle-based support module, which was planned as the natural space for students to develop a heightened awareness of the ESP component in the course and to develop learner autonomy in the context of mutual help and discussions. The innovation failed as out of 86 enrolled students, only a handful have used the platform to upload assignments or check the courses calendar. None has ventured to take advantage of the weekly task "What terms did we learn this week?" designed as an alphabetic dictionary. Given the four hours of face-to-face contact for the course, it is easy to account for students' passivity. The other basic reason is that students find the texts they are assigned to read too demanding, with too many unfamiliar words, and unless the authors of the texts have expressly indicated the terms they introduce (by bolding them or indicating their terminological status in other relevant ways), the students are unable to decide what counts as a term in the textual context.

versity education. The course is taught as a first-year compulsory course, scheduled for one two-hour lecture and one two-hour seminar per week for the first semester (15 weeks). The course ends with a three-hour written exam, the first ever exam different from English achievement tests that the students have to sit for.

The most outstanding feature of the group of students is that they share a single native language – Bulgarian⁵ – and they have all learned English in an educational context, albeit in an immersion model context. Their authentic interest (i.e. what they naturally engage in and relate to) in the target language is restricted to media, films and pop culture activities (music, youth magazines, etc.). There is a thin line dividing their active use of the target language for personal media and pop culture consumption purposes and the type of language they are expected to use in class. Their competence in English varies, despite the unified entrance exam they have all successfully sat for in the admission process. The meta-cognitive and learning skills⁶ with which our students are equipped are fairly uniform as they come from comparable educational backgrounds with nationally established standards, procedures, and practices. They are all novices to the subject and the greatest difficulty is the creation of analytical awareness towards the means of communication they take for granted, i.e. moving from scenario (1c) above to scenario (1e) in terms of epistemic commitments to language and linguistics. The analytical frameworks, no matter what school of linguistic thought they are associated with, are heavily laden with subject-specific terminology and a specific cognitive frame of approaching the object of study, which are not catered for in the course's syllabus design. The nature of the survey courses (the majority of survey, introductory courses) engenders, or rather enacts an understanding of students as memory machines which will swallow all the information as cut-and-dried rules of thumb, thus depriving them of the greatest privilege they can gain as students in a linguistics course – the power to reflect on and mutually feed their knowledge of a language (in which they have fairly advanced competence) and their knowledge of linguistics (which is the final objective of the course).

4. The status of ESP/ESAP

The contextualization of ESAP through offering linked courses, adjunct courses or co-teaching does not occur in the General Linguistics classroom. Generally speaking, the only two writing courses offered at the department are elective courses offered in the fourth year – one in business writing, the other in creative writing. Meanwhile the students have only written exams (in different formats) throughout their four years of studies, including a state written exam at the end of their studies, and the bulk of continuous assessment is based on written assignments (including those in General English courses, Literature courses, and Cultural Studies courses).

⁵ The few Chinese students that enrol in the BA program follow a special syllabus, use different textbooks and have simplified assignments, as they complain about being utterly lost in the standard materials.

⁶ This sweeping overgeneralization does not pay justice to individual cognitive and learning styles, but from the perspective of academia aptitude and readiness such a claim is justified.

The students' poor achievements and their low level of satisfaction echo our concerns about producing competent graduates. Teaching staff at English departments neglect the teaching of genre and discipline-specific writing and presentation skills as well as practical examination skills. These are best approached not as universal academic 'fitness' skills, but as highly subject-specific skills best taught within the confines of the particular subject-course, rather than in general EAP courses. Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998: 51) speak of the importance of content-specific teaching: "[...] if we are to meet our students' needs we must deal with subject-specific matters. Our case is that subject-specific work needs to be into specific disciplines rather than into broad disciplinary areas". For practical purposes, this would imply the teaching of genre and discipline-specific writing and presentation skills within the allotted hours for the linguistics course. This would also constitute one plausible way of implementing scenario (1e). Undeniably, disciplinary differentiation goes hand in hand with expressive differentiation and this naturally leads to implementing the desired scenario. However, the general practice in the immediate context discussed here brings about a divergent effect, as content-based disciplinarity is still maintained without engendering a sense of belonging to a discursive community. The recent contentions and complaints about students' workload and the lack of adequate accountability in terms of the credits they are awarded for core courses poses even deeper problems. Language instructors ask subject instructors to reduce the workload so that more classes can be devoted to academic writing, while subject instructors feel frustrated by the lack of subject-specific discursive skills. Curriculum and content-organization factors seriously undermine attempts to attain in a single course the desired scenario, despite the alleviating thought that, as Robinson (1980) claims, it is highly contentious whether the deep cognitive structures of the sciences exist independently of their realizations in various languages. In other words, it is very likely that linguistics remains part of the English language in the cognitive schemata of our students (bringing us closer to the ideal scenario (1a) above). The problem is that the cognitive schemata are not readily accessible and they do not significantly contribute to enhancing the reflexivity of students and sensitizing them to the transferability of knowledge structures and skills from the general language course into the linguistics classroom.

The lack of the ability for reflexivity is further aggravated by our ignoring Horowitz's (1986: 447) urge for teaching staff to provide "realistic advice about appropriate discourse structures for specific tasks" or for the need to "simulate university writing tasks in a practical way" (*ibid.*: 455) and to offer students ways to work on "information-processing problems" (*ibid.*: 460). As the exam paper is the component of assessment with the heaviest weight, Horowitz's pronouncements (*ibid.*: 455) ring true: "[g]enerally speaking, the academic writer's task is not to create personal meaning, but to find, organize, and present data according to fairly explicit instructions". Freshmen are bombarded with product-oriented writing tasks which seem to directly relate to the emphasis in EAP on "recognition and reorganization of data" rather than "invention and personal discovery", but these requirements and specifications are not expressly circumscribed in class.

At the same time the standard undergraduate course is condensed with theory

and finalized findings, with a bird's eye view perspective eschewing detailed practical knowledge and developing an uncritical, narrative-oriented attitude to content taught. All courses combine oral presentations (of pre-read texts), reactions to a text, summaries and a final exam paper whose genre status and discourse patterning are not well-established and which focuses on content evaluation exclusively.

Assessment procedures (at least for the General Linguistics course) combine continuous assessment based on pop-up quizzes (at least three quizzes of different design – (i) concept definition and clarification, (ii) data analysis on the basis of pre-read interpretative frameworks, and (iii) paraphrase aimed at deeper understanding and cognitively motivated internalization of a key text), a term test (a matching task focused on terminology, a multiple choice test accompanied by three analytical assignments) and a final written exam (essay type).

The assessment criteria for the exam paper in linguistics presuppose knowledge of genre- and discipline-specific discourse. In the General Linguistics classroom students are not explicitly taught the genre- and discipline-specific discursive practices and cultural patterns. They can in theory define a discourse as “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network” (Gee 1998: 51). However, they experience difficulties putting that into practice. They are exclusively taught how to analyse language, what reifications are justified etc., but they are not expressly taught the discipline-specific discourse models or “ways of using language” for the immediate specific purposes. The confined temporal contours of the Introduction to General Linguistics course and its content-overloaded schedule do not naturally create the space for cultivating in students the desired awareness of what a discourse is. Such awareness is ideally the product of an ESAP course. Thus the non-inclusion of English for academic purposes in freshmen courses negatively affects student satisfaction, achievements and intrinsic motivation. The lack of discourse-oriented teaching deprives students of the possibility of becoming members of the linguistics discourse community.

Moreover, in freshmen courses teaching is exclusively fact- and terminology-oriented. Students are construed as massive data-storage devices and they function in the classroom as receptacles of specific knowledge structures, packaged in a specific way. The imposed need to be as detached, free of affect (and/or personal preferences) and as comprehensive as possible, for the purposes of meeting the requirement that this be an overview course serving the needs of all focused future courses from the linguistics module of the curriculum inevitably entails that the teacher will be seen as a presentational conduit. Skills-enhancement practices are not incorporated and knowledge of English for specific purposes (literary theory, linguistics, cultural studies) is presumed. Concept formation is taught as disembodied from the language which engenders subject-specific concepts. The academic culture at this department seems to belong to those cultures which, in Gee's words (1998: 54), “highly value acquisition and so tend simply to expose children to adults modeling some activity and eventually the child picks it up, picks it up as a gestalt, rather than as a series of analytic bits”. For Gee the crucial question is: how does one come by the discourses

that one controls? He distinguishes between acquisition and learning as follows (1998: 53-54):

Acquisition is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models and a process of trial and error, without a process of formal teaching. It happens in natural settings which are meaningful and functional in the sense that the acquirer knows that he needs to acquire the thing he is exposed to in order to function and the acquirer in fact wants to so function. This is how most people come to control their first language. Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching, though not necessarily from someone officially designated as a teacher. This teaching involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into its analytic parts. It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter.

On this basis Gee (*ibid.*) identifies “secondary discourses” where acquisition is good for performance, and learning is good for meta-level knowledge. Acquisition and learning are thus differential sources of power: acquirers usually beat learners at performance, learners usually beat acquirers at talking about it, that is, at explication, explanation, analysis and criticism. We require the ideal balance from our students but provide them with conditions for acquisition only. As Gee claims (1998: 57), “powerful literacy [...] almost always involves learning, and not just acquisition”.

It transpires from curricula, syllabi and classroom practices that the acquisition model has been adopted in Bulgarian academia (or at least at the Department of British and American Studies of Sofia University). There seems to be a tacit shared agreement that academic skills (more specifically critical thinking and genre and task-specific writing skills) can be acquired in the same way as a language as means of communication can. In practice we expect the skills to grow naturally in our students as these rub off in an unaided manner from the specific subjects they are taught. Unfortunately, disciplinary culture and knowledge as well as fundamental theoretical assumptions do not naturally fall off from cornerstone texts in the respective field. This misconception is maintained by preserving insulation among different portions of institutionalized disciplinary bodies of knowledge, all of which lack a skills component where discursive habits of the respective disciplinary cultures should be trained. Many colleagues share their concerns about the inadequacy of the acquisition model in relation to critical thinking and academic writing skills. It is recognized as unsatisfactory on several counts:

- 1) students do not feel the need to acquire what they are exposed to (see Appendix – efforts should be focused on enhancing students’ motivation by raising their awareness of the need for professionals working with language (teachers, journalists, translators, interpreters, etc.) to be open to different analytical models of language;
- 2) the model does not work well in the context of a highly reflexive specialized area of knowledge – General Linguistics;
- 3) in the allotted time and format of the course, and given the basic objectives of the

- course which are mostly institutionally determined, it is very difficult to accommodate an ESP/ESAP component;
- 4) it is impossible to establish any explicit and rigorous assessment criteria for submitted exam papers and written assignments as these are based exclusively on the reproduction of internalized propositional knowledge and no guidelines for communal, discursive membership can be used;
 - 5) the genre specifics of the tasks students are assigned in first-year courses demands special writing abilities which are not specifically addressed in available teaching materials for academic writing, the major focus falling on review articles, MA theses, research articles, etc.

To recap, the tacit assumption in the design of courses at our institution is that students have to learn discipline/subject-specific concepts and knowledge structures, while they magically acquire the socio-cognitive features of the subjects' discourse patterns. In the field of General Linguistics (defined as a pure soft science) much of the knowledge is qualitative and new developments are hermeneutically tied up with the combination and recombination of existing research work and results which are represented in specific discourses. The learning of secondary discourses in a foreign language is demanding, but it is the main reason why both students and academic staff are dissatisfied as we teach disembodied packages of knowledge which lack their discourse and genre identity. Epistemologically speaking, it is clear that the division of disciplines is induced by the differential significance and distribution of mental and verbal processes in the construction and representation of knowledge in the respective disciplines. These underlie different vocabulary preferences, textual and discourse textures and modes of articulating knowledge and constitute distinct discourses which students should ideally possess as members of the knowledge societies they enter in academia.

Despite process/product, or process-centred/content-based dichotomies having characterized the debate around ESL writing, there is general agreement that the goal of university-level L2 writing programs is to prepare students to become better academic writers. This is an unattainable objective in the present state of curricula and syllabus design in the Department of British and American Studies. The Bologna harmonization process, critical teaching and critical discourse analysis (to name but a few of the basic influences) have made us patently aware that we need to redesign both our curriculum and our course syllabi if we want to meet our students' perceived needs and make them possessors of multiple discourses which will enhance their successful participation in exchange programs and student mobility.

This requires a change not only of academic objectives, underlying pedagogic philosophies and classroom practices but also of assessment criteria and procedures, all based on attempts to create in students a balance between critical distance, intellectual engagement and discipline-communal membership. However, for the achievement of "critical consciousness" Bizzell (1992) recognizes the mastering of formal academic discourse as providing the articulation of the dialectic relationship between the mind of the individual (students' intellectual involvement with the discipline) and the discursive conventions of the community.

Market-ready graduates cannot come out of university-not-ready⁷ students. The gap lies in the virtual absence of separate ESP/ESAP courses in the overall curriculum and/or the lack of such components in the subject-specific academic courses, which are strictly content-oriented and do not focus on the process of knowledge appropriation, the initiation procedures which would make students legitimate members of the respective discursive cultures.

5. General Linguistics and EAP/ESAP

One small step that might trigger significant consequences in the linguistics classroom is the incorporation of an ESAP component. This, however, might come at a high price in view of the serious definitional, disciplinary, and epistemological controversies involved in course design decisions relating to content. Contemporary linguistics is a rather contentious area of research torn by numerous controversies. Although the disciplinarity of Linguistics is more or less firmly established institutionally, content-wise Linguistics has been caught up in the vortex of philological debris, Theory vestiges and New Age pressures for new literacies.

The situation is even more complicated considering the disciplinarity of Linguistics within English Studies. The major concerns focus around the fact that while English is going global, Linguistics is going English, which sets off the perceived but not sufficiently articulated distinction between language competences and competences for Linguistics. Two parameters are considered important in content decisions in a linguistics course: how much on theoretical innovations is to be included and what is to be recognized as a *mainstream* body of knowledge sufficient in breadth and satisfactory in depth to meet the demands of linguistically-minded students and simplified to an extent that would allow disinterested students to get a pass grade? How to achieve the balance between content and method within linguistics and that between writing and reading linguistics and doing English literature and cultural studies simultaneously are among the central questions facing instructors of a course which is a feeder to a philological major, not to a linguistics degree. The design of the course should be signposted by the firm belief that “[f]undamental theoretical concepts are believed, not arrived at empirically” (Chung 2011: 37). In other words, a great deal of what we take language to be in the linguistics classroom is a matter of belief, or epistemic commitment, not something we can arrive at by jointly (with the students) relying on empirical investigations. Such major decisions relate to:

- a) the epistemology of language (a choice among the five scenarios)

⁷ It seems that we let students miss an extremely important step in their development – from the school bench we start preparing them for the job market without bothering to prepare them in their first year at university for the culture they are going to live in in the following 3 years. School education has other goals and does not cater for academic skills. But neither does university. Without helping students develop academic skills, we expect them to find their way in the university culture, sieve through it transferable skills in a natural way through exposure exclusively and become market-ready irrespective of their chosen career path.

- b) the methods of linguistics (how detailed the presentation/practice of methods of analyses should be)
- c) the 'how to's of linguistic reasoning (what counts as linguistics-informed reasoning)
- d) the 'how to's of effective argumentation in linguistics (how are effective linguistics discourses organized)
- e) how the skills necessary for satisfying academic achievement can be naturally incorporated (i.e. how academic skills development can be implemented within an introductory survey course in Foundational Linguistics).

Besides the purely definitional dimensions which might disrupt the more or less neatly structured syllabus and change the status, credit merit and teaching hours of the course, a decision to incorporate an ESAP component has serious implications for the recognition of authorities, the choice of teaching resources, pedagogic philosophies, and knowledge negotiations between course content and classroom procedures. A development in this direction necessarily has communal and discursive repercussions.

Unfortunately what is the cause of appeal for professional linguists is actually a cause for terror for first-year philological students. General Linguistics provides the necessary comprehensive viewpoint on language as “undoubtedly, it is still important for beginning students to get a *panoramic* view of human language before delving deep into the nooks and crannies of the various linguistic specialisms” (Katamba 1996: xv; emphasis added). Parallel to traditional factual learning as the objective of Linguistics courses, contemporary linguists recognize the necessity for a shift to procedural, competence-centred instruction. “You have to *understand* linguistics to do it. But at the same time you have to *do* it to understand it: you have to get your hands dirty by engaging with the data – grappling with the data, attempting to understand it and relating it to what you already know (or think you know) about language or a language” (McGregor 2009: xii). The appeal for *doing* things, however, does not surmount the “viewpoint” problem associated with the adoption of an interpretative paradigm, which ultimately establishes what language will be modelled to be. The choice amongst structuralism, generativism, functionalism and cognitivism predetermines the requisite competences to be developed and implicates the research questions students will be familiarized with. The repercussions stretch as far as the changing pedagogical philosophies. This of course implies the choice of appropriate teaching resources, which is by far the most crucial factor in shaping introductory university courses. Most widely available resources are intrasubject-focused introductions (phonetics, semantics, syntax, etc.) or theory-tailored introductions (Transformational Syntax, Optimality Theory, Cognitive Linguistics etc.).

Putting the content-theoretical dilemma aside, we are forced to acknowledge the more serious considerations which undermine quality in such courses – the lack of space and time for the development of subject-specific discursive skills. However trite the cultural divide between literature and linguistics is, it causes serious problems to students of English Studies as they develop schizophrenic discursive and academic competences. Language and literature modules within English Studies pro-

mote different socio-discursive practices based on different rites of passage. The two cultures value different types of knowledge structuring and presentation. As Hewings (2009: 111) puts it, literature students are “concerned with particulars, qualities, complications and interpretations. In contrast, the more social scientific approach where the search for patterns and evidence to support generalizations is common would be more usual in *English language assignments*”, which brings us back to the central problem of the place of English for Language and Linguistics in a linguistics course.

“Culture has always dictated where to draw the line separating one thing from another. These lines are arbitrary, but once learned and internalised they are treated as real” (Hall 1983: 230). The separation or distance necessary for the enhancement of a critical consciousness or the cultural significance of the same piece of data depends on its contextualization in a different disciplinary discourse. Without being expressly instructed, students are led to believe that there is uniformity across disciplines and they are not able to sense the different cultures inherent in different critical/analytical subject-specific⁸ discourses⁹. This is their second micro-cross-cultural handicap, the first one stemming from the different understanding of analyticity, argumentation and disciplinarity associated with the exclusively Anglophone context, text and subject matter the students are immersed in.

Admittedly, “[i]nterdisciplinary understanding (i.e. the ability to integrate knowledge from two or more disciplines to create products, solve problems, or produce explanations) has become a hallmark of contemporary knowledge production and a primary challenge for contemporary educators” (Derry & Schunn 2002: xiv). But the reality of the Linguistics classroom does not create a truly interdisciplinary context, it preserves its own ethnocentricity due to the need to equip students with the preliminary hardware (terminology, methodologies, basic concepts) for linguistics specialists. It does not engender academic skills development, task-specific writing skills, nor does it create motivation for autonomous learning (be it content-oriented learning or subject-specific language-oriented).

Unquestionably, students graduating from the Department of English and American Studies acquire philological competences and the professional qualification of Teacher of English language and literature, and the expectation is for their linguistic competences to be exclusively restricted to English. However, knowledge of a language is not tantamount to linguistics knowledge. Many contemporary educators believe that there are special competences for English linguists. This is revealed in the numerous recently published introductions to English Linguistics. Such introductions

aim to present linguistics not as such, or out of context, but specifically for students of English, i.e. students wishing to make productive use of what they learn about lan-

⁸ They only realize that there are different discourse requirements when they sit for their exams and the same behaviours are evaluated differently.

⁹ This handicap is to be interpreted in the perspective of culture defined by Hofstede (1994: 5) as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the member of one group or category of people from another”.

guage and linguistics in other areas of their academic courses (cultural studies, literature) and in their later professional careers in language teaching, the media, public relations or similar areas of language- and culture-related professional activity (Mair 2008: ix).

Though not expressly stated, a reorientation from a foundational linguistics course to an ESAP course is patently obvious. This reorientation is paralleled by a shift of focus from factual knowledge to skills development. The latter is specifically addressed by authors of recent introductions: “Taking a problem-oriented approach we do not present linguistics as a fixed set of knowledge, but as a systematic way of analyzing and understanding language phenomena” (Plag *et al.* 2009: xi); we aim to introduce students to “the basic methodological tools” with which “to be able to systematically analyze language data and to relate their findings to theoretical problems” (*ibid.*). The new surge towards the development of competences and literacies imposes the need for a restructuring of course content: “an adequate introduction to the study of the English language requires a top-down rather than a bottom-up discussion of the structure of English” (Meyer 2009: ix). Situating and contextualizing factual knowledge leads to the implicit acquisition of the requisite skills and competences in a field that as yet has to emancipate itself as an academic subject: “English Linguistics is intended as an introduction to a field that, as such, perhaps does not even exist” (Herbst 2010: xiii). The idea of the field is “to introduce students of English to basic concepts of linguistics that are relevant to the description and analysis of the English language and to ideas and approaches that are relevant in this context” (*ibid.*). This leads us back to the initial definitional problem: What are we actually teaching? Traditionally introductory, survey BA courses (more specifically Introduction to General Linguistics and Introduction to Literary Theory) within the context of English Studies (a comprehensive, not linguistics-focused major) are designed as ecumenical, trying to avoid the viewpoint problem, presenting as many existing paradigms, schools and traditions as possible. This leads to a pronounced inclination for such courses to be content-focused, not problem-oriented. This ecumenicity determines the underdevelopment of the subject’s discursive identity and the lack of specific communal practices. Sandwiched within English Studies and designed for students of English, the course Introduction to General Linguistics is structured so as to match the needs of the future courses within the linguistic module in the BA program. The students are taken unawares and cannot develop adequate learning and writing skills. They are not efficient in bridging the hiatus between secondary school and academia. In order for such a result to be achieved, the ESAP component in such courses has to become more pronounced. At present, the lack of subject-specific and academic writing classes is the main reason for a) students’ difficulties with ‘text-attack’ assignments; b) the inability to establish communal and discourse benchmarks; c) the lack of skills for inclusion strategies; d) the lack of multiple discursive literacies; and e) exam failure or underachievement arising from undeveloped task- and subject-specific writing skills.

Academic classroom practice in Bulgaria is traditionally restricted to presenting a state-of-the-art synopsis of a discipline as it is constructed outside the classroom and ‘text-attack’ practices are rare or beyond freshmen academic reading abilities.

In course surveys students' opinions consistently centre around the following: excessive reading load; too many unfamiliar and confusing terms; lack of hands-on analytical experience and lack of skills for the final exam paper. Although of a disparate nature, these can be catered for by an extended ESAP component. The transition will not be traumatic, taking into account the degree of reflexivity in linguistics:

Having language is probably concomitant with wondering about language, and so, if there is one thing that sets linguistics apart from other disciplines, it is the fact that its subject matter must be used in the description. There is no metalanguage for language that is not translatable into language, and a metalanguage is, in any case, also a language (Malmkjær 1991: xi).

Besides a number of educators, many linguists believe that the whole field of linguistics is in need of rethinking, not only standard theories and orthodox conceptions but the whole standard metalanguage needs to be rethought. In their view the time has come to demythologize language by applying the 'non-compartmentalization' principle and by reducing the inherent reification of the emergentness¹⁰ of language. This new necessity arises out of our novel understanding of the realities of language analysis. Taylor (2002: 115) postulates that reflexivity is a prerequisite for participating in meaningful communication. In his own words, "the ability to participate in reflexive discourse is a *prerequisite* for engaging with and contributing to the communicational worlds in which we live". Some linguists believe that there is an urgent need for linguists to attempt "a complete overhaul of the linguistic/metalinguistic divide" (Harris 2003: 3). This overhaul is needed because there has been a gross confusion by orthodox linguists between first- and second-order linguistic constructs which has prevented linguists from arriving at a proficient and practical understanding of communication. Orthodox linguists tend to treat languages as autonomous first-order objects which pre-exist their use by speakers. For such linguists, particular languages exist regardless of what the speakers believe about them and consequently 'linguistic scientists' investigate the objective existence of linguistic facts. However, integrationalists argue that the orthodox linguists' talk of *words, grammar, meaning* is just an extension of lay metalanguage. The difference between laypeople's and the professional linguists' metalanguage is that most orthodox linguists feel the need to fix, codify and systematize such second-order concepts in order to explain how communication works, so that on this view speakers become communicators by virtue of knowing how to *use* this determinate object. The orthodoxy, in its endeavour to make language a scientific object of enquiry, segregates first- and second-order abilities and posits an idealized system – a 'fixed code' – in order to explicate how language makes communication possible (Harris 2003: 3). The integrationalists' belief that reification of the phenomenon of language in its complexity might be detrimental is not unquestionably shared by the majority of

¹⁰ The term as used here refers to the basic postulates of "emergentism" (MacWhinney 1999, 2002, 2005), and the understanding of language as an adaptive, dynamic, distributed and non-compositionally arising embodied system (Sharifian 2011).

linguists. Even if it is difficult to put their desideratum into practice, I am convinced that we need to raise the students' awareness of the controversies of reflexivity and reification involved in linguistics and sharpen their sense of linguistic theorizing as an engaged activity, a social position and a conscious epistemological stance. Only such an awareness can provide the requisite understanding of the natural continuity between language as a communicative resource and as a reified object of scrutiny.

Within this theoretical framework it is natural to accept as pedagogically and theoretically grounded the switch from disengaged factual teaching/learning to procedural learning and building up of analytical competences. Cognitively and communally, this amounts to a conscious turn to teaching linguistics for practical purposes, not for its own sake. The change of tack witnessed in instructional materials from General through English Linguistics to English for Language and Linguistics should be introduced imperceptibly in the classroom:

[T]he classroom is a critically salient space for English Studies in ordinarily non-Anglophone contexts, where disciplinary boundaries are negotiated in ways that are redefining the discipline. In other words, in such contexts the classroom is not simply a space where the discipline as it is currently constituted or determined by advanced research and scholarly formations is conveyed, but is a space within which the discipline is constructed and reconstructed constantly with local realities in view (Gupta 2010: 328).

It is in the hands of tutors and students to negotiate the most pragmatically-informed and professional needs-centred constitution of the Linguistics classroom. An easy way to achieve this is by enhancing the implicitly present ESAP component and changing students' attitudes in view of this new focus. Informing students that they are going to study English will have a highly motivating and stimulating effect. They will not perceive the study of Linguistics as something they can hardly relate to; rather, they will accept this as an enrichment of their vocabulary and enhancement of their English skills in a particular area and thus the ideal balance between learning (subject-specific content) and acquisition (of discursive skills and practices) can be achieved at a very low price. Without the EAP component students are denied "the owned emblems of scholarly identity that place colleagues one in relation to another in a field of disciplinary differentiation" (Silverstein 2006: 269). They lack the rhetorical, cognitive, communal and genre literacies establishing discourse borders between academic disciplines. The suggested shift should be contextualized in the new Pragmatism Movement (see Templer 2010). The structure of teaching within English Studies allows for a natural integration of content and literacy teaching. Lectures can be shaped so as to correspond to content/factual teaching, while seminars can focus on situated literacy development with an in-built EASP component (see Manning 2008). Such an admixture should be a compromise between workshops for the production of manpower and knowledge institutions in society without diluting academic standards. It should be an informed decision taking into consideration the "democratization/downshifting of discourses" (Templer 2010: 89). It is motivated by an understanding of literacy as "a community resource,

realized in social relationships” (*ibid.*) in academic settings. The wish for restructuring is motivated by several basic aims:

- contextualized teaching with professional development as a focus;
- meeting undergraduate students’ needs without lowering academic standards;
- creating the context and atmosphere for the natural development of discipline-specific writing skills, targeting independent research in the future, with a narrow focus on written exam skills.

At present, as with many other academic courses, An Introduction to General Linguistics course lacks an ESP/ESAP component which is detrimental to the development of learner autonomy and subject-specific literacy, as well as to students’ (sense of) achievements and attitudes. In the context of English going global and linguistics going English (at least within English Studies) “higher education is being profoundly transformed, the most conspicuous outward sign of reform being the restructuring of entry-level undergraduate courses in the B.A. framework” (Mair 2008: ix).

6. Conclusion

It is very difficult to establish educational equity that can successfully bridge linguistic proficiency, academic performance and high-level discipline-specific learning. One of the main tasks of academic courses is the development of critical thinking skills that would allow the students in an informed way to prioritize and grade the implicit investments in and from the separate subject courses they are attending. Despite being fully aware of that, we fear serious changes. The fear of heedlessly enlarging instrumental relevance to the detriment of intellectual relevance explains to a certain extent the resistance to significant changes. The failure to adopt as a foundational principle of curriculum or course design the belief that language can be acquired but discourse management and effective academic writing/reading need to be learned has led to a situation in our case study where both parties are dissatisfied and the prospects for improvement are either too far removed in time (in case a change in the curriculum is chosen as an action plan) or come at a high price (in case course redesigning is opted for).

The direction such bridging should take is towards the construction of academic courses in which the cultural norms and practices of social, academic and language proficiencies converge. Ideally, the way to achieve improvements that will overcome students’ dissatisfaction with the foundational course in General Linguistics and the complaints about the unsatisfactory achievement and acquisition level of the students on the part of the members of the academic staff who teach the specialized linguistic courses in the BA course is to incorporate an ESAP component in the foundational literature, culture and linguistic courses in the first three semesters of

BA studies. This would enhance students' satisfaction as they would be aware of the benefits of acquiring transferable skills. It will also necessarily improve their academic achievements and knowledge acquisition as they would have subconsciously acquired the procedural cognitive routines and subject-specific discursive and cultural norms which will make the understanding of demanding subject-specific content (the specialized linguistic courses) a natural process of engagement with the socio-discursive, linguistic and cultural norms of the discipline. The latter process will inevitably meet the high expectations of linguistics specialists for undergraduate students with balanced literacies arising from a context catering for genuine educational equity.

Departmental changes lie in the future, but on the basis of the informal interviews and my one-semester experience as the instructor for the course, I intend to undertake the following immediate remedial steps: tie in the exposition part of the course (lectures) with thematically coherent units from the English for Language and Linguistics ESAP coursebook (Manning 2008) with an emphasis on the skills and vocabulary components in each unit, each accompanied by a problem-solving task based on a data set from English and/or Bulgarian. The data set and the vocabulary and reading tasks from the respective unit will be given for homework prior to the actual seminar. This means that the students will not be reading from a linguistics textbook during the semester but will be provided with a recommended list they may use if they feel up to it, or rely on for revising prior to the final exam. I will also give the students a deadline by which they can submit mock-exam papers over the Moodle platform for feedback and comments. I believe that these minor steps will open up the way for making the course worthwhile to all students. This would imply reducing the content part of the course, but as it is a course within the framework of an English and American Studies major it might prove to be a justified sacrifice¹¹. The seminars will be scheduled earlier in the week (prior to the exposition session) so that the relevant schemata and focal terms will have already been activated and the students will have had some working experience with the notions. Thus students will imperceptibly be led into the epistemic stance based on scenario 1e from figure 13.3. instead of the traditionally engendered one in my teaching context based on scenario 1c.

At the beginning and end of the semester I will again conduct the informal questionnaire interview and compare the results from the previous year. With all allowances for significant variation due to individual differences in terms of cognitive styles, internal motivation, interests and intellectual preferences, I expect that

¹¹ In the interval of writing and revising this paper a significant change was implemented in the curriculum which makes the action plan fully practicable. The prescribed contents of the course were redistributed in two semesters, with only 15 hours of lectures in the second one. All topics relating to language and its users (pragmatics and ethnography of speaking), language and society (variationism and language change) and language and the human mind (language acquisition and processing, bi- and multilingualism) were transferred to the second semester course, entitled "Language in Use". Thus the introductory course was sufficiently lightened in terms of content and a green light was given to the gradual incorporation of an ESAP component.

there will be much improvement in the sense of relevance on the part of the students as well as a heightened sense of self-satisfaction and achievement.

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Appendix

The students were asked to informally answer short questions. More formal questions are inappropriate as there is a centralized assessment system for students' reviews of courses and teaching staff and faculty members are sent forms with assessment of their own work only. The students are the 104 first-year students enrolled at the Department for British and American Studies at Sofia University for the academic year 2009/2010. Four have submitted blank pages with the questions copied out, two have provided answers entirely unrelated to the questions.

I. Beginning of course questionnaire:

1. What are your expectations for the course?
2. What do you think you need to learn as a student of English philology?
3. What are your personal educational goals?
4. How does the course's description fit with your idea of "being a student of (English) philology"?

Commentary

Freshmen rank General linguistics with low instrumental relevance as they generally come to the university without sufficient preliminary knowledge of what they are committing themselves for, as firstly there is an inadequate information flow, and secondly they do not bother to read the little there is widely available on the curriculum and on the general thrust of philological higher education. They are more familiar with what Anglophone universities offer in terms of courses, skills programmes and criteria of assessment than with the reality in the institution they have just been admitted to. Intellectual relevance is not a dimension students in their first year are aware of. Relevance is obviously measured by students in narrow vocational terms. Intellectual curiosity is not something they bring to their studies. Their predominantly instrumental and vocational motivation requires a far more marked transferable skills orientation of separate courses. Despite movements towards updating and revising the curriculum and methods of teaching, teacher-centred classes of instruction remain the standard in subject-specific freshmen courses. Active students' participation is expected in allotted intervals – during assignments submission and exam sessions, though most exam formats presuppose reproduction, rather than production.

A serious complication arises from the inevitable mismatch between institutional demands and learners' perceptions of what they need. Out of 98 interviewed students in the first week of the course, after they have been introduced to the nature and focus of the course (with a special leaflet distributed for that purpose), 77 claim that they expect the course to help them improve their English and consolidate their correctness of expression.

53 out of the 98 students state as their perceived needs the widening of gram-

mathematical knowledge and spoken communication. They are convinced that the student of English philology needs to have “perfect” English; 49 define as their educational goal to become translators or interpreters; 28 state their desire to become teachers of English, and the rest want to work for a ‘paper’ or ‘electronic’ media.

Only 17 students are able to formulate the distinction between Linguistics and language learning and express the opinion that being a philology student is impossible without the learning of “procedures” for analysis and translation strategies. The rest confess to being unable to fathom what the possible relation between Linguistics and English philology could be. 20 state that as Linguistics is the knowledge of many languages, they do not see any direct relations between the course in General linguistics and the university study of English.

Expectations (based on a brief introduction to the course and assumed preliminary knowledge of the nature of English studies as a discipline)	Perceived needs	Awareness of the distinction between knowledge of a language and the subject-specific knowledge of linguistics	Career path preferences
Improvement of communicative skills (78.6%)	Widening and deepening of knowledge of English grammar (54%)	An awareness of the necessity of a methodological apparatus and analytical procedures for the systematic study of language (only 17.4%)	Interpreter/translator (50%)
Enhancement of precision of expression (78.6%)		Confusion of the concepts of polyglot and linguist (20.4%)	Teacher of English and English Literature (28.6%)
22.4% either cannot formulate any expectations or state they are open to anything		72.4% come to the course unaware of any distinction between knowing a language and doing linguistics	Media-related professional development (21.4%)

Inevitably, there is an almost unanimous expectation for a prescriptive, authoritative approach to language learning with virtually no awareness of the possibility of a reflexive or “critical distance” approach to studying about language.

II. End of course questionnaire:

1. What was the most difficult part of the course?
2. Were your expectations met?
3. Did you gain any personal benefits from the course? What?
4. How do you think the course can be improved?

Commentary

101 students submitted answers to the four questions. 99 define as the most difficult part of the course the heavy reading load with “many unknown words”. They complain of being unable to grasp what they were supposed to read as it was written in “extremely advanced” English. Most admitted to having been confused as to what the course was going to be about, consequently the actual development of the course had little to do with their preliminary expectations for the course and for the

program of English Studies as a whole. The personal benefits they unanimously identify are the learning of many new words, the learning of many curious facts about language and languages, the improvement of reading speed. The recommendations for improvements in the course include (in descending order of frequency):

- a) reducing the reading assignments;
- b) more writing as preparation for the exam;
- c) clearer instructions for the summary and commentary of primary sources;
- d) introducing a mock exam with subsequent commentary of assessment;
- e) the introduction of a glossary for the readings;
- f) less information presented at a single lecture/seminar.

Difficulties in terms of	Expectations vs. outcomes	Personal benefits	Ideas for improvement
reading load	78.6% claim their expectations were not met as they did not “communicate” as much as expected or because they were not involved in discussions of accuracy issues. They admit that they learnt new, unexpected things	Vocabulary and terminology enhancement and consolidation	Reduction of reading assignments
many unfamiliar words	22.4% see no correspondence between the two as expectations were unarticulated	Accumulation of curious facts about language(s)	More writing assignments
advanced English (which is actually a misnomer as from students’ comments it appears that what they mean is reasoning and argumentation patterns and overall discourse management)		Improvement of reading speed	More detailed instructions
		Sense of improvement of skills in English	Mock exam practice
			Supplying a glossary

As is obvious from the answers provided, the basic drawback is the tightly packed content (reading assignments, new terms, the bulk of information, etc.). Students need to be more reflexively involved in the process of studying Linguistics and be offered the chance to pursue their perceived (and extrinsic) needs for academic skills development.