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Teaching English for Specific Purposes in ESL/EFL Classroom.

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Abstract:

English for specific purposes ESP has been most demanding and a current trend in English language teaching for years. The ESP teaching principals take part in the process of designing a good syllabus or developing teaching materials for a particular vocational course or study. Traditionally, ESP courses were typically designed for intermediate or advanced level adult learners. But   nowadays many young students can start learning academic or vocational English at an earlier age or lower level of proficiency. A need analysis which is an integral part of the principle of teaching ESP, is required to apply in order to find the needs of the course's participant. This paper comprises mainly three parts, the nature of ESP, the needs analysis in ESP and ESP in ESL/EFL contexts.

Keywords: ESP, EFL, ESL, Needs Analysis, Vocational Training, EAP, EOP

Introduction:

English language is very important and have many different uses but one branch of TEFL/TESL, that is increasingly common is ESP-a common term meaning English for Specific Purposes.This ranges from specific vocational purposes such as the English language of medical discourse, the business administration, the scientific or engineering, tourist industries or that of the banking industry etc., to arguably academic English in any discipline. ESP is very much focused on the learners need for the English language.

English language teaching ELT can be broadly divided into English for general purposes EGP and English for specific purposes ESP. ESP is meant for occupational purposes, English for academic purposes and English for science in technology. ESP consists of English language

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teaching which is designed to meet specified needs of the learners related in context to disciplines, occupations, and activities, centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis,discourse, semantics etc. and analysis of the discourses. ESP is in contrast with general English. ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learners' reasons for learning. The division of ESP into absolute and variable characteristic, in particular, is very helpful in resolving arguments about what ESP is and what it is not.The word "specific" in ESP refers to 'specific in language' and 'specific in aim'.A simple clarification that can be made here is, specific in language and specific in aim are viewed as similar concept although they are two entirely different notions.

The Nature of ESP: -Certainly, a great deal about the original PSP could be written. Notably, there are three common reasons to the emergence of ESP: the demand of brave new world, a revolution in linguistics, and focus on the learner. English for specific purposes (ESP) programs are specifically devoted to professional fields of study. A course in English for vocational or occupational purposes would fall under the general rubric of ESP. Usually ESP courses are differentiated from vocational/technical English in that ESP refers to disciplines in which people can get university majors and degrees, while vocational/technical refers to trades and other certificate program.Nevertheless,ESPcan also be inserted in ESL/ EFL curriculum since English department graduates must have the ability to design and teach a particular course in English. In designing a program of course, the teachers must be able to see their students' needs, wants, and lacks in order to make their designed program meet their students' requirements. Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters succinctly identified three keys or reasons that are common to the emergence of all ESP: the demands of the learners or the needs of the learners. They noted that two key historical periods breathed life into ESP. First, the end of the Second World War brought with it an age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical, and economic activity on an international scale for various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in post-war world, the role of international language fell to English. English has become an important language for global affairs. Secondly the oil crisis of the early 1970s resulted in western money and knowledge flowing into the oil rich countries. The medium of this knowledge has been English. The general effect all this development is to exert pressure on the language teaching professions to deliver the required goals. English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became subject to the wishes needs and demands of people other than language teachers.

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The second key reason that has a tremendous impact on the emergence of ESP is a revolution in social linguistics. Whereas traditional linguists set out to describe the features of the language, the revolutionary pioneers in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication. Many linguists point out that one significant discovery is that ways of spoken and written English vary. In other words, given the particular context in which English is used, the variant of English will change. This idea can be taken one step further. If language in different situation varies, then tailoring language instructions to meet the needs of learner in specific context is also possible. Hence in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there are many attempts to describe English for specific purposes.

The final reason which Tom Hutchinson and Alan waters cite to have influenced the emergence of ESP has less to do with linguistics more to do with psychology. Rather than simply focusing on the method of language delivery, more attention is given to the ways in which the learners acquire the language and the difference in the ways the language is acquired. The learners are seen to employ different learning strategies, use different skills, enter with different learning schemata, and be motivated by different needs and interests. Therefore, focus on the learners' needs become equally paramount to the methods employed to disseminate linguistic knowledge as such, describing designing specific courses to meet the individual needs is a natural extension of the "learners-centered "or "learning-centered" perspective of ESP.
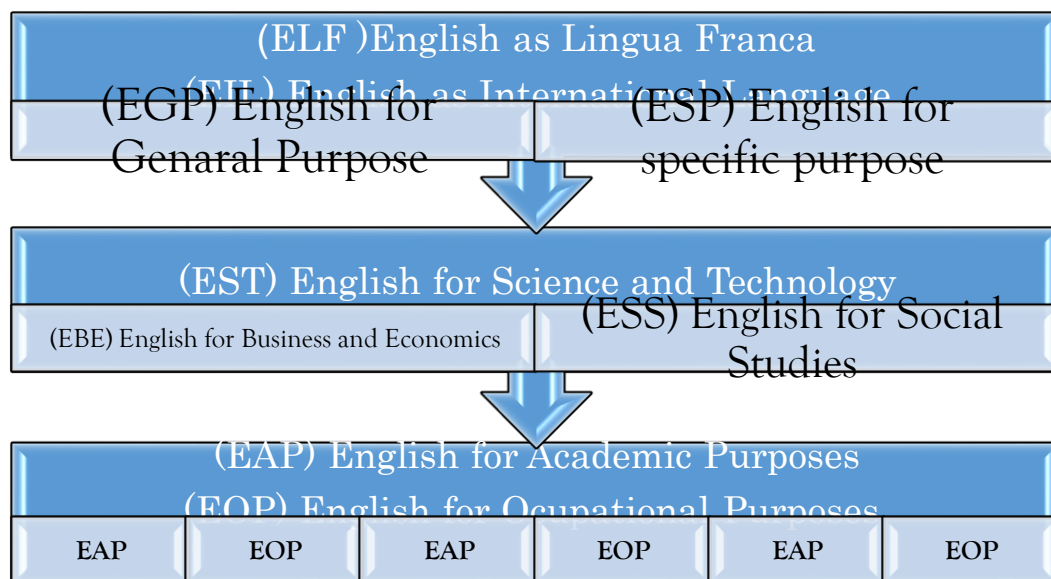
According to Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters, there is no clear-cut definition between EAP and EOP.

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ESP and English Learning Education:

English for specific purposes is an exciting moment in English language education since it opens a rich opportunity for English language teachers and researchers in new professional domains. The growing demand for highly proficient speakers of specialized academic and workplace English is drawing increasingly large number of teachers into the ESP profession and awarding them higher salaries and prestige than were previously given to language teachers.

Moreover, ESP has become increasingly important since there has been an increase in vocational/occupational training and learning throughout the world. The spread of globalization has resulted on the increasing use of English as the language of international communication. More and more people are using English in a growing number of occupational contexts. Learners are learning and mastering general English at a younger age and so moving to ESP learning for their occupational purposes.

Basically, ESP currently This is three main referents in the world of English Language Education as follows:

1- Specific subsets of English language that are required to carry out specific tasks for specific purposes.
2- A branch of language education that studies and teaches subsets of English to assist learners in successfully carrying out specific tasks for specific purposes.
3- A movement that has popularized the ESP profession and its work with ESP discourse.

Specific purpose of English includes not only knowledge of specific part of the English language but also competency in the skill required to use this language as well as sufficient understanding of the context within which it is situated.

Although the name can be misleading, ESP does not refer to English language or English education for any specific purpose. All education exists for specific purposes, but only English education for highly specialized purpose interest ESP professionals.

There are two main characteristics of ESP has been described by some famous linguists which are as follows:

A - Absolute Characteristics: -
1- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of learners.
2- ESP makes use of the understanding methodology and activities of the discipline.

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3- ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register,etc.) skills,discourse, and genres appropriate to the activities.

B- Variable Characteristics: -

1- ESP may be related to or designed for specific discipline.

2- ESP may use, in specific teaching situation, a different methodology from that of general English.

3- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level situation or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at university level.

4- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced learners of English Language.

5- Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners also.

In the light of the above-mentioned characteristics, they assert that ESP is not necessarily related to a specific discipline. Furthermore, ESP is likely to be used with adult learners although it could be you used with young adult learners in a university setting.

Importance of Needs Analysis in ESP teaching:

Need analysis aim to present learners' wants, needs, and lacks prior to organizing a course. According to Burksaitiene(2008), needs analysis is the key to collect insider's view of the ESP situation (P. 330) and the views of chosen learners are of utmost importance. Dudley-Evans (2001) also stated that the main aim of the ESP course is to meet the explicit needs of the learners. It is deemed as a learners-centered approach that develops learners' language capacity to be successful on their job's spheres or academic needs. A need analysis is an essential and primary step which helps to identify the learners needs, desires, and prerequisites.

According to West, the term 'analysis of needs' appeared for the first time in the 1920s when Michael West introduced the concept to include two important factors to be taken into consideration while designing a foreign language program: what learner will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might be best master the target language during the period of training.

Gonzalez and Louis in Crandall and Kaufman (2002:93) assume that English for specific purposes (ESP) teachers often find themselves teaching a course without possessing any knowledge of the content they are going o teach. Thus, self-instruction seems to be a common trend for teachers in this area. Motivation is one if the important factor in language learning,

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which is why teachers of English as a foreign or second language have always tried to find new approaches or strategies that introduce practical uses of EFL/ESL in the classroom.

In all ESP teaching situations, we must start by considering the needs of learners and what they have to do in the target situation (Flook - 1993). Needs are defined as being the requirement that the learners have in order to be able to communicate effectively in the target situation. They are also defined as what the learners need to learn to acquire the language the process of need analysis often entails collecting information for the sake of having the necessary basis to develop a course which will meet the needs of group of learners. In this regard Richard and Platt (1992: 242) state that need analysis is, "the process of determining the needs for which a learner or a group of learners acquires a language and arrange the needs according to priorities."

A teacher engaged in the process of needs analysis is required to gather information about, 'what the learners need' and 'how they can learn'. These points should be considered while designing a course.

In recent years, course designing has become more learner centered or learning centered, as differentiated by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Needs analysis has come to be regarded as the situation starting point of process, especially in the ESP field. The content of any ESP course should only be determined by a comprehensive needs analysis at this first step, and it is seen as being absolutely crucial if ESP practitioners wish to design a course that will maximally benefit our learners. Needs analysis is neither unique to language teaching nor within language training but it is often seen as being 'the cornerstone of ESP' and leads to a very focused course. Although there are various ways of interesting interpreting 'needs', the concept of 'learners needs' is often interpreted in two ways.

1-As what the learners want to do with the languag
e (goal-oriented definition of needs) which relates to terminal objectives are the end of learning; and
2-What the learners need to do to actually acquire the language (a process-oriented definition) which relates to transitional/ means of learning.
In view of these concerns Dudley Evans and St. John (1998:145) discuss criteria for ESP course design and put forward useful steps for ESP teachers and the course designers to consider. They list these concerns surrounding course design in the form of the following questions-
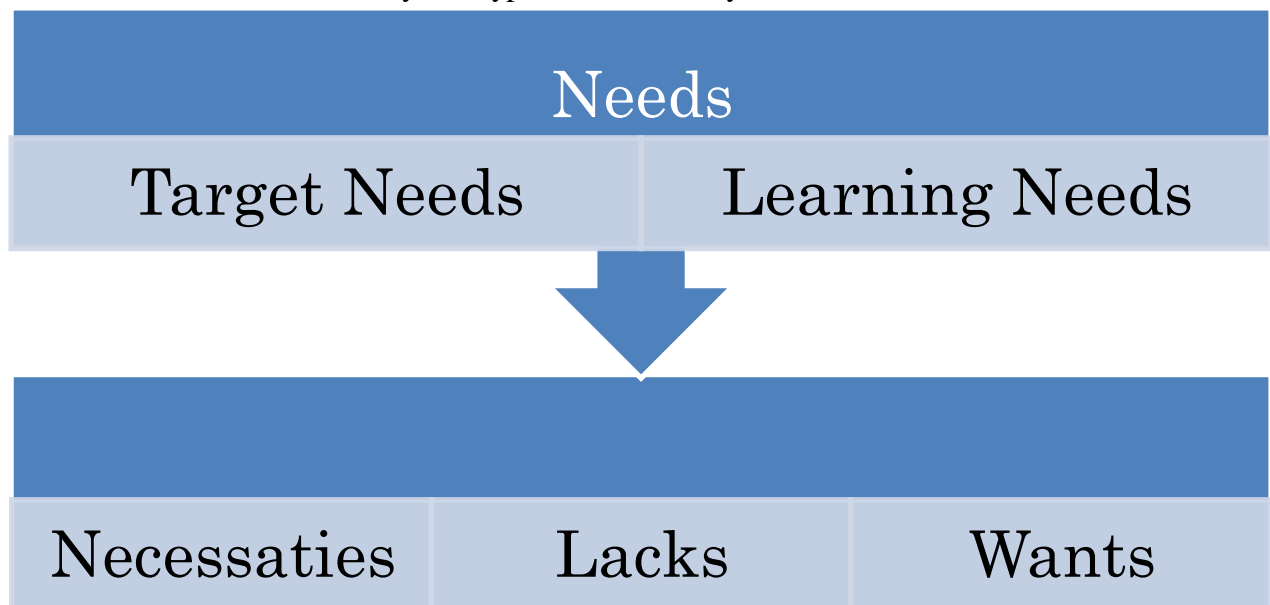
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- Should the course be intensive or extensive?
- Should the learners' performance be assessed or non-assessed?
- Should the course deal with immediate needs or with delayed needs?
- Should the role of the teacher be that of the provider of knowledge and activities, or should it be as facilitator of activities arising from learners expressed wants?
- Should the course have a broad focus or narrow focus?
- Should the course be pre-study or pre-experience or run parallel with the study or experience? Should the materials be common-core or specific to learners' study or work?
- Should the group taking the course be homogeneous or should it be heterogeneous?

In short, by asking these questions prior to planning course design, the ESP teacher can be better prepared, so if the teacher has to balance but some of these parameters which are linked to institutional and learners' expectations. Dudley Evans's and St. Johns,(1998). Needs analysis prior to materials design is necessary. Therefore, more emphasis should be put on formative evaluations and monitoring as materials are piloted. Such evaluation may reveal important information about student attitudes which can be difficult to obtain in an initial need analysis.

Types of Needs Analysis: -
Hutchinson and Waters identify two types of needs analysis as illustrated below-

Needs	
Target Needs	Learning Needs

Necessaties	Lacks	Wants

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Target Needs:

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) target needs are mainly related to, "what the learners need to do in the target situation". In order to answer this statement, ESP practitioners should also get gather information about learners' necessities, lacks and wants.

A- Necessities: - They are the academic or occupational requirements of the target situation, that is what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. Accordingly, needs are perhaps more appropriately described as 'objectives'(Robinson, 1991:7) to be achieved.

B- Lacks: -They are what the learners already know and what they are deficient in i.e., what they ignore or cannot perform in English subsequently, lacks are the gaps between the initial are actual situation of the learner in terms of language proficiency or aptitude, and the one thing one which is required after the accomplishment of the language training.

C- Wants: -They are learners' expectations and hopes towards acquiring English i.e., what they would like to gain from the language course. Usually, these needs are very personal; therefore, they are sometimes called 'subjective'. In fact, these wants are very real, and may conflict with the necessities as perceived by the employer. Therefore, ways must be found to accommodate them. In these respect individuals' wants cannot all be accounted for; however, the wants of the majority can be discussed and partially met.

Learning Needs: -learning needs involve an answer to the question, 'How are we going to the destination? They can be defined as the "factors that affect the learning like attitude, motivation, awareness, personality, learning styles, and strategies, together with social background."(Xiao, 2007:2).Learning needs concern about the route between the starting point (lacks) and the destination (necessities). For example, learners may be greatly motivated in the subject work, but may completely lose interest with the long, boring, and old teaching materials. The learning process should be enjoyable, fulfilling, manageable and generative. It is not concerned with knowing but with learning. The concept of 'learning needs' put forward by Hutchinson and Waters and their analysis of 'learning needs' have been proved to be fairly useful in practice because learning needs clarify the means through which learners proceed to achieve their target need starting with realizing their lacks. As a result, in the process of learning, learner's need should always be taken into consideration. Of course, designers need to analyze the learner's learning needs according to their motivation, the condition of the learning situation, and their existing knowledge and skills.

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Procedure of Needs Analysis: -Needs analysis has been introduced into language in the 1960s through ESP movement. It is a set of procedure for collecting information about learners need. Understanding learners' needs can contribute to successful course planning. Hence, the purpose of need analysis is-

- **A-** find out what language skill is a learner needs.
- **B-** To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students.
- **C-** To determine which students are most in need for training in particular language skills.
- **D-** To identify student lacks.
- **E-** To identify students wants and expectations.
- **F-** To collect information about particular problem learners are experiencing.

How to conduct need analysis?

In ESP identifying what a course should contain and how it should be run is determined using different sources and methods to gather data about the situations. The below table illustrates the mains sources and methods for needs analysis-

Sources for Needs Analysis	Methods for Needs Analysis
Published and unpublished literature	**Interviewers**
Participating or administrative material	**Participants' observation or non-participants' observation**
Former students	**Questionnaires**
learners	
Teachers	
Domain Experts (ESP researchers, linguists, subject specialists)	
Triangulated sources	**Triangulated methods**

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in ESL/ EFL context: -

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From the early 1960s, English for Specific Purposes ESP has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of English as foreign language EFL or English as second language ESL teaching today. Its development is reflected in the increasing number of universities offering courses in ESP. English for specific purposes ESP is known as learner-centered approach for teaching English as a foreign or second language. It meets the needs of learners who need to learn a foreign language for use in their specific field such as science, technology, medicine, and academic learning. The ESP principles take part in the process of designing a syllabus or developing a teaching material for a particular course or study. Traditionally, ESP classes were typically designed for intermediate and advanced learners. Nowadays many learners start to learn academic or vocational English at an earlier stage and at a lower level of proficiency. A needs analysis is applied in order to find the needs of the course's participants. A course of ESP has already been inserted in the curriculum of English Language Center of Umm Al Qura University Makkah Saudi Arabia for many years to master the learners to join a specialized course in their respective colleges. The main objective of this course is designed to equip the student with practical knowledge of the concept of English for Specific purposes which are in turn assign them to design their own ESP course. Some teachers at other universities are afraid of making the transition from teaching general English to teaching ESP. There is also a danger that the novice ESP teachers will only use material that they feel comfortable with and will not stretch their learners. Bill (2002) argues that the depth of knowledge of a subject matter that a teacher requires depend on a number of variables which include

1- How much do the learners know about their specialism?
2- Are the students pre-experience or post experienced learners?
3- How specific and detailed are their language skills and generals that are the learners need to learn?

Although the teacher perhaps is not an expert in a specialized area, he still must need to have some awareness and feel for a particular area. Bill (2002) advocates the three Cs for helping teachers to improve their knowledge and skill in a particular area of ESP. These three Cs are as follows

1-Curiosity:The teacher should be interested in the subject area and want to learn more.
2-Collaboration: Teacher should seek out subject specialist show them their work and ask for their feedback.

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3-Confidence:It will grow as teacher explore the new subject matter engage with subject specialist and learn from their learners.

Harding (2007) stresses that the general skills that general English teacher must have, are being communicative, using authentic material, and analyzing English in a practical way. Harding also suggests that teachers should-

A- Think about what is needed and do not just follow an off the self of course or course book.

B- Understand the nature of their learners' subject area.

C- Workout their language needs in relation to their specialism.

D- Use context, text, situations from their subject area.

E- Use authentic materials.

F- Make the task as authentic as possible.

G- Motivate the students with variety, relevance, and fun

H- Take the classroom into the real world and bring their real world into the classroom.

Teaching English for specific purpose was and is a controversial issue among EFL/ ESL teachers and others. Whether the ESL/ EFL teachers or the specialist in the field should teach ESP courses is the matter of controversy. There has been much discussion among ESP specialists and the teacher as to who should teach business as scientific English. ESL/ EFL teachers or specialists in the field? Some people claim that EFL/ ESL teachers do not possess the necessary grip of the subject matter and therefore he/she may not be able to exchange ideas which contribute to bring about the intended learning outcomes. However, what defines the intended learning outcome raises a number of questions which should be directly addressed. Moreover, there are those who claim that ESP teaching is a part of part and parcel of an English language teacher.Maleki (2005) states that the meaning of the word 'specific' that goes with the term English for specific purpose does not mean 'specialized' and the aim of teaching ESP is not to teach special terminology or jargon in a specific field of study. However, when students have little or no basic knowledge of English, teaching it for specific purpose is almost impossible. This is when general English and ESP cross paths.

Robinson (1991) Maleki (2005) asserts that the most important quality of the ESP teacher needs is flexibility. Flexibility means changing from being a general English teacher to being a specific purpose teacher. Such a flexible teacher can cope with different groups of students and can teach ESP classes.An ESP program is built on an assessment of purpose and needs and the functions for which English is required. ESP concentrate more on language in context and

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covers subject varying from one to another, for example computer science, engineering, medical,etc. The focal point of an ESP is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the learners' real wishes, instead it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners. ESP classes combine subject matters and English language teaching. Such a combination is highly motivating because students are able to apply what they learn in their English language class to their main field of study.

Conclusion: -The term ESP for English language learning enriches students approach the study of English through a field that is already known and relevant to them. This means that they are able to use what they learn in the ESP classroom right away in their work and studies. If the ESP learners and teachers hope to grow and flourish in the future, it is vital that the community of learners and teachers as a whole understands what ESP actually represents. Only then, can new members join with confidence and existing members carry on the practice which have brought ESP to the position it has in EFL /ESL teaching today. Moreover, this seems to be the latest paradigm for ESP teachers: infusing more reality into teaching program and realistically designing the syllabus and material that meet the students' needs.

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