

English for horticulture 1: učbenik angleščine za poklicne programe s področja horticulture. Urška Sešek & Simona Duška Zabukovec. Biotehniški center Naklo, Strahinj (2017). 76 pp., ISBN 978-961-94007-4-6.

The volume entitled *English for Horticulture*, written by Urška Sešek and Simona Duška Zabukovec and published in 2017 at Biotehniški center Naklo encompasses all the qualities of a book aimed to fulfill the requirements of the two fields it aims to cover: English teaching methodology and the specialized language of horticulture. The book under review aims to provide an introduction to English for Special Purposes (ESP) for future horticulturists, as it has been written for young learners (teenagers and young adults) studying horticultural sciences.

English for Specific Purposes, which is obviously the main concern of this volume, is the sphere of language that has been developed to meet the needs of those learners who intend to use English in professional contexts and for professional purposes. Although the senior branch of ESP is English for Science and Technology (as it received the biggest amount of attention, and it was the first to be included in English teaching curricula), due to the spread of societal changes, the need for other “Englishes” has grown in recent years. Teaching English skills for horticultural students seems to be quite a recent worry of English teachers, and the volume signed by Urška Sešek and Simona Duška Zabukovec is among the few that target this very special field of specialized languages: the language of horticulture. Amongst previous similar works we mention Alan Mountford's *English in Agriculture* (Oxford University Press, 1977/1987), but few further works could be cited in this respect.

The volume is organized into 27 micro units, grouped into nine larger segments, eight revision units and a bilingual glossary at the end. The introductory chapter (Introduction. Welcome to horticulture in English) is followed by the following chapters: How plants live, Soil, Types of plants, Processes in horticulture, Plant protection, Plant propagation, Technology in horticulture, and Horticulture and society. Each of these chapters is further subdivided into smaller units, subchapters which are construed in such a way that they investigate the terminology of horticultural production, soil cultivation, plant morphology, taxonomies, water control, crop growing and harvesting, plant protection, the processing of plant products, engineering, economics, and other related matters.

Chapter One (How plants live) approaches the problem of plant morphology, plant growth, plant needs and nutrition. Chapter Two (Soil) focuses on soil types, the issues of fertilizing and composting, and crop rotation. The third chapter (Types of plants) investigates the terminology of plant taxonomy, i.e. vegetables, fruit, medicinal and ornamental plants. The fourth chapter (Processes in horticulture) is meant to introduce terms related to horticultural measurements and design, the steps of implementing a garden, works performed in the garden (digging, tilling, mulching, sowing, trimming, etc.). The chapter entitled Plant protection puts an emphasis on the most important weeds and pests, whereas the next chapter (Plant

propagation) introduces the notions of propagation, seed, seeding, shrub, germination, GMO, i.e. terms related to the controlled perpetuation of plants. Technology in horticulture focuses on the array of tools, materials, machinery and equipments used in horticulture in different operations, such as working the soil, removing weeds, pruning, planting or watering. The last chapter, Horticulture and society reveals the interdisciplinarity of the field, by approaching issues related to history and culture (types of gardens, the history of gardens).

Each lesson follows the same pattern, comprising a *reading* section (usually preceded by a pre-reading discussion), a *listening* section, a *language point* section, a *speaking* section and a *writing* section, thus developing all the skills.

The *reading* section includes the well-known tasks of communicative language teaching: reading comprehension exercises, filling in the chart, matching the words and pictures, filling in the gaps, true/false, drawing a mind map, matching words with their definitions, finding words in the text, etc. All the reading tasks highlight the importance of specialist discourse, specific target language elements, as the keywords and terms are highlighted in bold, for a better visual exposure. The use of authentic texts and discourses adds more value to the volume.

The *listening* section uses YouTube videos and other electronic resources (for which the authors express gratitude at the end of the book, as a sign of their impeccable professional ethics). The listening tasks exploit the inventory of listening skill developing exercises in communicative language teaching (question/answer, finding the words, writing down the words, finding key information, listing ideas, etc.).

The *language point* section is meant to include those aspects of language use and grammar that seem to be relevant from the perspective of a future horticulturist. These are language boxes containing information connected with spelling, pronunciation, abbreviations, semantics (synonyms/page 18, antonyms/page 32), pragmatics (page 14), morphology (countable and uncountable nouns/page 58), but also inter-linguistic comparison (page 36). The language point sections offer a new perspective upon language teaching, as they blend the communicative and post-communicative approaches to language teaching, reinstating and reintroducing translation exercises. Translation is used for teaching sensitive language issues, such as Passive Voice (page 62).

The *language production* section includes writings tasks, involving once again multimedia tools. These writings tasks combine the usual communicative tasks (guided, semi-guided and free compositions) with terminology issues. Thus, in semi-guided writing tasks students are asked to describe a plant (page 4), describe a process (page 6), write a letter (page 8), write directions (page 18), fill in a questionnaire (page 28), fill in the gaps or finish the sentences (page 36). In guided compositions students are expected to complete emails (page 10), complete reports (page 38), fill in the chart using information from the internet (page 42), or write a letter to ask for advice (page 44). Free writing is practised with the help of poster making (page 16) or writing a report (page 24). Once again, translation is reintroduced (page 48, for instance) as a useful way of teaching and learning terminology.

The *speaking* section exploits all the means of communicative language teaching (role plays, presentations, Power Point presentations, debates, pair and group work, etc.), but also post-

communicative approaches. Translation is again used in role plays (page 50), in conversations (page 62), etc. The authors provide hypothetical scenarios in which students might find themselves engaged.

The story of Zlatorog, the text which closes the book is an interesting case of identifying common threads with other fields such as culture. By revisiting an old myth, this last lesson blends the old and the new, the traditional and the innovative and makes use of a text type which is not typical for the professional genre (the text of a legend) to introduce specialized terminology, genus and species names and botanical taxonomy.

The revision units use all possible exercise types (matching, filling in gaps, drawing, labeling, odd word out, true/false). They focus on reinforcing previously taught materials, vocabulary and language points alike. Besides terminology, word formation issues are also reinforced (compound nouns/page 12) and semantics is also investigated (synonyms, hyponyms, hyperonyms, word families, semantic fields /page 64, metaphors/page 69, etc.).

The volume helps trainees further their knowledge of terminology and improve their speaking and writing skills alike. The volume targets students who are in need to enhance verbal interactions in professional contexts such as meeting other professionals, asking for specialized advice, giving advice, etc. *English for Horticulture* teaches specialized vocabulary in a funny way, it is colourful, varied, up-to-date and it reveals the basic expectations of a modern course book. It is easy to use, and it focuses particularly on practice, which is natural with a domain which is as practical as the field of horticulture. The most important aim of the book is to teach and practise the vocabulary of horticulture, highlighting its difficulties and peculiar features in a way which might be appealing for young people. It blends the traditional and innovative approaches; it rehabilitates translation (long banned from language teaching) and uses multimedia tools and modern technology fully. It merges communicative practices with more recent, post-communicative trends.

The authors show that they are perfectly aware of the importance and position of ESP today: course design, teaching materials and syllabus design, methodology, course development, teaching methods, investigation of specialized discourse, curriculum development. They are also aware of the lack of teaching materials in the field and they manage to come up with a publication which fills this huge gap in the ESP course book market. It is a thorough and practical introduction to English to horticulturists. It is both stimulating and innovative, a fresh and innovative work, which manages to merge and to meet the requirements of two domains: language teaching (ESP) and horticulture (teaching of professional terminology and transmitting knowledge in a foreign language).

The book provides a good balance of theory and practice. It supplies valuable information for those eager to learn English for horticulture and it is a rich source of ideas and teaching materials for ESP teachers. The book is an excellent resource in itself, but it could serve as a model for future similar approaches, setting the standards rather high. Had the authors of the volume provided the key and solutions of the exercises at the end of the book, they would have made it even more suitable to be used at an international level, beyond the borders of Slovenia. The parts that are of particular value are the chapters dedicated to teaching the vocabulary of cultivation of garden crops, fruit, vegetables, flowers, and ornamentals, which help students store and retrieve specialist vocabulary, job-specific lexis and the functional

language they might need in their specialism.

Hopefully there will be a second volume building on this first book. Teachers will most probably find *English for Horticulture* useful, accessible, and it might serve, in the same time, as a guideline and model for future similar works, including other aspects regarding viticulture and oenology, fruit growing (pomiculture), vegetable growing (legumiculture), floriculture and dendrology, plant pathology, entomology and weed control, or landscape design. Being a good horticulturist involves mastering the knowledge of the most important characteristics of seeds and plants, the techniques of selective breeding, the insights of plant reproduction and plant tissue regeneration, knowledge related to horticultural practices, such as the prevention, recognition and cure of frost damage, use of fertilizers, use of plant hormones, soil management and measuring acidity or alkalinity of the soil, the wide variety of diseases caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, worms, insects, mites, etc. This type of knowledge can only be enhanced by teaching such professional issues in the language which is the *lingua franca* of international communication, English.

The main concern on this volume seems to be effective learning and finding the ways this can be best achieved in ESP courses. It has broader implications as well, as it draws attention to a field of ESP which has been neglected so far. Beyond this novelty and the specific contribution it makes to the field of teaching specialized languages, *English for Horticulture*, by Urška Sešek and Simona Duška Zabukovec skillfully blends several language teaching approaches, as it reconsiders the role and status of translation, it clearly shows the slow shift from communicative to post-communicative language teaching. Translation is, in this sense, an operation on language use which attempts to make the learners aware of the communicative value of the language they are learning by overt reference to the communicative and pragmatic functioning of their own mother tongue. The two authors have proven that they are interested in and knowledgeable about the subject (horticulture and the language of horticultural sciences), and that they are able to design a detailed frame for a whole ESP course. In a society, in which there is a constantly growing need for teaching materials directly related to vocational and professional purposes, Urška Sešek and Simona Duška Zabukovec have managed to provide a coherent response to the very diverse learning situations. *English for Horticulture*, by Urška Sešek and Simona Duška Zabukovec is a course book which fully meets the requirements of professional language skill development, and which will certainly remain in the spotlight amongst the works dedicated to teaching English for horticultural and/or agricultural sciences.

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