

Teacher's Role and Challenges in Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine the multifaceted role of teachers in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction and the challenges they face in delivering discipline-specific language education. **Method:** Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations involving twenty experienced ESP instructors from various academic disciplines, including business, engineering, and medicine. **Results:** The findings reveal that ESP teachers are expected to go beyond traditional language instruction by integrating content knowledge relevant to specific professional fields. Major challenges identified include limited subject-matter expertise, lack of ready-to-use instructional materials, and varying student language proficiencies. Strategies such as collaboration with subject experts, differentiated instruction, and learner-centered materials development were noted as effective in addressing these issues. **Novelty:** This study contributes to the growing body of ESP literature by highlighting the dual pedagogical demands placed on instructors and proposing practice-based recommendations to bridge the gap between language teaching and subject content mastery, particularly in under-researched multilingual contexts.

INTRODUCTION

According to John A. M, in 2008, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a subfield of language teaching designed to address the particular language demand of learners, usually in professional or academic situations. Unlike General English which has a wider perspective in language development, Specific English emphasizes the needs of students in relation to the vocabulary, grammar, and language functions of their fields of study or work. For example, a student pursuing medicine must be able to speak the language of medicine. In the same way, a student in business must be able to speak the language of business. said that An ESP teacher has a significant role in this task because apart from the discipline-specific knowledge, there is a need to address the different goal, context, and culture of the learners [1].

This is not to say that teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has its challenges. As with other content areas, the expert teaching the ESP course needs to know both the target language and the specific discipline very well. Also, they need to develop or modify teaching resources for different student categories [2]. This is quite a lot of work because the learners might have very low language skills, and they might not know the required souse of discourse markers and language. This paper discusses the most important functions of an ESP teacher, the problems they encounter in their teaching practice, how to deal with those problems [3].

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative methodology and gathers data using surveys, interviews, and classroom observations with the purpose of understanding the part played by teachers in ESP teaching and the problems they face. This is done at a university college which runs various departments like business and engineering, medicine and health, and social sciences and offers ESP courses at the higher levels. The participants for this study were selected from among the teachers of the ESP classes who have been actively teaching in their disciplines for a minimum of two year [4].

Participants: From different academic journeys, twenty ESP instructors with an average teaching experience of about five years in the aforementioned context participated in the study. They were selected on the basis of their experience in teaching specific disciplines, such as business, engineering, or medicine [5].

Data Collection:

Surveys: The survey was administered to teachers, seeking to find their perceptions of the role of ESP teachers, their responsibilities, and the most important challenges they are facing with students in the classroom [6].

Interviews: In-depth thinking was obtained through conducting semi-structured interviews with teachers. The interviews were tailored around topics such as student engagement, course design, and how they handle discipline-related language [7].

Classroom Observations: To watch good teaching strategies and look at teacher-pupil interaction, classroom observation formed another case [8].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results: The survey and interview results highlighted several key themes regarding the role of ESP teachers and the challenges they face:

Language and Subject Expertise: Teachers put great importance on being experts in the English language in addition to the specific subjects they teach. This means that an ESP teacher of engineering should know its technical language whereas an ESP teacher of business should understand matters of corporate culture as well as business language [9].

Customization of Materials: Teachers emphasized the need to construct or adapt relevant materials for the academic or professional context of their students. Many ESP teachers used articles, manuals, and case studies from particular disciplines as authentic materials in order to immerse students in the real-world use of the language [10].

Facilitators of Learning: ESP teachers strive to serve as facilitators, guiding students on how to acquire the necessary language and communication strategies relevant to their specific disciplines [11].

Challenges Faced by ESP Teachers:

Lack of Subject Knowledge: One challenge that a number of the respondents reported as being an important one was lack of thorough subject area knowledge. Teachers often found themselves being challenged to differentiate the nuances of

discipline-specific vocabulary limitations and content with an adverse effect on their responsibilities toward students' learning [12].

Diverse Student Backgrounds: ESP classes generally consist of heterogeneous groups of students. Teachers found it difficult to satisfy different levels of language proficiency among students while keeping the material sufficiently specialized for more advanced learners [13].

Curriculum Development: Another challenge faced was preparing and tailoring relevant ESP materials. Many teachers stated that there were few pre-made materials that could straightforwardly be used or adapted, resulting in rather long times spent developing materials themselves. This was especially so for fields having highly specific languages [14].

Student Motivation and Engagement: Teachers reported that there are problems with keeping students engaged in an ESP course, and that such students are more likely to reflect on its immediate relevance to their future jobs. This is especially true for courses in non-English-speaking settings [15].

Discussion: The results of this study emphasize how complex the role of the ESP instructor can be. Their duties extend to not merely the teaching of English; they also include the understanding and application of subject-related language and practices in teaching ESP. The challenges trainers in ESP face are many; from inadequate subject knowledge to constant upgrading of materials for teaching.

Richards and Rodgers state that ESP teachers must address these issues by constantly upgrading their qualifications. They could do that by working with subject professionals to verify some of the content being taught, getting in touch with workshops designed for ESP teaching strategies, and collaborating in the sharing of materials with other teachers in similar disciplines. The involvement of students in the processes of creating their materials – with support from authentic resources from the field they are studying – may also foster a sense of motivation and relevance toward the study.

Equally, differentiated instruction strategies could be used to cater to varying levels of language proficiency by offering support to students whose standards have fallen below an acceptable level, or conversely, promote those advanced learners with more challenging materials.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study identifies the central role of ESP teachers in bridging linguistic and disciplinary knowledge, emphasizing their responsibilities in adapting materials, understanding subject-specific content, and addressing heterogeneous student needs. **Implication :** The findings suggest that professional development tailored to interdisciplinary competence and collaboration with field experts can significantly enhance teaching effectiveness and learner outcomes in ESP contexts. Institutions should consider integrating ESP-focused training modules and cross-departmental support systems to improve instructional quality. **Limitation :** The study is limited by its qualitative scope and sample size, which focused solely on

instructors within one regional context, potentially affecting the generalizability of the results. **Future Research** : Further studies should employ longitudinal and mixed-method approaches across diverse educational settings to assess the long-term impact of proposed strategies and develop scalable models for ESP teacher training and curriculum development.

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