

**Teaching ESP through translation:
A key for Teaching Specialized Communication.**

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Abstract:

Taking into consideration that teaching English for Specific Purposes (henceforth ESP) requires a fundamental objective that includes helping learners engaging in specialized communication, whatever their fields of study, ESP learners are supposed to be active participants in their discourse communities, possessing specialized terminology and being aware of their different usage.

This paper is in fact devoted to shed some fresh lights on the underlying significance of making the ESP learners acknowledged with the appropriate usage of specialized terms for reading disciplinary-based texts in general, and enhancing their communicative competence in particular. To achieve this required objective, a careful understanding of the role of the ESP practitioner in devising an innovative framework based primarily on the new-fangled prospect and tactics for instructing terminology through the use of translation from the source to target language. However, this calls for an urgent need for a systematic analysis of the target and the learning situations.

Key-words: ESP Teaching, specialized Communication, translation, terminology usage.

Owing to the on-going process of globalization, our global village is nowadays oriented towards a continuous growing of an international market pressure as well as high-tech environments. To better fit the requirements of this market-place, a shared knowledge of the global language is believed to play a pivotal role for more successful transaction on the international scales.

Additionally, these accelerated developments have been accompanied by the appearance of a large number of new concepts and new ways of communications that did not previously exist, these latter entail the needs for maintaining a cross-country plethora of interaction, information and intercultural understanding between members of different discourse communities. It is therefore of great discernible to noticeably meet the new challenge and the demand of the world by adapting or adopting a new-fangled framework based on *specialized English courses* (henceforth ESP courses).

Algeria, like any other countries, has implemented ESP instruction in her higher education offered, for instance, English courses in the field of business and economics, science and technology, social sciences that correspondingly conforms the learners' academic or workplace requirements to develop better professionalization in their area of research and foster, at the same time, '*communication among specialists*'.

Due to the nature of ESP and its emphasis on discourse analysis from the early *register* to *genre* analysis, educationalists around the world were encouraged to think about different discourses and practices that have valued in different content fields. While disciplines are often distinguished by their specialized subject areas, the topics, terminology methodology and the way of seeing the world, they have different forms of language and different purposes of communication.

In this line of thought, BERKENKOTTER and HUCKIN (1995) state: '*a discourse community's norms, epistemology, ideology, and social ontology are not necessary same of other discourse community*'. The concept of community draws attention that each field of study has its own norms, set of conventions and models of enquiry which characterized their specialized communication

Moreover, there is a general consensus among educationalists that each academic discourse contains certain language features that occur more frequently such as technical, sub-technical terms and some grammatical structures, therefore, imparting ESP / EAP learners with appropriate content is, usually, believed to be of major significance. (Mc DONOUGH, 1984; BASTERKMAN, 2006)

The language specialized communication of any subject field are believed to be one of the key for successful interaction required not only for scientists and technicians but also for:

- Communication professionals;
- Expert in lexicography and terminology;
- Language planners;
- Language teachers.

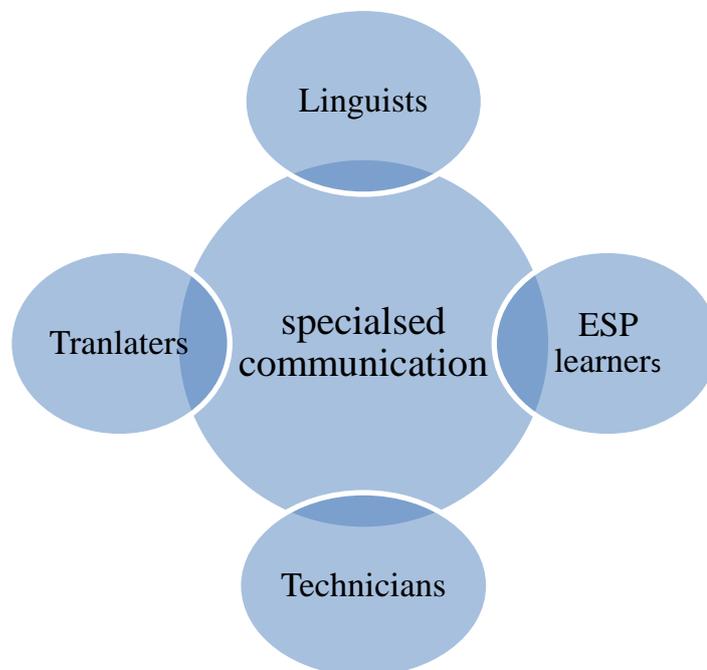


Diagram 1: The Need for Specialized Communication.

In this vein, preparing ESP learners for more specialized communication should be subjected to a planned and strategic instruction so that to be able to fit the challenges of our global world, and at the same time, attaining a better professionalization.

Being aware of the importance of English as a global language, the preparatory school of Economics and Commercial Sciences provides a compulsory business English course for both first and second year students. Moreover, it schedules these courses twice a

week with the objective of developing their speaking skill for better communication on the international sphere.

Despite the significant importance of such courses, no language curriculums, or even instructional materials is provided, except a guide stating the objectives. Accordingly, the short-term objective of these courses is to prepare learners for the professional test. In this latter, they are required to read and understand economic texts as well as writing an essay. Moreover, there is only general agreement among ESP practitioners about the following themes illustrated in this table:

The first semester	The second semester
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business and Company; 2. Production; 3. Distribution; 4. Advertising; 5. Market and Marketing; 6. Supply and demand; 7. Trade; 8. Economy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic systems; 2. Dealing with problems; 3. Basic forms of ownership; 4. Manufacturing; 5. Accounting and types of accounting; 6. Management; 7. People at work

Table 1: Themes of First year Business English Course at the Preparatory School.

In this respect, the ESP teachers have to rely on themselves to design adequate activities. Consequently, most of these instructors, usually, focus on providing learners with texts on the above mentioned themes, followed by comprehension questions.

For the purpose of attaining the learners’ academic and vocational aims, ESP courses should be taught in a way to prepare learners, at this school, to become communicatively competent in their target discourse community. This article is based fundamentally on the following enquiry: **how one- as an ESP teacher- may enhance the learners’ specialized**

communication in business context? The answer of this question lies at the heart of training their terminology usage through translation task.

Taking into account that these business learners come from different learning environment, have different English language proficiencies as well as instructed in both Arabic and French languages, lead them to acquire knowledge in their L₁ and L₂. Being exposed to authentic materials in Business English courses, this calls the need to translate from the source to the target language and vice versa. The following diagram endeavors to summarize the role of translation in the acquisition of specialized discourse:

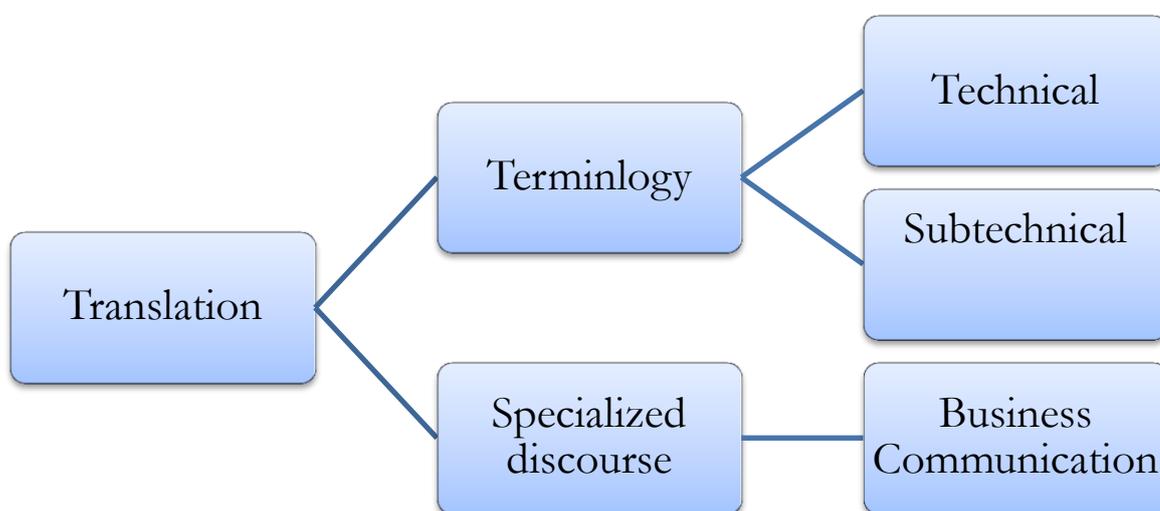


Diagram 2: the Role of Translation for Specialized Communication

It worth noting at this level that translation as a communicative activity in ESP context is considered as a *'fifth language skill'* and a teaching/ learning strategy helping learners to compensate for their low level of language proficiency. As result, it should not be implemented as a product-oriented task in itself to avoid a continuous dependency on their first and second languages, enabling them at the same time to have a total exposure to acquire the target language. Moreover, it should be used as teaching and learning aid.

It is agreed among instructors that ESP practitioners are, often, seen to be strange participants in a particular field, they find themselves in a dilemma of what to teach and face themselves with little or no prior knowledge. This new challenging task, as result, entails the need for classroom management, basing on collaboration and cooperation with subject specialists for the sake of choosing content in accordance with the students' subject courses.

From another layer of analysis, it has been widely recognized that the reason for the most poor communication ability in some ESP occupational contexts which resulted in the loss of business is closely linked, first and foremost, to the insufficient of cross-cultural understanding on the part of the customers ((CiLT 2005).

Consequently, to fit the demand of our global age, a new-fangled tendency in pedagogy has been emerged to become nowadays as a significant challenge for our ESP teaching in general, aiming basically at filling the existing gap between the requirements of the academic and work place situations. Several speculations thus have been made on mapping the cultural aspect in language instruction, making use of translation as *cultural mediation*. This has been stated by LEONARDI (2009:150)

Business and financial texts are characterised by a large number of culture bound terms and references which should be known by students in order to boost their comprehension of texts.

Thus, another advantage of introducing translation as a strategy for more specialized communication is assisting them having '*information transfer*' or '*re-creation of information*' (MACKAY and MOUNTFORD 1978). Translation, in this effect, should not be used in a way to which learners are required to give word for word equivalents or sentence for sentence interpretation. But rather to take into consideration the already existed knowledge, they state that:

Where translation can be employed as a pedagogic procedure, it provides an opportunity to relate their own knowledge...to the acquisition of English as a foreign language.

MACKAY et al (1978:14)

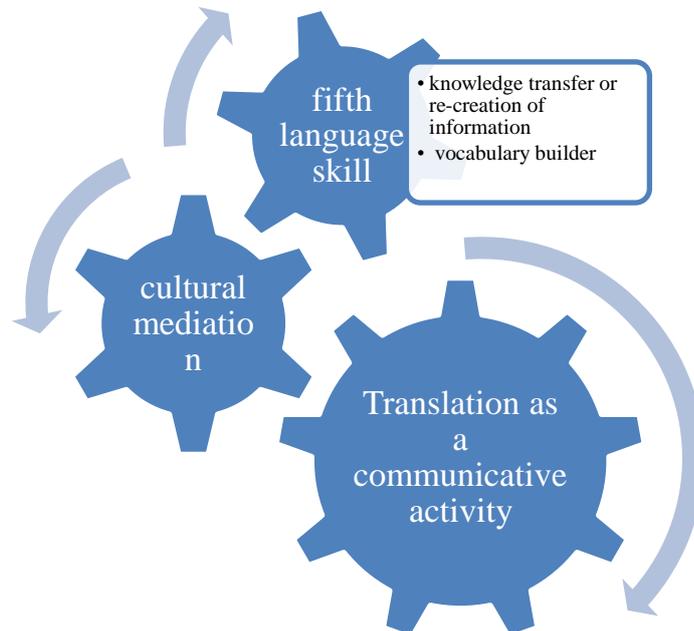


Diagram 3: The Integration of Translation in ESP Classroom.

Due to the dynamic nature of ESP and business communication, some vocabularies are seen to be highly technical terms that belongs to only this specific field. The case in point is *Marketing* and providing learners with equivalent in their L1 *اتسويق* maybe used as a supportive strategy for time saving because of the limited time of ESP courses.

Another category consists of the set of terms which are not specific to the field of business i.e., they refer to the set of terms who has different meaning in both general English and Business English. As example is the word '**plant**', this term has a meaning in general English which is '*a living thing that has leaves and roots and grows in earth*'. However, in business English, it refers to '*company or a place where power is produced*' thus, the translation from English into French or Arabic '*usine*' may serve as a facilitator for language learning.

The following table is an attempt to illustrate the translation of a set of technical terms from English to French to Arabic, which helps our ESP learners to have clear understanding of the target language as well as saving time:

English	French	Arabic
Company	Société	شركة
Enterprise	Entreprise	مؤسسة
plant	usine	مصنع
Firm	Maison	منزل
works	usine	مصنع

Translation, in business English classroom, is to guide and assist our ESP students through practical synonyms and explanation. This may refer, for example, impart them with useful comments as far as the processes and techniques followed throughout the translation task and aiding them compensate for their language difficulties. Furthermore, the focus should be beyond *teacher-centred approach* towards *active learning* to better acquiring communicative competence and subject specific knowledge.

For intensive educational preparation, appropriate tactics must be implemented in the ESP classroom for helping learners to bridge the existing-gap of the learners' immediate and long-term needs i.e., Moreover, emphasis has to be put also on re-wording strategy which is generally accomplished through the application of *transfer*, *synonyms*, *functional equivalents*, *compensation* and *reduction*.

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