

# ESP teaching methods

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**Abstract:** English for Specific Purpose (ESP) is a market driven, need oriented and purpose driven course but a snap shot of an ESP classroom in gulf countries will reveal that it is often taught on the line of teaching General English focusing on language teaching methods. ESP teachers often forget that ESP has some distinguishing features unlike General English. ESP is a separate activity within English Language Teaching (ELT) with its own approach, material and methodology by adapting and integrating with other disciplines and it encourages learner investment and participation. Since ESP uses distinctive approaches, materials and methods based on learners' specific needs, ESP practitioners must assess learners' needs, design course, develop materials, choose appropriate instruction and implement it to satisfy the identified needs of the learners. Therefore, just knowledge of language system and ability to deliver this is not enough for an ESP teacher. This article is going to delineate how to teach an ESP course successfully.

**Keywords:** ESP, need, design course, develop materials, evaluation

English skills are becoming a necessity for the academic success. English is one of compulsory subject included in the school curriculum, English is also taught in every discipline either in teacher training, vocational, science, engineering or technology. The teaching English in every discipline is supposed to be different dependent on the specific needs of the language learning. This is often referred to as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Through ESP the students are not only taught the language but are also learning the subject matter relevant to their fields. Therefore, they acquire both the language skills and relevant knowledge in their field at the same time. English for specific purposes (ESP) is different from general English purposes (EGP), in terms of both teaching methodologies and teaching materials. However, many English lecturers who teach English for ESP students teach general English, which is not suitable for the learning purposes. Those are the fact that often occur in the ESP field and it perhaps happened because of the lack of experiences, information, and miss understanding about ESP on the teachers' part.

Additionally, the role of ESP teachers is more than teaching in regular class. They should be a motivator to ESP students because most of ESP students are less fond of studying English. Most of them claim that English is not important because it is beyond their field and thus is useless, ignoring the fact that English is very important for them to support their competence in the future. The lecturers need to have this awareness and have to get solutions, for example, by developing the authentic materials and using the techniques or strategies to motivate students in learning English. Teachers need to accommodate students' need for more specialized English teaching relevant to their background. ESP is designed for adults, meanwhile general English learnt by high school students. The aims of ESP are to meet the needs of particular learners and communicative competence. Meanwhile, General English purposes to improve overall English competence involving a range of skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.).

ESP has been discussed in the literature in many ways, labelled as „vocabulary teachin” or „reading comprehensio”. However, it is a different field with its own syllabus design, terminology which changes accordingly and own participants. ESP first started to be taught in the workplace for staff development. Since the 1980s there has been a vast development in ESP. Learners' needs changed in parallel with technological development. ESP has been claimed not to have a method. Is there any specific method for General English? In fact, there are many methods and approaches to be used in the classroom effectively; teachers choose which one to use according to our participants. For example, with a group of graduate engineers who would like to communicate in their field and follow technological development all over the world: which method would you use?

Translation method, direct method, audio-visual method? Having already identified their needs, you make the curriculum according to this. This is called the eclectism approach. As a teacher, lecturer or instructor, you choose the method which is the most appropriate for your own learners. In ESP, the advantage is that participants are more likely to be motivated and ready to acquire anything the teacher will transfer.

English for Specific or Special purpose (ESP) has become prominent part of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or ESL (English as a Second Language) teaching since 1960. Nowadays both material writers and teachers realize the importance of need analysis due to the influence of ESP on English language teaching in general. ESP is a broad area consisting of English for business, English for science and technology, English for engineers, English for waiters etc. It is a branch of English Language Teaching (ELT) with its own approaches, materials, and methods which have been developed by adapting from other disciplines and integrating with other disciplines. ESP has been very actively influencing ELT since it is material driven, learner centered and learning centered approach. There is a growing diversity in ESP now.

Modernity presents ever higher requirements for training and practical mastery learning foreign languages in everyday and professional sphere. Due to globalization processes of professional communication, the English language is becoming more widespread and significant in almost all areas of special knowledge, as it is widely used as a means of communication in areas of interaction between people of different nationalities. Communication skills in English are in demand in almost all areas human activity. English widely used in professional discourse, being official language of most international conferences, symposiums, meetings. The ESP course expands the goals of teaching English and determines the need for an effective approach to the learning process, the creation of such a model of language education, which integrates linguistic, cultural and social aspects. Modernity presents ever higher requirements for training and practical mastery learning foreign languages in everyday and professional sphere. Due to globalization processes of professional communication, the English language is becoming more widespread and significant in almost all areas of special knowledge, as it is widely used as a means of communication in areas of interaction between people of different nationalities. Communication skills in English are in demand in almost all areas human activity.

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At the same time, attention was focused on the communicative role of the language and its stylistic functionality. (Prague Circle, L.V. Shcherba). Later, in the 60s, with the growth of the influence of English language in the international arena, in English-speaking countries the term arose: English for Special/Specific Purposes—ESP (English for Special Purposes). This term simultaneously determined both the scientific direction and the type teaching English that meets the needs of students. Currently, the direction of profile training in English (ESP) is developing rapidly in accordance with the specific needs of professional activities, English has become common international language of technology and economy. Development of Applied Linguistics gave impetus to the development of new methodological and didactic approaches to the organization of the learning process English for a specific group of students taking into account the specifics of their professional activities. New developments in the field of educational psychology led to the development of ESP, the students themselves and their attitude to learning were brought to the fore, as well as their needs and interests, which influence on the degree of motivation and the level of efficiency learning. All these factors determine the need for targeted specialization in language

ESP itself is presented as a learning system, for which the curriculum and materials are determined depending on the preliminary analysis of the student’s communication needs. Such the learning process is characterized by its own accents and priorities. Being a way of teaching foreign language, it is at the same time a separate specialized discipline or educational subject. ESP is an approach to teaching a foreign language in which all aspects learning, such as content and methods, are based on the motives of students to learn a foreign language. Thus, in the focus of teaching a foreign language is the goal for which students learn language, not linguistic features.

At the same time, we adhere to the position that ESP is not a special variety of English, although it certainly differs from GE. General content English should be integrated into the course ESP during the entire period of its study, since target language cannot function without general English content. The ESP course is aimed at preparing students for specific situations in their professional communication using the relevant industry vocabulary, including terms, professionalisms, jargon. The purpose of ESP training is more specific, takes into account the needs of students, corresponds to the nature of the orientation of the educational process for the future professional activity, as opposed to purpose learning GE, which involves mastering language skills and skills for communicative needs at the conversational household level. It is the analysis of the goals and needs of students, as well as features of the formation of professional foreign language competence should be taken into account when creating curricula. Moreover, ESP course optimization promotes the use of the latest methodological developments, as well as the use of modern information and communication technologies to create learning situations.

Widespread introduction of information technologies in the teaching process, ESP accompanies its optimization, creates additional opportunities for searching professionally oriented materials and their integration into the educational process. As practice shows, multimedia programs best fit the ESP structure. They bring the process of learning a foreign language as close as possible to real conditions. Multimedia technologies combine different ways of learning: texts, graphics, music, videos in interactive mode. They provide quality training, increase visibility, intensify work of students, contribute to the organization of independent work of students. However, on our look, computer, multimedia technology must serve as learning aids, they are only ways of learning, efficiency which depends on the ability of the teacher to use them to achieve certain pedagogical goals. A computer in the educational process is not a mechanical teacher, not an analogue of a teacher, but a means reinforcing and expanding the possibilities of his learning activities. Benefits of Information technologies can be considered access to world information data banks; the opportunity to participate in real intercultural communication; creation of a training environments with a visual presentation of information; the possibility of registering and saving the results of educational activities of students. In modern conditions of rapid development science, it is impossible to quickly update information to teach a person for life, it is important to develop in him an interest in the accumulation of knowledge, continuous self-improvement vocation.

Traditionally ESP is divided into English for Academic Purpose (EAP) and English for Occupational Purpose (EOP), both of which are sub-divided into further like English for science and technology, English for law, English for vocational purpose etc. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) divided ESP into three: English for Science and Technology, English for Business and Economics and English for Social Science, each of which is subdivided into EAP and EOP. They didn't see much difference between EAP and EOP, and pointed out that "people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the students takes up, or returns to, a job" (p. 16). It is implied here that the end purpose of both EAP and EOP are one and the same but the means to achieve this is very different. However, there is a difference between these two terms. EAP refers to English requires in an educational institution like school, college and university and it is concerned with those communication skills in English which are required for study purpose in formal educational system.

ESP is a major ELT enterprise in English speaking countries where English for occupational purposes for new migrant and refugee population and English for academic purpose in academic context for non native speaking students are offered. However, the present trend is spreading ESP into non- native English speaking countries where English is taught as either as a second language or as a foreign language. According to Johns (2001), "... ESP continues to be even more common in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where an increasing number of adult students are eager to learn business English or academic English in order to pursue their career or study in English medium educational institutions". ESP started late in China; however, it has developed quickly because "the boom of ESP teaching both in college education and continuing education is rightly the result of social demand of the English language, rapid development of linguistics, and educational psychology" (Wang, 2007, p.122). According to him, business English has been a part of ESP for long, but now the trend is spreading into aviation industry. Though grammar translation method has been dominating in ESP, bilingual method and a contrastive approach along with linguistic analysis is used in aviation ESP, where a contrastive analysis of aviation language between English and Chinese is done in order to provide suitable ESP approach to the Chinese context. In Iran ESP is a part of academic subjects and locally produced ESP textbooks are used. However, Iranian ESP text book are not based on learners' need analysis (Eslami, 2010; Iranmehr, Erfani and Davari, 2010).

Liton, Muhammed and Alom (2012) investigated the effectiveness of ESP courses for business administration students at Community College of Jazan University in Saudi Arabia and found that the existing ESP course is not based on students' work place needs. Further more, they reported that ESP in Malaysia needs to be redesigned to meet the demand of the job market. ESP courses are getting popularized in Middle East, East Asian countries, Iran, Lebanon and South Asia due to global trade and career growth. As a result, universities in these countries started offering ESP recently. Need analysis is an integral part of ESP and it is an ongoing process because students are culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, their objectives and the levels of academic literacy are different. The method of doing need analysis have become more sophisticated due to the development of new technology. The most common ways of doing need analysis are questionnaires, surveys, interviews and observations (Johns, 2001). The learners' needs or goals are the foundation of the course. A need analysis is the essential starting point for ESP teaching. Need is defined as the reason for which the learner is learning English, which varies from learner to learner, context to context and discipline to discipline. To demonstrate a learner may want English to study in an English speaking country, or work in a multinational company as an IT expert. Need analysis is asking questions about students' needs and wants. Broadly learners' needs can be divided into two: immediate and delayed needs. Immediate needs refer to those needs that students have at the time of the course, whereas, delayed needs refer to those needs that students will have later or after the course.

ESP teachers should be aware of the options and limitation arising from learner expectations and requirements. When developing an ESP course, the designer needs to answer these questions: What English do learners need? Why do they need it? Which specific skills do they require? And what genre do they need to achieve their goal. According to Burmfit (1984) need analysis is not exclusive to ESP, but it is rather common in all language teaching program. However, ESP starts with need analysis and it is done by ESP practitioner or teacher, not an outsider. Specific learners' need analysis has to be done by explaining the context in which learners are going to use the language, and the text used in that situation because Dudley- Evan (2001) asserted that "for ESP courses to be successful and to have a lasting effect on learners, ability to study or work using English, the environment in which English is taught versus that in which it is used must be assessed". Furthermore, the course designer has to see the four dimensions of needs: target situation, the sponsor, students and course designer (Jordan, 1997). Need Analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabus, course material and the kind of teaching and learning that are going to take place in the ESP course. In nutshell, need analysis includes: necessities, demands, wants, likes, lacks, deficiency, goals, aims, purposes and objectives. Thus, a typical

need analysis includes these: job contexts; academic contexts; learners' multiple intelligence; learning styles and ways of working in a particular job.

Every learner has a different attitude towards learning. The most important key is to find the „appropriate“ method rather than „specific“. The syllabus, content and how to present lesson separate ESP from general English learning. In the ESP classroom, learners are more likely required to be at intermediate level to be able to achieve their target. Therefore, learners are guided, observed and differentiated in ESP classrooms rather than teaching the target language word by word. Language learning is not only acquiring grammatical structure but also its function. It is important for engineering students to be able to present their ideas or exchange their opinions or follow the technological development all over the world. Most universities have been offering ESP courses besides general English lessons to boost learners' confidence in this field. Hutchinson and Waters (1990) stated that for language learning relevant knowledge is not enough for learners to make things meaningful but should be used and every language learner is communicatively competent in one language, but does not know the special terms or specific forms of the language. Shortly, speaking the language does not mean you know the language. Knowing language means to be able to have a good command of language. Everybody speaks one language but how many of us actually have a good command of mother tongue? Everybody has different vocabulary span because of their life style and how much and what they read.

When we talk about specific methodology, we mean all language aspects from reading complex articles to making a presentation. When we chose a method to be used in ESP classroom we should think of our group of learners and adapt one method with our teaching materials. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claimed that there is no specific methodology for ESP. The same principles apply with ELT methodology in general. It can be arguable whether there is a specific methodology for ESP; my experience is that knowing General English methodology does not make a teacher successful in techniques that the teacher implements in the ESP classroom. For example; if the teacher is not familiar with such specific subject matter as the blast furnace or power station, he will not be able to want to prepare his own material for this matter. It is not always possible to find what material you want to use during the course/programme in the course book. In ESP courses, the teacher has to put in more effort than in General English courses. As I mentioned in section 2, to find the appropriate or competent method we have to do „needs analysis“ for learners' and institution's benefits.

All four language skills; listening, reading, speaking, and writing, are usually stressed equally in an ESL/EFL classroom, while in ESP it is learners' needs that decides which language skills are focused, and the course is designed accordingly. ESP students are usually intermediate or advanced adults who already have some acquaintance with English and are learning the language in order to communicate in a particular academic or professional context. Practically, ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching together. Above all the origins of ESP lie in satisfying learners' needs. Therefore, evaluation of the course helps to assess how far the identified needs have been satisfied. There is no dominating movement in ESP now; however, there are different approaches, materials and methods used in ESP. To conclude, ESP always goes with ESL/EFL teaching, but whatever the current trend is it is the responsibility of ESP practitioners to be sensitive to learners' needs and their learning contexts.

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