

The ESP Teacher: Issues, Tasks and Challenges

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to discuss the issues, tasks and challenges of the ESP teachers. Firstly, some basic concepts of ESP are presented; then ESP teaching issues like effectiveness of ESP, teaching strategies, ESP teaching objectives, teachers' role are succinctly presented. Thirdly, tasks of the ESP teachers like curriculum development, course design, needs analysis and assessment are explained. Finally, the author has tried to bring about some problems and challenges for the ESP teacher.

Key Words: Effectiveness of ESP, Methodology, Teachers' Role, Training, Assessment

1. Introduction

English for specific purposes (ESP) represents the effect of the worldwide interest in the study of English. Among the factors paving the way for the creation of this academic subject, Kennedy and Bolitho (1984:1) include:

- the introduction of governmental mass education programs “with English as the first, and sometimes only, foreign language;
- the need of English as a common medium of communication as a consequence of the growth of business and increased occupational mobility;
- the facilitation of access to scientific and technical literature.

2.1. Definition

English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain. The teaching of English for specific purposes, in its early days, was largely motivated by the need to communicate across languages in areas such as commerce and technology. This has now expanded to include other areas such as English for academic purposes (EAP), English for occupational purposes (EOP), English for vocational purposes (EVP), English for medical purposes (EMP), English for business purposes (EBP), English for legal purposes (ELP), and English for sociocultural purposes (ESCP) (Belcher 2009).



In fact, the term ESP has been in use for a quarter of a century now, and its definition can be found in many issues on the subject that followed the first, classic, edition by T. Hutchinson and A. Waters (1987). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) attempt to define ESP not by showing what ESP is, but rather showing what ESP is not:

- a) ESP is not a matter of teaching 'specialized varieties' of English. The fact that language is used for a specific purpose does not imply that it is a special form of the language, different in kind from other forms. Certainly, there are some features which can be identified as 'typical' of a particular context of use and which, therefore, the learner is more likely to meet in the target situation. But these differences should not be allowed to obscure the far larger area of common ground that underlies all English use, and indeed, all language use.
- b) ESP is not just a matter of Science words and grammar for Scientists, Hotel words and grammar for Hotel staff and so on. When we look at a tree, we see the leaves and branches, but there is much more to the tree than just these- much of it hidden from view inside and beneath the tree. The leaves do not just hang in the air: they are supported by a complex underlying structure. In the same way there is much more to communication than just the surface features that we read and hear. We need to distinguish, as Chomsky did with regard to grammar, between performance and competence, that is between what people actually do with the language and the range of knowledge and abilities which enables them to do it.

- c) ESP is not different in kind from any other form of language teaching, in that it should be based in the first instance on principles of effective and efficient learning. Though the content of learning may vary there is no reason to suppose that the processes of learning should be any different for the ESP learner than for the General English learner. There is, in other words, no such thing as an ESP methodology, merely methodologies that have been applied in ESP classrooms, but could just as well have been used in the learning of any kind of English. (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 18)

Hutchinson and Waters illustrated their idea of ELT by the picture of a tree. In the picture, ESP is opposed to General English, usually taught for exam purposes. Thus, the first conclusion we can draw is that ESP is teaching English for any other purposes, e.g. work or study. These two are usually called professional (also occupational, or vocational) purposes and academic purposes. According to the division, most secondary schools teach General English simply because their purpose is a particular exam (a GE exam, of course, such as the FCE or the standard Russian school exam). If a student intends to use English in their future profession or wants to continue their academic studies, they need another sort of English that ought to meet some particular needs. Therefore, all our universities and colleges deal with ESP.

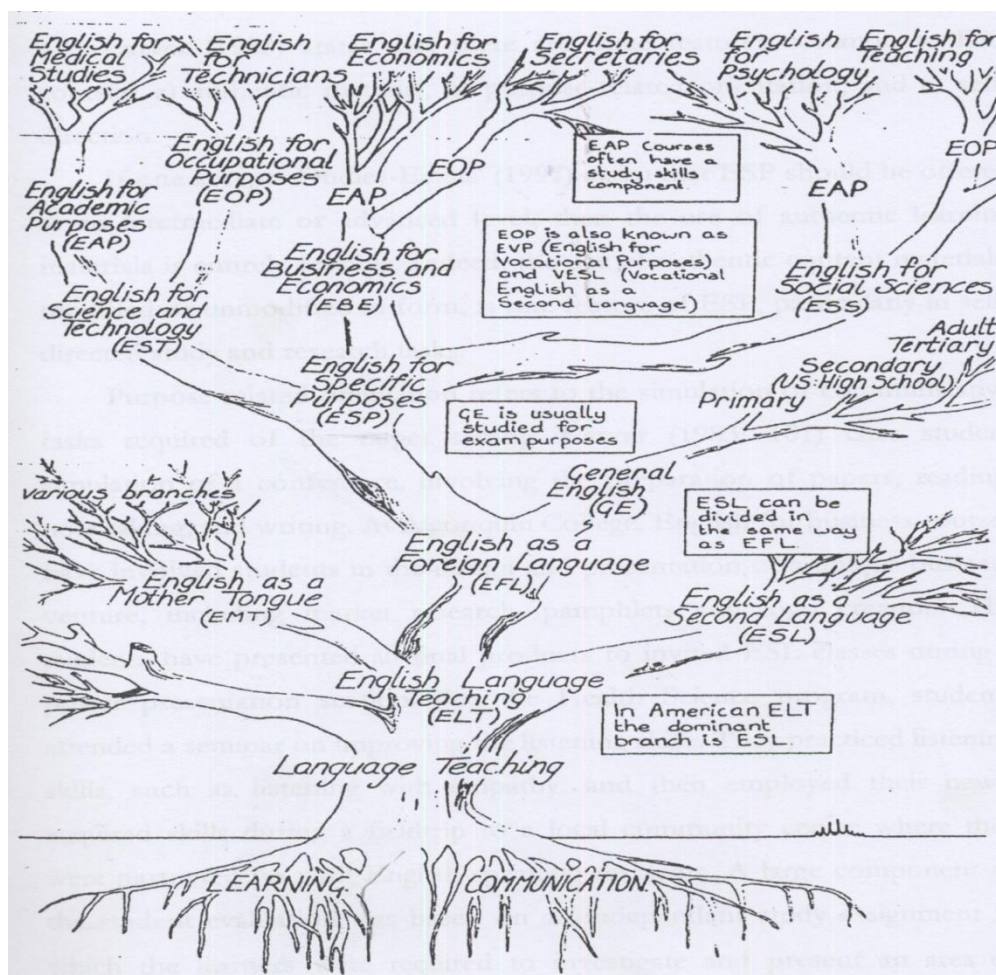


Figure 1: ELT Tree (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 17)

2.2. The Birth of ESP

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) show a long-term retrospective view on causes resulting in the birth of E.S.P., when they present nearly the same factors, which, in turn, suggest a cause-effect relationship (p. 6):

- the enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale. Two forces were dominating the new post-war world – technology and commerce, whose relentless progress soon generated a demand for an international language and, due to the economic power of the U.S. it was English which was granted this role.
- the emerging of a new mass of people wanting to learn English – the key to international currencies of technology and commerce. This mass of people joined together particularly new generations of learners who knew specifically what they were to learn and why.
- the Oil Crises of the early 1970s involved a massive flow of funds and western expertise into the oil-rich countries. Therefore, English suddenly turned into ‘big business’ and, on the other hand, commercial pressures began to exert an influence in the acquisition of this language. Time and money constraints created a need for cost-effective courses with accurately specific goals.
- the need for several countries to update their knowledge.

Therefore, E.S.P. came into being and gradually developed into a multilayered language approach primarily based on learners’ specific needs required by their professions or occupations. The domain labeled E.S.P. was proven to have a universal dimension through the concept of language for specific purposes and a language-specific perspective through the insights explored into various European languages. Out of these mention will be made of French, German, Russian and Spanish.

The Romanian specialists have shown a certain interest in approaches to terminologies rather than in the study of what is generally known as *limbajele funcționale*. Their interest is focused more on practical aspects than on purely theoretical ones.

2.3. A Learning-centered Approach

The emphasis in E.S.P. is laid not on language *use* but on language *learning*. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) describe their vision of ESP in the volume *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-centered Approach* (1987). They start their view on ESP with a metaphorical image presenting the relationship between ESP and ELT under the form of a tree. The roots of their ELT tree represent the learning communication while the trunk, the language teaching. The next division represents the English language teaching out of which three branches indicate English as a Mother Tongue (EMT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). The thickest of the branches, EFL, further divides into General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP distinguishes English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE) and English for Social Sciences (ESS). As the authors state, “the topmost branches of the tree show the level at which individual ESP courses occur”. Their vision is not only self-explanatory but also complete and useful in accounting for the multitude of purposes for which the English language may be thoroughly or superficially studied, depending on the immediate aims of the (individual) learner.

2.4. Demands of Teaching ESP

Basturkmen (2010) is of the view that teachers may find themselves dealing with content in an occupation or subject of study that they themselves have little or no prior knowledge of (p. 7). Some may find themselves working alone in an on-site environment. They may find they have far less knowledge and experience in the subject than their learners. So how prepared are ESP teachers for teaching what often is a challenging new task?

Master (1997a) reviewed the state of ESP teacher education in the US and found that at that time there were no ESP-track MA TESOL programs although one university was in the process of building one, and a handful of universities had a course in the topic. Howard (1997) surveyed UK universities and found that three offered MA programs that specialized in ESP and a good number offered a course in the topic. The City University of Hong Kong at this time offers an ESP track MA and a number of other universities around the world offer MA courses as part of their MA TESOL programs. However, only some teachers who come to work in ESP have received such formal training (Basturkmen 2010, p. 7).

For many ESP teachers, formal TESOL training has been very largely concerned with general ELT. Some might argue that there is little difference between teaching ELT and ESP. Both ELT and ESP share a similar aim – to develop students’ communicative competence. Ellis (1996) describes language pedagogy as “concerned with the ability to use language in communicative situations” (p. 74). Workplace or academic situations can be argued to be simply just some of those situations, a part of the whole. Many ELT courses are based on the principle that language course content should be related to the purposes for which students are expected to use language after all.

Cook (2002) distinguishes between external and internal goals for language teaching. External goals can be related to the uses of language outside the classroom – being able to get things done in the real world, such as being able to buy groceries or provide medical information. Internal goals relate to the educational aims of the classroom – improving attitudes to speakers of other languages, promoting thinking skills such as analysis, memorizing and social goals. ESP teaching is generally understood to be very largely concerned with external goals. In ESP the learner is seen as a language learner engaged either in academic, professional or occupational pursuits and who uses English as a means to carry out those pursuits. External goals suggest an instrumental view of language learning and language being learnt for non-linguistic goals. In a general ELT situation, goals are generally linguistic (such as, development of oral competence or a wide vocabulary, or ability to use a wide range of grammatical structures). In an ESP situation, it is understood that the learner would want to achieve ‘real world’ objectives, objectives requiring specific linguistic competencies. The ESP teacher/course developer needs to find out what the language-based objectives of the students are in the target occupation or academic discipline and ensure that the content of the ESP course works towards them (Basturkmen 2010, p. 8).

ESP focuses on when, where and why learners need the language either in study or workplace contexts. Decisions about what to teach, and sometimes how to teach are informed by descriptions of how language is used in the particular contexts the learners will work or study in. There is thus a strong focus in ESP on language as ‘situated language use’ (Basturkmen 2010, p. 8). Tudor (1997) points out that an important distinguishing feature of ESP is that it deals with ‘domains of knowledge which the average educated native speaker could not reasonably be expected to be familiar with’ (p. 91). In other words, what is focused on in ESP

courses is not part and parcel of the communicative repertoire of all educated native speakers as in the case of general English teaching. So, for example, in teaching English to a group of nurses, course content might involve items such as medical terminology, patterns of nurse–patient interaction, written genres such as patient records, items that are not in the communicative realm of those outside nursing fields. In this case we need ESP teachers who know how to design courses in a conceptual area that one has not mastered and develop the ability to analyze and describe specific texts (Basturkmen 2010, p. 9).

3. Issues in ESP Teaching

Who are ESP teachers? They are teachers at vocational schools, colleges and universities, as well as any other teachers who deal with their students' professional development. Professional ESP teachers are experts in teaching English for any profession, able to design teaching materials based on the content material presented by the professors, or experts in the subject.

What do they teach? ESP teachers teach academic skills to future (or real) professionals. They teach English for the profession and encourage their students to use their background knowledge along with the academic skills in dealing with all sorts of authentic information in their profession. ESP teachers design courses according to their students' professional needs, having in mind their target language use situation.

3.1. Effectiveness of ESP

Helen Basturkmen (2010) avers that ESP teaching makes additional demands on teachers and course developers in terms of investigating needs and designing courses that may only run for a relatively short time and asks whether teaching ESP is effective (Basturkmen 2010, p. 9). Empirical investigation into the effectiveness of ESP teaching has been limited (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Master, 2005). This has also been the case in EAP (Gillet and Wray, 2006). It is easy to understand why this is so. There are few situations in which an experimental study comparing a group of learners provided with an ESP-oriented course and one with similar learners provided with a general English course would be possible. There are few empirical studies investigating the effectiveness of ESP in workplace training, due in large part to issues of confidentiality in corporate culture and also time and cost constraints in ESP management (Kim, 2008, p. 16).

Master (2005, p. 109) lists a number of questions concerning the accountability of ESP including:

- ✓ Do ESP/EST (English for Science and Technology) programs work?
- ✓ Are they more effective than previous programs aimed at general language proficiency?
- ✓ If so, in what ways are they more effective?
- ✓ Can the expense be justified?
- ✓ Are there any unintended or unforeseen outcomes resulting from the use of any given ESP program?

The two studies described below relate to the second of these questions posed by Master (2005): Are ESP programs more effective than programs aimed at general language proficiency? Kasper (1997) conducted an experimental study to investigate the effects of

academic courses linking the content of intermediate level English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to mainstream courses such as psychology in a US college setting. The study found that content-based instruction impacted positively on the students' academic progress and success (qtd in Basturkmen 2010, p. 10). Kasper (1997, p. 310) explained this result saying that the students focused on gathering information/ideas from the content-based materials. The materials presented the students with complex information/ideas communicated through the second language. The students thus acquired information through sophisticated linguistic input and this helped them move to more advanced levels of language processing. Another study in a college setting is reported in Song (2006). Like Kasper (1997), Song compared the academic performance of two groups of ESL students enrolled at the same point of time in their first semester of study. Song found that students receiving content-based instruction achieved better results in their ESL course and subsequent ESL courses as well as better long-term academic success rates than those who received non-content-based ESL instruction.

Basturkmen (2010) argues that theoretical arguments can be made as to why ESP courses should be more effective than general ESL courses. It can be argued that because ESP courses cater to students' interests and needs, they are more likely to engender high levels of motivation. It can be assumed that students will be more interested in topics and texts related to their work or study areas. If students are more motivated, then learning is more likely to occur. It can also be argued that ESP courses are more efficient because they have more limited aims than general ESL courses. Because ESP courses are based on needs analysis, the learning objectives are more highly proscribed than would be the case in general ESL courses. Thus it is not surprising that learning outcomes may be perceived more favorably. Limited and highly specified aims are more likely to be achievable (Basturkmen 2010, p. 11).

3.2. ESP Teaching Methodology

Helen Basturkmen (2006) marks it as debatable whether ESP has a distinctive methodology (p. 114). Robinson (1991) argues that methodology in English Language Teaching (ELT) and ESP differ little and that it is not possible to say whether general ELT has borrowed ideas for methodology from ESP or whether ESP has borrowed ideas from general ELT (qtd in Basturkmen 2006). Robinson identifies two characteristic features of ESP methodology: ESP can base activities on students' specialism (but need not do so), and ESP activities can (but may not) have a truly authentic purpose derived from students' target needs. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) maintain that what characterizes ESP methodology is the use of tasks and activities reflecting the students' specialist areas. Post-experience ESP learners have specialist knowledge from working or studying in their specialist areas and a 'deep-end strategy' (p. 190) can be used.

In a deepened strategy, students' performance of a task is the point of departure for instruction. Watson Todd (2003) reports that six approaches have been emphasized in the EAP literature: inductive learning, process syllabuses, learner autonomy, use of authentic materials and tasks, integration of teaching and technology and team teaching (cooperating with content teachers). Watson Todd argues that whereas the first five are also found in general English language teaching, the sixth, team teaching or cooperation with content teachers, is distinctive to EAP (qtd in Basturkmen 2006). Basturkmen's (2006) presentation of ESP methodology is organized around the concepts of input and output. These concepts are associated with information processing views of second language acquisition (p. 114).

3.2.1. Input-based Strategies

Basturkmen (2006) states that Input based strategies rest on the idea that learning occurs primarily through exposure to language input in the form of written or spoken texts and language descriptions. Input is seen as a sine qua non of learning. Basturkmen identified two distinct subcategories of input-based strategies. The first is premised on the idea that input is sufficient for learning and the second on the idea that input needs to be followed by student output for learning to occur (p. 115). Students are primarily provided with language input inasmuch as exposure to it is understood to promote learning. Learning comes about as the students see evidence (sometimes also termed positive evidence) of how language works or how language is used in workplace, academic, or professional target environments. Students do not need to be pushed into immediate production in order to learn.

Basturkmen (2006) further views that teaching can simply provide positive evidence about how language works or is used by exposing students to authentic texts and engaging them in comprehension activities, or teaching can go beyond this simple exposure to language input and aim to help students notice specific language features or forms in it through the use of awareness-raising activities (p. 115). Through the use of such activities, teachers should aim to direct students' attention to the targeted forms or features in the input so that the students will develop explicit knowledge of them. Basturkmen points out a number of techniques for awareness raising, such as input flooding (exposure to multiple samples of the feature) and input enhancement (the feature is highlighted in the text) (p. 115). Heightened awareness of the forms or features by the students is understood to be beneficial. Basturkmen (2006) is of the view that it is not expected that once students have become aware of a linguistic item, they will immediately produce it, but rather that repeated noticing will enhance learning (p. 115). Acquisition, according to Tomlinson (1998), "results from the gradual and dynamic process of internal generalization rather than from instant adjustments to the learner's internal grammar" (p. 16). It is important for learners to be re-exposed to language items in multiple samples over time. The use of reading and listening texts are one way to achieve this. There can be a gap between learners' understanding or becoming aware of a linguistic item and actually activating this knowledge into some form of production (Basturkmen 2006, p. 116).

Basturkmen (2006) gives an example that can be linked to input-based teaching. The example illustrates a teaching strategy based on the idea of implicit knowledge acquisition through exposure alone and the second illustrates consciousness-raising activities.

Example: Subject Specialist Texts for Comprehension. The ESP division of the English Language Centre at Cukurova University, Turkey provides English language instruction for students in their first and second years of study in their departments in the university. The ESP courses focus on the vocabulary of the students' disciplines and how concepts and ideas are expressed in them.

One commonly adopted lesson plan employed at the Centre involves the use of subject specialist texts for comprehension activities. An authentic text is chosen on the basis of topic and level. The topic of the text needs to be relevant to learners' specialist interests. For example, one ESP instructor chose a text on the subject of religious festivals in different counties for her ESP class composed of students studying theology. The text also needs to be slightly above the students' current level of comprehension. It should contain some but not too many structures and vocabulary items that are not well known to the students.

The text is given out for self-study in the first instance. Students read the text and isolate the vocabulary items in the text that they do not know and translate them into their first language. In class the teacher leads a discussion (this is done in Turkish, which is the first language of the teacher and students) on the meaning of segments of the text the teacher preselects as ‘interesting’ from a content point of view. During the discussions, the teacher periodically draws students’ attention to linguistic features of the input arising incidentally when engaged in the discussion of meaning of the text. (Basturkmen 2006, p. 117)

3.2.2. Input to Output

Basturkmen (2006) shows that in this strategy, students are provided with input as the basis for production (output). The lack of sufficient use of this strategy can be inferred in the following criticism made of methodology in ESP: ‘A common failing in teaching is to expect high level production without giving sufficient input’ (Scott & Scott, 1984, p. 217). In this strategy, the focus is on students acquiring explicit knowledge of preselected language items. The teacher selects specific items (target linguistic forms or features) as the focus of instruction. The items are presented or highlighted by the teacher. This is followed by some form of practice activity in which the students produce the items. The input can take various forms such as a language description, analysis of a genre, or teacher-led discussion of features in a text. The input provides accurate samples of how the language works and how it is used. The students become aware of a gap between how they currently understand or use the linguistic form or feature and the equivalent feature in target language use. The teacher then requires the students to produce (output) the targeted item(s), generally within the same lesson or the following lesson (Basturkmen, 2006, p.119).

In ESP, the input-to-output option is used for teaching different aspects of language, including genre knowledge. Badger and White (2000) describe the practice of understanding (input) and applying rules (output) in the practice of genre instruction in ESP: “Proponents of genre approaches are not often explicit about their theory of learning. However, the use of model texts and the idea of analysis suggest that learning is partly a question of imitation and partly a matter of understanding and consciously applying rules” (qtd in Basturkmen, 2006, p. 119). The input-to-output strategy can be inferred from the following instructional material. It is a proposal for genre-based instruction for an English for Engineering studies class (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 122).

Example: The Final Year Engineering Report. L. Flowerdew (2000, 2001) reports on the method used to teach students who were writing final-year engineering reports in a Hong Kong university. Flowerdew developed the materials in line with the recommendations of Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988), Kusel (1992), Dudley-Evans (1994), and Jacoby, Leech, and Holton (1995). The first step in developing the materials was to collect a small corpus of successful final year reports from former students. The reports were analyzed for move sequence, use of graphics and visuals, and to identify the relationship between sections (for example, the relationship between the introduction and the results section). The following stages and activities were used in teaching. The move sequence of the report was highlighted. Linguistic phrases used in the corpus were highlighted with the aim of expanding the students’ own repertoire of ways to express engineering concepts. A text was cut into sections and the students reconstructed it. Sample texts were compared. The content of moves

and sections was highlighted. ‘Good models’ of students’ writing were provided by the engineering faculty and these were discussed in the EAP class. L. Flowerdew (2000) argues that good apprentice models offer ‘realistic, attainable models of academic writing’ (p. 369).

3.2.3. Output-based Strategies

Basturkmen (2006) states that Output-based instruction takes as its starting point students’ efforts to communicate in the target language. Two sub-strategies can be identified. The first is based on the premise that using the language (producing output) is sufficient for learning and the second on the premise that it is only when students’ production or output is followed by some form of input (discussion or highlighting of language) that learning occurs (p. 124). In instruction based on a predominantly output strategy, students are placed in situations that require them to perform production tasks (to produce output) at the outset of a lesson or activity. The rationale is that through producing language, students can identify where their interlanguage (developing language system) is sufficient for the performance or production task and where it is not. Swain (1985, 1998) argues that in being pushed to produce, language learners notice ‘holes’ in their linguistic repertoire and this stimulates learning of language to fill in the holes. Ellis (1990, p. 117) identifies three key points in Swain’s argument for the role of output in advancing levels of grammatical language accuracy:

- i. The need to produce output (‘pushed language use’) that is precise, coherent, and appropriate during negotiation of meaning encourages the learners to develop the necessary grammatical resources.
- ii. During output, the learners can try out their hypotheses about language. Production, as opposed to comprehension, may force the learner to move from semantic to syntactic processing. It is possible to comprehend a message without any syntactic analysis of the input it contains.
- iii. Production is the trigger that forces learners to pay attention to the means of expression. (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 124)

The idea of students being required to produce language is reflected in many task-based activities for the classroom. In line with Willis (1990), a task is understood to be ‘an activity that involves the use of language but in which the focus is on the outcome of the activity rather than on the language used to achieve that outcome’ (p. 127). Tasks specify what students will communicate about and action they will take but do not specify the language that students will use or are expected to learn in the process of doing the task (Ellis, 1998). Such activities do not set out to teach a pre-selection of linguistic items as it is recognized that any pre-selection of language items to be taught is unlikely to match the learner’s internal syllabus. It is claimed that tasks create the conditions for acquisition, such as negotiation of meaning, and that doing tasks enables learners to develop the language and skills in line with their own internal syllabuses (Ellis, 1998). Task-based teaching has featured strongly in ESP in recent years and is used often in combination with a ‘deep-end strategy’—student performance as the point of departure for the lesson and for which students may or may not have been given preparation time (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Dudley Evans and St. John argue that a benefit of the strategy is that it reflects the students’ target or professional, academic, or workplace world where performance is the point of departure rather than preparation. In ESP the use of deep-end strategy is associated with case study activities, projects, presentations, role plays, and simulations. Basturkmen (2006) gives the following teaching activity to illustrate the output option.

Example: E-Commerce Web Page Project. Crookes (2001) reports a project used for teaching English for Business Purposes in Australia. The project calls for the students to set up an e-commerce web page for small businesses in the local community. The students carry out this project during the final weeks of the program. The students are young adults with good computer skills. The project involved the following steps:

- ✓ The class examined commercial Internet sites.
- ✓ Students discussed web page design techniques in class.
- ✓ The task was given. The task was to advertise a local business with a 3-page linked Web site.
- ✓ Out-of-class pairs of students met with a local business owner to find out the goods/services the business owner would like advertised on the web.
- ✓ Back in the ESP class, the pairs prepared the Web-site advertisement.

In this task the students were required to create an advertisement that accurately conveyed information about the business (pushed output). The output emerged during a process of negotiation of meaning—first in terms of negotiated content with the business owners and second as the pairs negotiated the language needed to convey the information about the business. (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 126)

3.2.4. Output to Input

Basturkmen (2006) shows that students' production (output) in instruction based on an output-to-input strategy are followed by feedbacks (p. 126). Students perform a task and feedback is provided to show a more native-like performance. The aim is that the students notice how their own output differs from the more native-like model. The feedback stage may be followed by a further optional stage in which students re-perform the task. During task production, students notice 'holes' in their linguistic repertoire or resources, thus creating the meta-cognitive state necessary for input. Learners may notice that they cannot say what they want to say precisely in the target language—'noticing a hole in one's inter-language' (Swain, 1998, p. 66). It is thought that provision of input in advance of students' themselves recognizing a need for it is similar to expecting someone to be interested in filling a crack in the plaster work on the wall before they have perceived that there is a gap to be filled. The output–input option is illustrated with reference to the following teaching material for teaching academic speaking.

Example: Promoting Pragmatic Awareness and Spoken Discourse With EAP Classes by Clennell (1999). The material focuses on understanding and interpreting spoken discourse. The following teaching procedure was used:

The first stage requires students to produce output. Students working in pairs choose a topic and develop an interview protocol to use to interview native speakers on the campus. They conduct and record a number of interviews. The students transcribe one of the interviews and present their transcription and analysis of events in it to the class. The second stage provides opportunities for input or feedback to students on their performance of the task. To present their work, the pairs replay the recording and talk through their transcription and analysis of events. Peers and the teacher offer suggestions and can disagree with the deciphering and the analysis of events as presented. In Clennell's class, students in the audience point out language items and

features that eluded or confused the interviewers. For example, one pair of students transcribed, ‘It’s pretty shocking what happen er I mean. . . .’ Students in the audience identified what was actually said as, ‘It’s pretty shocking what happened there, I mean . . .’ (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 127)

3.3. ESP Teaching Objectives

Stern (1989, 1992) distinguished four types of ESP teaching objectives: proficiency, knowledge, affective, and transfer. *Proficiency objectives* concern mastery of skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. *Knowledge objectives* concern the acquisition of linguistic and cultural information. *Linguistic knowledge objectives* include language analysis and awareness of the systematic aspects of language. *Cultural knowledge objectives* include control of socio-cultural rules (mastery of the norms of society, values, and orientations) and also the ability to recognize culturally significant facts, knowing what is acceptable and what is not. *Affective objectives* concern the development of positive feelings toward the subject of study. They include attitudes toward attaining second language competence, socio-cultural competence, and language learning. Transfer objectives concern the ability to generalize from what has been learnt in one situation to other situations. Helen Basturkmen (2006) describes the five broad objectives in ESP teaching: (i) to reveal subject-specific language use, (ii) to develop target performance competencies (iii) to teach underlying knowledge (iv) to develop strategic competence and (v) to foster critical awareness.

3.3.1 Revealing Subject-Specific Language Use

Helen Basturkmen (2006) opines that historically, the objective of teaching content about subject-specific language use has dominated ESP (p. 134). This objective is linked to the linguistic knowledge objective and, to a lesser extent, the cultural knowledge objective in Stern’s (1992) categorization. Teaching oriented to this objective aims to show how English is used in the target environment and to impart to students the knowledge about it that has been revealed by linguistic research in the field. Basturkmen (2006) argues that there is a direct link between research and pedagogy, with teaching primarily focused on demonstrating the forms and features that descriptive linguistic research has brought to light (p. 134).

Basturkmen (2006) further argues that the idea that ESP teaching should be first and foremost concerned with demonstration of findings from linguistic research in specific-purpose language use can be seen in the recommendations made by Bhatia (1982). Bhatia made an in-depth linguistic analysis of the language of ‘qualification’ in legal texts. Following this, Bhatia offers a number of suggestions for teaching English to students of law. Teachers are advised to discuss the organization of texts with the students, to highlight the structure of the texts, and demonstrate the language of qualification in legal writing. Bhatia does not propose that research findings are simply presented in teaching, however. He recommends that teachers need to simplify example texts so that the structures used in legislative writing can be made more transparent to the learners. (qtd in Basturkmen, 2006, p. 134)

3.3.2. Developing Target Performance Competencies

Funnel & Owen (1992) is of the view that competency-based occupational education can be described as an approach focused on developing the ability to perform the activities of an occupation and function to the standards expected of those employed in that occupation. In

language education, Basturkmen (2006) adds, teaching oriented toward this objective presents language operationally in terms of what people do with language and the skills they need to do it. Courses are organized around core skills and competencies that are also subdivided into microskills and more specific competencies. This orientation can be categorized as a proficiency objective, according to Stern's classification (1992). The link between needs analysis and teaching to develop target performance competencies is straightforward. Needs analysis reveals the demands and expectations of the target environment, and ESP teaching sets out to help students meet those demands to the level of competency expected. (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 135) For example, a hypothetical needs analysis reveals that one of the competencies needed by medical practitioners is the ability to ask questions to elicit personal medical histories from patients. An ESP course devised for overseas-trained doctors might specify this competency as a course objective: 'by the end of the course students should be able to ask questions in English to elicit medical histories in clinical settings.' One early proposal for ESP teaching oriented directly toward the demands of the target environment was the Communicative Needs Processor proposed by Munby (1978).

3.3.3. Teaching Underlying Knowledge

The ESP teacher should be aware of the fact that using a second or foreign language for workplace or study purposes requires not only linguistic proficiency and knowledge but also knowledge and understanding of work-related and disciplinary concepts. Douglas (2000) avers that specific-purpose language ability results from interaction between specific-purpose background knowledge and language ability. ESP teaching with pre-experienced students (students with limited familiarity with their target workplaces and disciplines) may set out to teach specific purpose background knowledge. The term underlying competencies in ESP was used by Hutchinson and Waters (1985) to refer to disciplinary concepts from the students' field of study. They argued that ESP should focus on developing students' knowledge of these disciplinary concepts as well as their language skills. The objective of teaching underlying knowledge can be classified as a cultural knowledge objective, according to Stern's categorization (1992). (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 137)

Hutchinson and Waters (1985) proposes that the ESP classroom is the appropriate place to introduce students to concepts from their disciplines in addition to the language the students would need to express those concepts. They are led to make this proposal partly by their own teaching situation. They have taught ESP courses in the United Kingdom to overseas students. The courses aimed to prepare the students for study in technical colleges in the United Kingdom. Hutchinson and Waters has argued that in such cases, ESP teaching needs to play a role in providing the students with background knowledge, termed underlying competency. This means teaching general conceptual subject content alongside language i.e. teaching engineering students about pump systems while teaching language use for describing systems and processes. (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 138)

3.3.4. Developing Strategic Competence

Douglas (2000) proposes a three-part model of specific-purpose language ability comprising language knowledge (grammatical, textual, functional, and sociolinguistic), background knowledge, and strategic competence (assessment of the external context and engaging a discourse domain). Douglas argues that strategic competence acts as a 'mediator' between the external situational context and the internal language and background knowledge that is

needed to respond to the communicative situation (p. 38). Strategic competence is the link between context of situation and language knowledge and can be defined as the means that enables language knowledge and content knowledge to be used in communication. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) maintain that ESP learners bring to language learning knowledge of their own specialist field and communication in it. Although this knowledge may be conscious, it is often latent (implicit or tacit knowledge) and thus learners will not be able to control the use of that knowledge. Therefore, “the ESP teacher’s job may be to develop a more conscious awareness so that control is gained” (p. 188).

Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) cite an example of Birmingham University’s EAP unit who developed a team teaching approach of working with postgraduate students from highly specialized fields. Their aim was to avoid situations in which ‘the EAP teacher . . . with a smattering of knowledge in the subject area, and a view of himself as an expert on communication . . . comes to regard himself as an expert—or the expert—on how the subject ought to be taught, and even what the subject ought to be ‘ (p. 152). The approach involved three parties in teaching: the EAP teacher, the subject specialist, and the students. The role of the teacher was to be a mediator between the language and subject knowledge by providing language needed to express the content (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 139). The following sequence shows an example sequence of instruction. Before the team teaching session:

The subject specialist records a lecture. In this case the subject specialist is a lecturer in highway engineering. The EAP teacher devises a worksheet of questions on the lecture content. The student or students write their responses to the questions.

The team teaching session:

A team-taught session is held in which the student(s), the lecturer of highway engineering and the EAP teacher are present. The session focuses on the responses of the student(s) to items on the worksheet items. The subject specialist gives information as needed on points of content and the language teacher helps with any language points arising (qtd in Basturkmen, 2006, p. 140).

A number of advantages are given for team teaching (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1985, p. 141):

- ✓ The student(s) have immediate assistance with any difficulties as they arise.
- ✓ Subject specialists find out how effectively they communicate to the students.
- ✓ The EAP teacher gains familiarity with the conceptual matter of the subject and how language is used to represent it.
- ✓ The EAP teacher understands where linguistic difficulties arise in relation to conceptual matter.

3.3.5. Fostering Critical Awareness

Basturkmen (2006) in this final point avers that the role of ESP has been construed in terms of helping English language learners meet the demands and expectations of the target environment, to close the gap between the students’ present state of skills and knowledge and the level required by members of the target environment. This taken-for-granted understanding has recently come to be challenged and a critical approach proposed in its place (p. 40). A critical approach to ESP questions whether the function of ESP teaching should be exclusively on helping students fit into target situations by teaching them the

language, behaviors, or knowledge to act appropriately. Proponents of a critical approach (Benesch, 2001) challenge the idea that teaching should promote the communicative norms of the target environment and lead students to accept these norms uncritically. Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) report, as a central issue for EAP, the question of whether it is “the EAP teacher’s job to replicate and reproduce existing forms of discourse (and thus power relations) or to develop an understanding of them so that they can be challenged?” (qtd in Basturkmen, 2006)

ESP has most often been seen as a pragmatic venture that helps students become familiar with established communicative practices (Allison, 1996, 1998). Benesch (1996) describes critical approaches as a reaction to the pragmatic ESP/EAP perspective that ‘changing existing forms is unrealistic whereas promoting them is practical’ (p. 736). A critical orientation of ESP has led to the accusation that ESP has been a force for accommodation and conservatism (modifying students to suit established norms in the target environment and maintaining the status quo of those environments). By seeking to prepare non-native speaker students for target discourse communities, ESP may have inadvertently endorsed practices and norms of target environments. Thus, ESP may be in part responsible for the maintenance of norms and practices not all of which are necessarily desirable. Instruction with the aim of raising students’ critical awareness would involve discussing with students how norms and communicative practices in the target environments become established, encouraging students to critique any negative aspects, and making them aware of ways to try to change or modify the situation so as to position themselves better in relation to it. It can be argued that unless teachers raise students’ awareness of the negative aspects, they may be choosing compliance for them. (Basturkmen, 2006, p. 141)

3.4. ESP Teachers’ Role

Most authors agree that the ESP teachers’ works involve much more than teaching. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) prefer the term *ESP Practitioner* as this definition seems to be more detailed and complete. They distinguish the following roles of ESP practitioners.

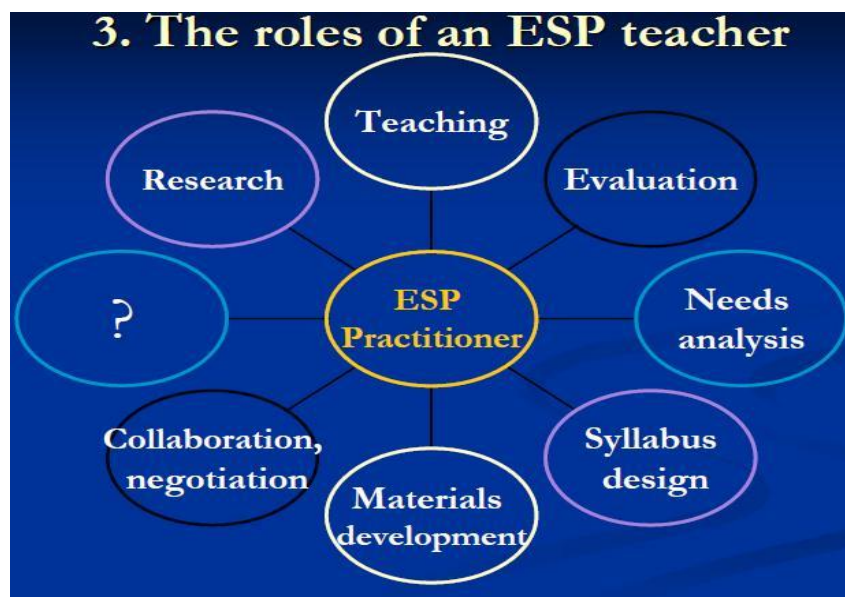


Figure 2: The Role of ESP Teacher

3.4.1. *As a Teacher*

ESP is a practical discipline with the most important objective of helping students to learn. However, the teacher is not the primary knower of the carrier content of the material. The students, especially where the course is specifically oriented towards the subject content or work the students are engaged in, may know more about the content than the teacher. The teacher has the opportunity to draw on students' knowledge of the content in order to generate communication in the classroom. When the teaching is a specific course on, for example, how to write a business report, it is vital that the teacher adopts the position of the consultant who has the knowledge of communication practices but needs to "negotiate" with the students on how best to explore these practices to meet the objective they have. The relationship is much more of a partnership. In some situations the role of ESP teacher extends to giving one-to-one advice to students (e.g., in non-English speaking countries students will have to publish in international journals and need advice in both language and discourse issues). ESP teachers need to have considerable flexibility, be willing to listen to learners, take interest in the disciplines or professional activities the students are involved in, and to take some risks in their teaching. (Cited in Bojović 2006)

3.4.2. *As Course Designer and Material Provider*

Since it is rarely possible to use a particular textbook without the need for supplementary material – sometimes no really suitable published material exists for identified needs - ESP practitioners often have to provide the material for the course. This involves selection of published material, adapting material if it is not suitable, or writing it. ESP teachers also need to assess the effectiveness of the teaching material used whether it is published or self-produced. However, since the teachers are encouraged by their employees to write new material there is a danger of constant re-invention of the wheel; advantages of published materials are ignored even when they are suitable for a given situation. (Cited in Bojović 2006)

Due to the lack of materials for ESP courses, the ESP practitioner is expected to plan his course well as per his need and accordingly provide the materials to his pupils. The teacher's task also includes adapting materials when published materials are unsuitable, or his/her own materials lack the proper authenticity. With reference to a particular class room experience, the Design of the course shall be prepared. The levels of attainment are described for each of the skills areas (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as follows:

1. Survival Level – The person can use language for basic purposes in extremely limited way.
2. The way stage level – The person can communicate very simply in limited range of topics.
3. The Threshold level - The person can use the language for most everyday situations and topics at simple level.
4. The Adequacy Level-The person can use the language for range of situations and topics and can show awareness of appropriate style and variety.
5. Proficiency Level- The person can respond flexibly to complex ideas and expressions.
6. The mastery Level- The person has no problem in using the language.
7. The Ambi-lingual Level- The person's use of language is indistinguishable from that of any educated native speaker.

3.4.3. As Researcher

Research has been particularly strong in the area of EAP (genre analysis). Regarding the research into English for Business Purposes, there is a growing interest in investigating the genres, the language and the skills involved in business communication. ESP teachers need to be in touch with the research. Teachers carrying out a needs analysis, designing a course, or writing teaching materials need to be capable of incorporating the findings of the research, and those working in specific ESP situations need to be confident that they know what is involved in skills such as written communication (Cited in Bojović 2006).

3.4.4. As Collaborator

It is believed that subject-specific work is often best approached through collaboration with subject specialist. This may involve cooperation in which ESP teacher finds out about the subject syllabus in an academic context or the tasks that students have to carry out in a work or business situation. Or it may involve specific collaboration so that there is some integration between specialist studies or activities and the language. It might involve the language teacher specifically preparing learners for the language of subject lectures or business presentations. Another possibility is that a specialist checks and comments on the content of teaching materials that the ESP teacher has prepared. The fullest collaboration is where a subject expert and a language teacher team-teach classes; in EAP such lessons might help with the understanding of subject lectures or the writing of examination answers, essays or theses, while in EOP they might involve the language teacher and a business trainer working together to teach both the skills and the language related to business communication (Cited in Bojović 2006).

3.4.5. As Evaluator

The ESP practitioner is often involved in various types of evaluation - testing of students, evaluation of courses and teaching materials. Tests are conducted 1) to assess whether students have the necessary language and skills to undertake a particular academic course or career which is important in countries such as the UK, USA, Australia where large numbers of international students do postgraduate course or research and need internationally required tests, e.g. International English Language Test Service (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and 2) to assess the level of their achievement – how much learners have gained from a course. Evaluation of course design and teaching materials should be done while the course is being taught, at the end of the course and after the course has finished, in order assessing whether the learners have been able to make use of what they learned and to find out what they were not prepared for. Evaluation through discussion and on-going needs analysis can be used to adapt the syllabus (Cited in Bojović 2006).

3.5. Use of Technology in ESP Class

Technology has long played a major role in the teaching of English for specific purposes (ESP) in two distinct ways. First, as a tool for helping with traditional types of language learning and, second, as a space for creating new forms of communicating. All areas of ESP pedagogy have been impacted by the ongoing development of new technologies. Spoken English teachers, for example, can use programs like Audacity not only to create their own recordings or podcasts but also to allow students to monitor a visual pattern of their spoken

language. Audacity is a free program frequently used for podcasting but has been implemented by ESP teachers for specific pedagogical goals.

Technologies have also been used in a variety of ESP classes to create contexts for communicating with oral, literate, and visual modes of discourse. These include synchronous forms of discourse, such as chat, where the participants interact in the same time frame, or asynchronous forms, such as email, listservs, Twitter, or blogging, or newer forms of technologies, such as Facebook where the reader/writer can interact using any of these modes of discourse. The problem arises, then, in choosing which technologies are most appropriate for the types of learning found in the classroom, which raises a further question: how does the choice of a technology or technologies affect those goals for learning? Decisions about the choice of technologies can be linked to the more traditional decisions made about the goals for a curriculum. ESP teachers have long relied on needs assessment for selecting the goals of their curricula. Hyland (2002) has argued that an ESP curriculum begins with a needs assessment of the learner.

The use of technology can be applicable across all types of ESP classrooms. Each technology has created its own norms and values for the use of language, some of which have also affected how language is used in face - to - face contexts. Understanding the nature of these languages is especially important for ESP teachers who need to immerse their students in these types of technologies in response to their needs to use English, often as a lingua franca, in a variety of technology - based contexts. The choice of which technologies to use involve an assessment between the types of relationships one is engaged in and the nature of the language most appropriate. As technology becomes more a factor in ESP education as a tool for language learning, as a site for varied and authentic materials, and as a place for publishing and sharing work, the impact of technology has become more complicated and often more controversial as well.

3.6. Training for ESP Teachers

Through training, ESP teachers are provided with the necessary knowledge and tools to deal with their own students' specializations. Bojović (2006) reminds that ESP teachers are not specialists in the field, but in teaching English, their subject is English for the profession but not the profession in English. They help students, who know their subject better than the teachers do, develop the essential skills in understanding, using, and/or presenting authentic information in their profession. A professional ESP teacher must be able to switch from one professional field to another without being obliged to spend months on getting started. He/she simply brings the necessary tools, frameworks, and principles of course design to apply them to new material. The material (the content) should be provided by the professors or experts in the subject. It should always be authentic (the main purpose of teaching skills is to enable students to deal with authentic information despite their level of English), up-to-date (the informational exchange is growing more intense), and relevant for the students' specializations (they ought to be given the information representative for their target language use situation) (Bojović 2006).

Bojović (2006) is of the view that most teacher training courses contain four basic elements:

1. Selection, initial and terminal, is necessary because not every human being would become an adequate language teacher. Each teacher has continuing responsibility throughout a career which can last for thirty years or longer. This responsibility makes it essential that potentially

ineffective individuals should be discouraged from entering the profession by adequate pre-training or post-training selection procedures.

2. Continuing personal education. Teachers should be well-educated people. Minimum standards accepted for teachers vary from country to country. There are variations in how the trainee's personal education is improved – either simultaneously with his/her professional training; or consecutively where first two or three years of study with no elements of training as a teacher are followed by the fourth year containing methodology of foreign language teaching or one year post-graduate course of teacher training; or, as in many countries, by in-service courses. Either way, the assumption is that graduates' level of education is to be regarded as insufficient.

3. General professional training as an educator and teacher. This element involves what all teachers need to know regardless of which subject they teach – the components are as follows: a) educational psychology, the study of child development, social psychology, and the principles of educational thought – the component intended to lead the trainee to understanding of the nature of education; b) an outline of the organization of education in a particular country – the teacher should be aware of the different kinds of schools, of normal and unusual pathways through educational network, of responsibility, control and finance, of sources of reform and change, of the main features of history of education in the country where he will teach; c) an awareness of the moral and rhetorical function of the teacher: the building of standards, character, enthusiasm; d) knowledge of, and skill in, class management, discipline and handling of various groups of students; e) knowledge of, and skill in, basic instructional techniques, and understanding teacher-learner interaction; f) Acceptance of the fundamental need for the preparation of lessons; g) understanding the role of curriculum, syllabus and teaching materials; h) a teacher should be committed to keeping in touch with the teaching profession.

4. Special training as a teacher of a foreign or second language. The complexity of this training which constitutes the core of most teacher training courses can be made simpler if the distinction is to be made between three aspects of it. They are:

i) The skills component which includes three different skills required by the teacher: a) command of the language the teacher is teaching – this component must ensure that teacher's command of foreign language is at least adequate for class purposes; b) teaching techniques and classroom activities – the major part of teacher training is to assimilate a great body of effective techniques; c) the management of learning – it is a crucial part of teacher's classroom skills to learn how to assess from moment to moment the progress of each individual in the class and how to manage the classroom activities so that most able learners are not frustrated by being held back, while the slowest are not depressed by being left behind. The skills component requires practical training in performing the skills themselves. There is a great range of activities which can be summarized as follows:

a) the observation of specially-devised demonstrations of specific techniques and of complete lessons; b) the observation of actual class; c) practice in the preparation of lesson plans; d) micro-teaching – the teaching (by the trainee) of several items or techniques with the possible use of camera recordings; e) peer group teaching (i.e. teaching fellow-trainees) as a form of exercise; f) being a teacher's assistant in real class; g) teaching real classes under supervision; h) discussion of the trainee's

teaching; i) post-training, in-service courses of various kind (ESP courses for teaching EMP or EBP).

ii) The information component – the needed body of information can be divided into three parts: a) information about education – about different approaches to the task of teaching language; b) information about the syllabus and materials he will be using – the syllabus, the prescribed textbooks, other teaching materials (readers, workbooks, etc.) and aids (flashcards, wallcharts as well as tape recorders and language labs) make up the tools of the teacher's profession; c) information about language – when the teacher enters his course of training, his understanding of the nature of language is likely to be scanty; this information refers to knowledge of normal stages in the infant's acquisition of his mother tongue, the existence of common speech defects and whose job is to treat them, relation between speech and writing, literacy and education, notions of the 'correctness' and social judgments on language, language variety including dialects and accents, language in contact, artificial language, language and thought, and many more. The information content can be learned from reading or lectures.

iii) The theory component – the language teaching profession makes connection with theoretical studies in several disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, social theory, education. The theoretical studies are likely to find a place when the trainee has attained a sufficient level of personal education and when he is preparing to teach high-level learners. Alternatively, they can be included in postgraduate teacher training as the interdisciplinary approach of applied linguistics which integrates appropriate parts of the disciplines most relevant to language teaching. The theory component can be assimilated from discussion, practice in solving problems, tutorial explanations and time to absorb new ways of thinking. (Bojović 2006)

3.7. ESP Teacher's Collaboration with Content Teacher

Ana Almagro Esteban and Manuel C. Vallejo Martos (2002) view that although there is unanimity as regards the relevance of the collaboration between the ESP teacher and the content teacher; the positions on this score are both very general and difficult to put into practice. In the same way, in the field of ESP the student is seen as a collaborator, which entails advantages and disadvantages that are also simply a theoretical reference (p. 10). Hansen & Hammen (1980) stress that team-working reduces the gap between science and language. Huerta, Ibáñez & Kaulen (1986), as well as Schleppegrell (1991), coincide in showing that this is a way of resolving doubts about content. What, at first sight, might be an attractive idea, is not without its difficulties: dissimilitude of fields; different purposes, topics, and approaches; both teachers' conflicting timetables, and attitudes (Adams Smith, 1980 qtd in Esteban & Martos, 2002, p. 10). We should also consider, according to our personal experience, the interest on the part of content teachers in Business English, in this case, and their own competence in English (this latter aspect is positively stressed by Dudley-Evans & St John [1998], who conceive it as the distinctive trait we should look for to establish this collaboration). In order to get round these obstacles, to some extent at least, Chamberlain (1980) points out that it is crucial that each of them knows what their role and attitude are towards learning from one another and collaborating (Esteban & Martos, 2002, p. 10).

In Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) we detect a clearer specification of the content teacher's role in the field of English for Specific Purposes, that is to say, the role of collaborator with the ESP teacher. These authors base this collaboration on three progressive stages which they term *cooperation*, *collaboration*, and *team-teaching*.

Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) aver that this collaboration can adopt different formats (qtd in Esteban & Martos, 2002, p. 11):

- 1) It is the content teacher who provides the topic which is the reference point (which these authors term *carrier content*) to introduce the linguistic side (which is called *real content*).
- 2) It is the ESP teacher, in this case, who prepares the students as far as language is concerned for them to have the necessary competence in academic or professional situations.
- 3) The content teacher guides the ESP practitioner as regards the topics selected by the latter.
- 4) Finally, team-teaching is the last of the stages we have referred to, in which each of the teachers focuses on their field, the ESP teacher on English skills and the content teacher on professional skills. As such, Koh (1988) defines the role of language teachers as "supportive and subordinate", which explains that students consider their task as a side issue (qtd in Esteban & Martos, 2002, p. 11).

4. Tasks of ESP Teachers

4.1. Developing Curriculum

The ESP teacher needs to be aware of the distinction between courses that are “wide angled” (designed for a more general group of learners) and those that are “narrow angled” (designed for a very specific group of learners). Courses titled EGAP and Business English can be considered ‘wide angled’ since they are designed for classes focused on broad academic skills or a register (Business English) which encompasses many subfields including marketing, accounting and management. Courses titled English for Nursing Studies and English for Accountants can be considered relatively ‘narrow angled’ since they refer to courses that are more specific, as they have been designed for learners we might assume have largely homogeneous needs and who have a particular type of academic or work environment in mind. Furthermore, courses can be even more specific. For example, accountants often distinguish between two areas, financial accountancy and management accountancy, and a course could be developed for just one of these sub areas – English for Financial Accountancy or English for Management Accountancy. Some ESP courses are developed for groups of learners with very similar needs and some for learners with only somewhat similar needs. Some ESP courses are developed for disciplines or occupations as broad fields and some for specialties within them. (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 53)

The terms ‘wide- and narrow-angled’ course designs might suggest a two-way divide. However, courses can be more or less narrow or wide and can be seen as existing on a continuum of specificity. At one end of this continuum are the most general ESP courses, courses that focus on a register, such as Business English or Academic English and courses that focus on a generic set of skills in an area, such as Business English Skills or EGAP. Towards the other end of the continuum are courses focusing on specific needs and language use of a particular area of work or study, for example, English for Accountants (and the

narrower option, English for Financial Accountants), or English for Social Science Studies (and the narrower option, English for Sociology Studies). Some ESP courses are devised for a very specific group of learners, for instance, English for Auditors (auditing is a branch of financial accounting) and an even narrower option, a course organized at the behest of a particular workplace or division within a workplace, for example, a course for the financial accountants in the auditing division of a particular accountancy firm. See the representation of courses that range from low to high specificity shown in Figure. (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 55)

Wide angled



Narrow angled

Figure 3: The wide- and narrow-angled continuum (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 55)

4.2. ESP Course Design

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) are of the view that much of the work done by ESP teachers is concerned with designing appropriate courses for various groups of learners. So, they (1987) argue that “whereas course design plays a relatively minor part in the life of the General English teacher – course here usually being determined either by tradition, choice of textbook or ministerial decree – for ESP teacher, course design is often a substantial and important part of the workload” (p. 21). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) consider ESP course designing is “fundamentally a matter of asking questioning order to provide a reasoned basis for the subsequent processes of syllabus design, material writing, classroom teaching and evaluation (p. 21).

The ESP teacher needs to have the knowledge about:

1. Why does the student need to learn?
2. Who is going to be involved in the process?
3. Where is the learning to take place?
4. What potential does the place provide?
5. What limitation does the place impose?
6. When is the learning to take place?
7. How much time is available? How will it be distributed?

8. What does the student need to learn? What aspects of language will be needed and how will they be described?
9. What level of proficiency must be achieved?
10. What topics areas will need to be covered?
11. How will learning be achieved?
12. What learning theory will underlie the course?
13. What kind of methodology will be employed?

(Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 21-22)

Investigating these fundamental questions thoroughly, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) summarize them under three categories: Language Descriptions, Theories of Learning and Needs Analysis. Even though these three items look like separate entity, their interdependence in the syllabus design process is of greatest importance. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) show their relationship in the following manner:

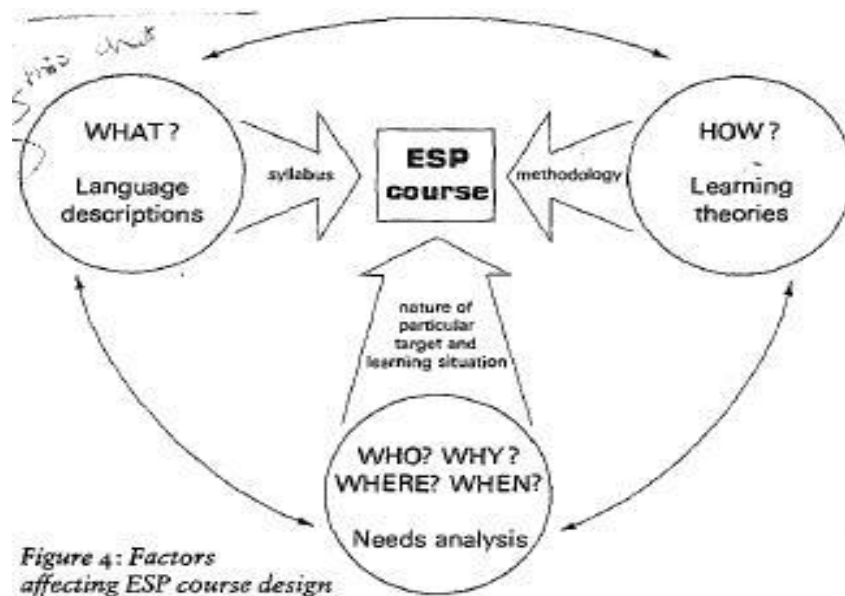


Figure 4: Factors affecting ESP course design

Figure 4: Factors affecting ESP course design (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 22)

4.3.1. Approaches to Course Design

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identify three main types of approaches to course design: language centered, skills-centered, and learning-centered (p. 65).

4.3.1.a. Language Centered Course Design

In the language centered approach the idea is to try to bring, or to form direct correlations between the language taught in the classroom and the language of the subject area as it is used in the real world. This is basically what we talked about the beginning of this course in relation to genre and register analysis and it is certainly the oldest type of course design in the ESP approach (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 66).

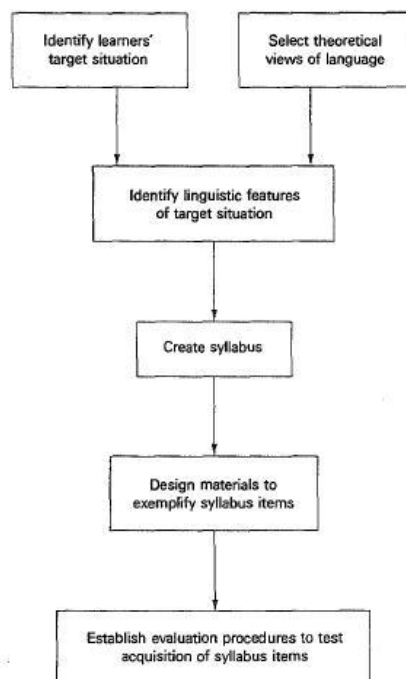


Figure 4: A Language Centered Approach to Course Design (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 66)

There are several problems with the language centered approach. The most striking of these is the criticism that the language centered approach is really just a surface level approach. Yes, it looks at the particular language of the situation, but it doesn't really focus on how the students will actually have to learn this language or how they might actually go about using it. It does not deal with the creation of the language in any fundamental way. This is a major problem. It is also very static, meaning that it really doesn't change very much. We know it is not the way that we should be running ESP classes. ESP classes are all about being able to change things quickly in response to the students reactions and needs, but a syllabus focusing on language forms really doesn't allow this to happen simply because we are only noticing the language forms and nothing else.

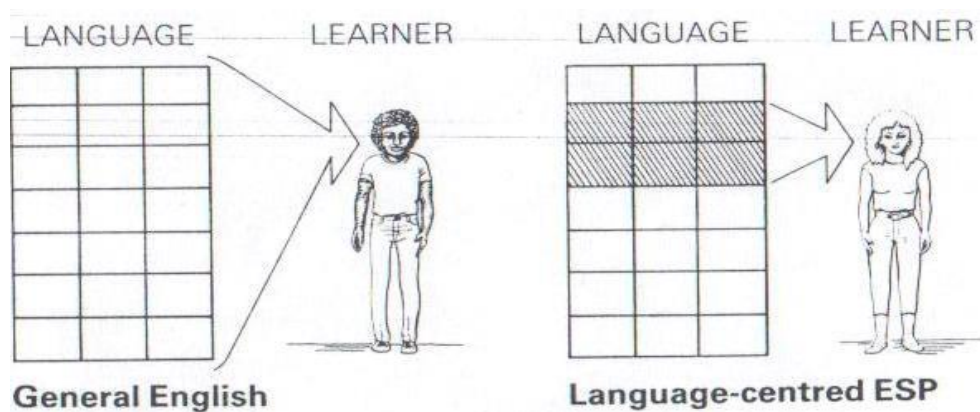


Figure 5: The Learners-restricted Syllabus (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 67)

4.3.1.b. Skill-centered Course Design

Skills centered focus in course design really looks toward the end. But this means it is best for course designers using a skilled centered approach to worry about the process yet they don't worry about the road or the trail that the individual student is going to take to get to the end, they are really only worry about the goals as the results. For example, if you are teaching a class of students who are studying medicine you will certainly have to set of certain goals for the students, things that they will need to get done by the end of the course, and rightfully so, but you don't necessarily have plan, or clear plan for getting get there. Of course there are activities and chains of activities that you have designed and will have the students do, but those will be designed for the entire class without really thinking at all about the individuals. So, the skills centered courses focuses on goals and the road that the students will take to get there, but only as a group and not his individuals. Such syllabi are often filled with chains which have focuses on skills or necessities for reaching major goals and these are often listed and charted together. We might, however, question the validity of such an approach in the face of individual learner differences. Not everyone learns the same, at the same pace, or the same things given a similar learning situation. Planning out in great detail goals and the realization of those goals on a general basis might be a waste of time to a certain extent. Yet we need to do this, for it is our only option. We need to be careful when we do this, and not get too caught up in it. It is but one concern amongst a slew of interlocking and interrelate concerns for us as teachers.

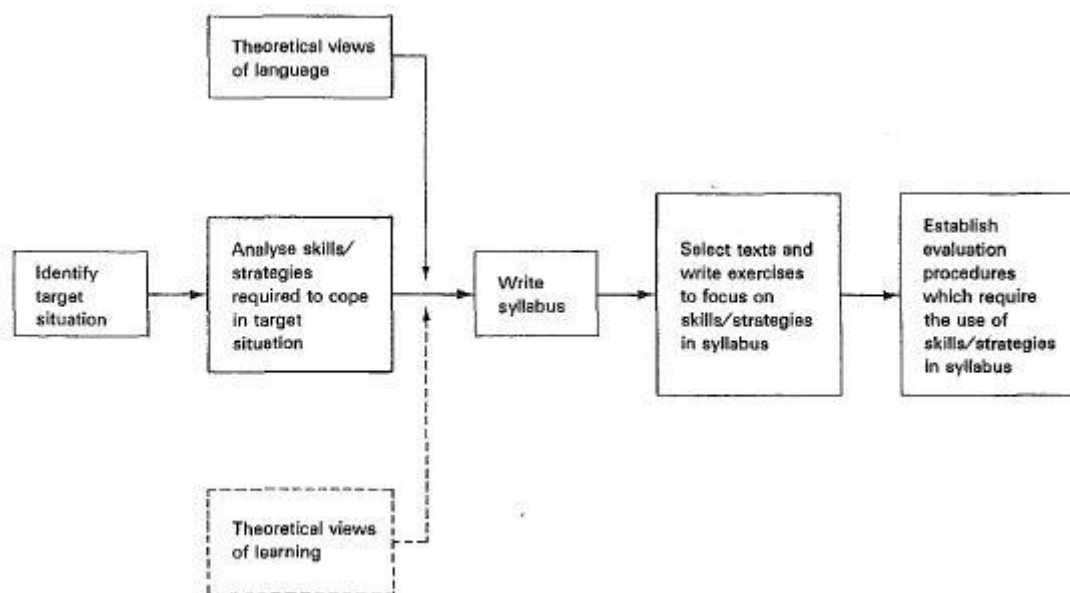


Figure 6: A Skills-centered approach to course design
(Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 71)

4.3.1.c. A Learning-centered Approach

The main implications of a learning center approach are basically the ability of teachers to take what they have been doing in their course planning with a certain grain of salt. There is no such thing we will ever do in the classroom that is going to work for every single learner in the same way and we cannot expect to it to. Each learner has their own cognitive structure, their own preferences, their own wants, and their own histories. We cannot get to their heads directly, thus we really don't have access to a lot of the information that we might actually need to have access to in developing our courses. The best way of dealing with this fact, then,

is to simply be very sensitive in the classroom and really try to keep tabs on how individuals are reacting to the plans you have put together, always being ready and willing to change what you have planned if there is good enough reason.

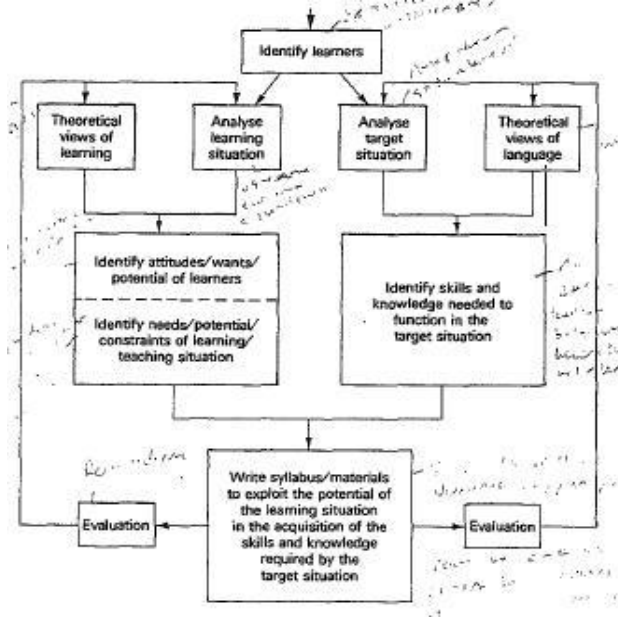


Figure 7: A Learning-centered Approach to course design (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 74)

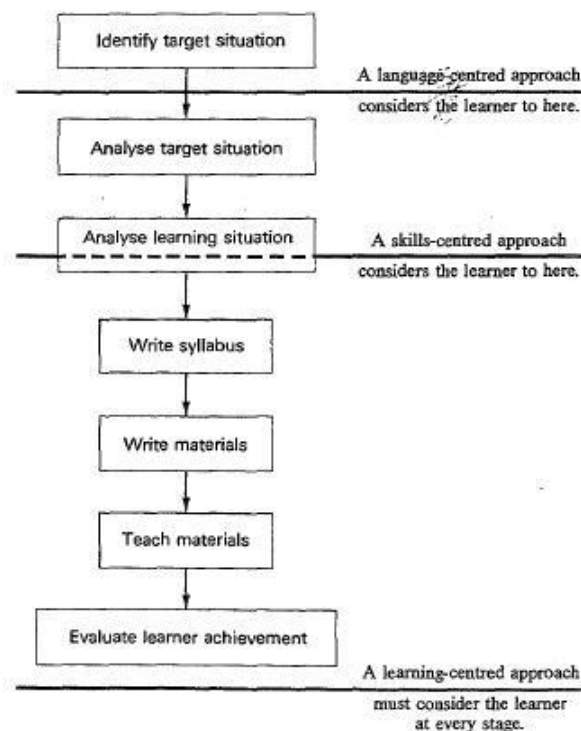


Figure 8: A Comparison of Approaches to Course Design (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 73)

4.4. Needs Analysis

Because ESP focuses on teaching specific language and communication skills, ESP course design usually includes a stage in which the course developers identify what specific language and skills the group of language learners will need. The identification of language and skills is used in determining and refining the content for the ESP course. It can also be used to assess learners and learning at the end of the course. This process is termed “needs analysis”.

A broad, multi - faceted definition of needs analysis is provided by Hyland (2006 : 73):

Needs analysis refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design: it is the means of establishing the how and what of a course. It is a continuous process, since we modify our teaching as we come to learn more about our students, and in this way it actually shades into evaluation – the means of establishing the effectiveness of a course. Needs is actually an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learners ’ goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in. Needs can involve what learners know, don’t know or want to know, and can be collected and analyzed in a variety of ways. (qtd in Flowerdew, 2013, p.325)

Needs analysis, carried out to establish the “what” and the “how” of a course, is the first stage in ESP course development, followed by curriculum design, materials selection, methodology, assessment, and evaluation. However, these stages should not be seen as separate, proceeding in a linear fashion. Rather, as noted by Dudley - Evans and St John (1998), they are interdependent overlapping activities in a cyclical process. This conceptual distinction is neatly encapsulated by the following diagrams from Dudley - Evans and St John (1998, p.121) showing how needs analysis is often ongoing, feeding back into various stages.

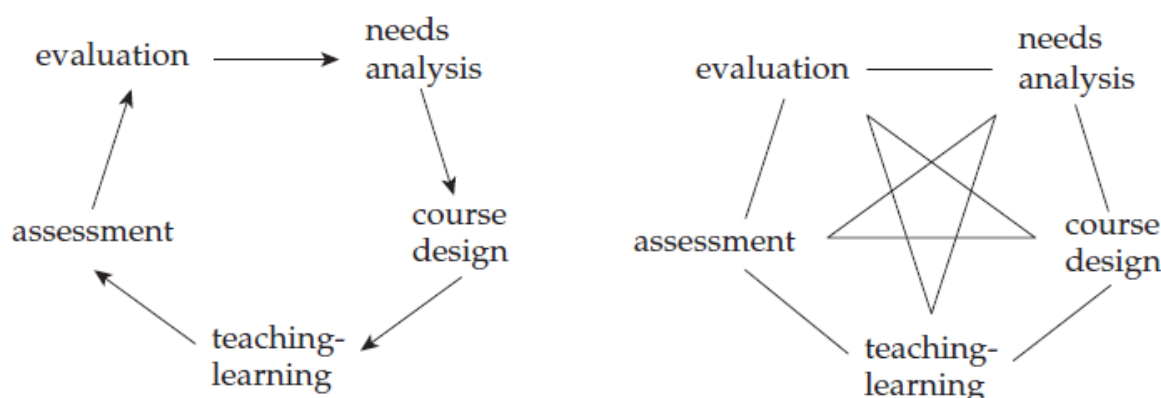


Figure 8: Linear vs. cyclical processes of needs analysis (Dudley - Evans and St John 1998: 121)

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) offer a ‘current concept of needs analysis’ (p. 125):

- A. Professional information about the learners: The tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for – target situation analysis and objective needs.
- B. Personal information about the learners: Factors which may affect the way they learn such as previous learning experiences, cultural information, reasons for

- attending the course and expectations of it, attitude to English – wants, means and subjective needs.
- C. English language information about the learners: What their current skills and language use are – present situation analysis – which allows us to assess (D).
- D. The learners' lacks: The gap between (C) and (A) – lacks.
- E. Language learning information: Effective ways of learning the skills and language in (D) – learning needs.
- F. Professional communication information about (A): Knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situation – linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis.
- G. What is wanted from the course?
- H. Information about how the course will be run – means analysis.

West (1997, pp. 70–1) reports on the expanding concept of needs analysis and uses the metaphor of a journey to describe the elements involved. In the early days needs analyses focused largely on necessities or objective needs representing 'the destination of the learner's journey'. These analyses aimed to determine priorities, such as, which skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), and which situations or tasks, such as speaking on the telephone or writing minutes from meetings, were more or less important in the target situation. Later the concept of needs analysis was expanded to include 'deficiency analysis' (lacks or the gap between what the learner needs to know to operate in the target situation and the learner's present language proficiency). This analysis represented the point of departure for the language-learning journey. In time 'strategy analysis' (the preferred approaches and methods in teaching and learning) was also included in needs analysis. This represented the means of travel. And later 'means analysis' (identification of the constraints and opportunities in the teaching situation) was added. This analysis included gathering information on the classroom culture, learner factors, teacher profiles and the status of language teaching in the organization. Means analysis represented the ESP journey. Amalgamating the ideas described above, the definition of needs analysis that will be used in this book is given below.

Needs analysis in ESP refers to a course development process. In this process the language and skills that the learners will use in their target professional or vocational workplace or in their study areas are identified and considered in relation to the present state of knowledge of the learners, their perceptions of their needs and the practical possibilities and constraints of the teaching context. The information obtained from this process is used in determining and refining the content and method of the ESP course. The needs analysis process involves:

- Target situation analysis: Identification of tasks, activities and skills learners are/will be using English for; what the learners should ideally know and be able to do.
- Discourse analysis: Descriptions of the language used in the above.
- Present situation analysis: Identification of what the learners do and do not know and can or cannot do in relation to the demands of the target situation.
- Learner factor analysis: Identification of learner factors such as their motivation, how they learn and their perceptions of their needs.
- Teaching context analysis: Identification of factors related to the environment in which the course will run. Consideration of what realistically the ESP course and teacher can offer.

Needs analysis should not be seen as an entirely objective procedure. Hyland (2008, p. 113) reminds us, ‘Needs analysis is like any other classroom practice in that it involves decisions based on teachers’ interests, values, and beliefs about teaching, learning and language.’

4.5. Assessment

The teachers’ task of assessment in English for specific purposes (ESP) is in principle no different from other areas of language assessment. Language assessment practitioners must take account of test purpose, test taker characteristics, and the target language use situation. All language assessment specialists adhere to accepted principles of measurement, including providing evidence for test reliability, validity, and impact. Finally, professional language testers are bound by international standards of ethics which require, among other considerations, respect for the humanity and dignity of test takers, not knowingly allowing the misuse of test scores, and considering the effects of their tests on test takers, teachers, score users, and society in general (ILTA 2000). ESP assessment is held to these same principles. ESP assessment instruments are usually defined fairly narrowly to reflect a specific area of language. Thus, ESP tests are based on our understanding of three qualities of specific purpose language: first, that language use varies with context, second, that specific purpose language is precise, and third that there is an interaction between specific purpose language and specific purpose background knowledge. With regard to contextual variation, it is well known that physicians use language differently from air traffic controllers, university students in economics use language differently from students in chemistry, and football/soccer players use language differently on the field than do ice hockey players on the rink. Furthermore, physicians use English differently when talking with other medical practitioners than when talking with patients, though both contexts would be categorized under the heading of Medical English (Douglas, 2013 p. 367).

5. Problems and Challenges

5.1. Problems

Belinda Ho(2011) points out that Course designers and teachers encounter problems related to the design of the ESP course, the tasks, assignments and the teaching methods (p. 120). The problems were intensified due to the fact that the university required the course to be taught in an outcomes-based teaching and learning (OBTL) setting. In this setting, the teaching and learning activities (TLAs) and assessment tasks (ATs) had to align with the course intended learning outcomes (CILOs) (Biggs and Tang 2007). In turn, the teaching and learning activities were expected to be student-centered (with students engaged in group tasks most of the time playing simulated roles of Computer Consultants and Clients with the teacher being a facilitator) and each intended learning outcome having to be assessed through an assessment task.

With a view to solving the problems arising from the ESP courses, a procedural framework was developed by the teacher-researcher based on concepts related to Action Research (Ho 2011, p. 120). Kemmis and McTarggart (1988, p.14) list the procedure of action research as: to reflect on action, plan, act, observe and revise the plan. Bailey (2001) summarizes the procedure as “systematic, iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflection”, which are the basic steps to follow in carrying out action research. Cohen and Manion (1994) on the other hand, elaborate the procedure to meet more needs. They (1994, p.198-199)

suggest that when a problem is diagnosed in a specific context, an attempt should be made to solve the problem within that context. They list 8 stages:

Stage one - Identification, evaluation and formulation of the problem

Stage two - Preliminary discussion and negotiations among the interested parties

Stage three - A review of the research literature

Stage four - A modification or redefinition of the initial statement of the problem at stage one

Stage five - Selection of research procedures

Stage six - The choice of the evaluation procedures to be used

Stage seven - Implementation of the project

Stage eight - Overall evaluation of the project

However, as suggested by Cohen and Manion (1994, p.198), the above framework is only a review of procedures in general terms. An appropriate model may need to be selected to meet the needs of the situation in question. The procedures as shown in the following figure can be followed when an attempt was made to solve the problems encountered in relation to the design and teaching of the ESP course.

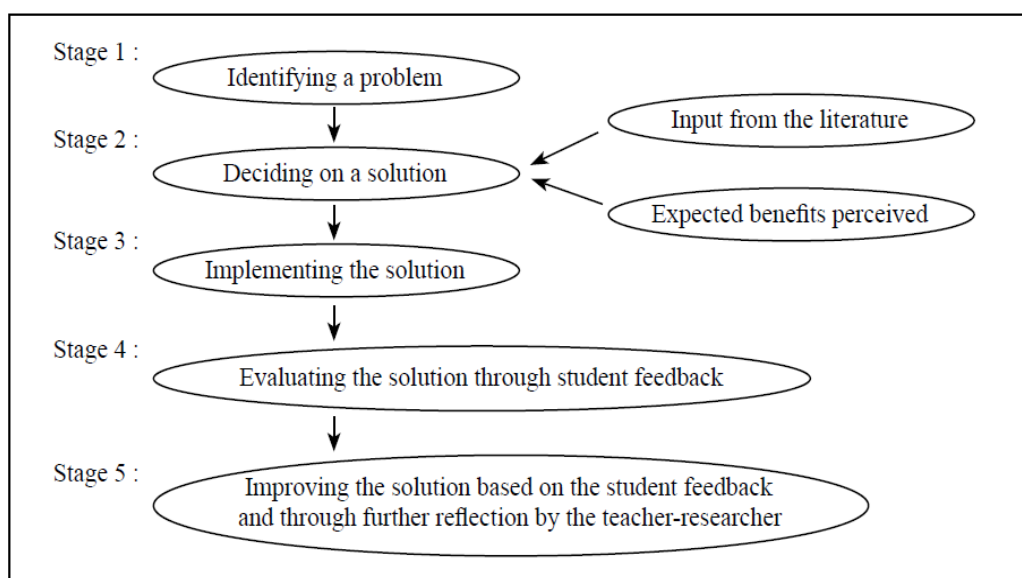


Figure 9: The procedural framework for solving the problem (Ho 2011, p. 121)

5.2. Challenges

Abdulaziz et al. (2012) in their paper “Change from A General English Teacher to An ESP Practitioner: Issues and Challenges in Pakistan” sort out the following as the challenges for ESP teachers:

1. Pronunciation of certain vocabulary words borrowed from other languages had always been an issue, according to an ESP practitioner.
2. The course title did not match the qualification of an ESP practitioner. He/She was supposed to take a class of Business Communication while her qualification at that time was Masters in English Literature.

3. According to an ESP practitioner, the students needed a course in EAP but the outlines given catered more to their EOP needs. A finer distinction had to be explained to the administrators in order to redevelop a relevant course outline.
4. In the future, students will come up with different objectives and specialized vocabulary and expressions. More field-specific vocabulary will emerge. There will be more fields like, English for Development Purposes (Karn, 1994), English for Teachers (since English is required right from the nursery level nowadays), English for Internet, English for Mobile Phone Texting, etc. Due to globalization, there will be an enormous explosion of vocabulary and a mixture of Englishes will be required by the students according to their needs. For example, Japanish, Indianish, Chinglish, etc. In order to overcome situations as these, the ESP practitioners need to be more dynamic in their approach; keep themselves sentient and updated about the demands of the world, learn to make use of the internet, listen to news channels, watch dramas/ movies, etc.
5. More trained teachers are needed and teacher training institutions are required because the teacher training programs run by the Government offer a very minute number of seats and cannot supply sufficient amount of trained English teaching faculty.
6. Students sometimes do not know how to attempt the exam questions since they are unfamiliar with the format. Details can be provided before the exam, in the class, about the type of questions and evaluation the students are going to face.
7. Team teaching of subject/ content teacher and language teacher is a new concept. Therefore, issues might emerge regarding this new notion of their working in collaboration for course designing/ implementation, etc. Gatehouse (2001) says that "... we could not teach the restricted repertoire in isolation. What is more, it was highly unreasonable to assume that the content instructor would take on the role of ESL instructor." (Gatehouse, 2001)
8. Some ESP practitioners are not aware of the fact that they are teaching ESP. such teachers either are not willing to understand their responsibilities or ignore the idea. New teachers can be hired for better future results.
9. ESP practitioners should be good researchers as well. Nowadays, however, the researches done are focused more towards achieving fame and not for learning. They are not in-depth studies. Their quality should be assured. (Abdulaziz et al. 2012, p. 456)

6. Conclusions

ESP teachers' role is a complex and responsible one than teaching General English. The ESP teacher not only teaches but also provides materials, designs a syllabus, collaborates with subject specialists, conducts research and evaluates the course and the students. He/she is to be aware of the course objectives; have a sound understanding of the course content and be flexible with the learners. A professional ESP teacher must be able to switch from one professional field to another without being obliged to spend months on getting started. He/she simply brings the necessary tools, frameworks and principles of course design to apply them to new material. We should always remember that the ESP teacher is not specialized in the field, but in teaching English.

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