



Overview of English for Specific Purposes in a Technical High School “Lutfi Musiqi” in Vushtrri

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Abstract

This research outlines the challenges and obstacles of introducing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in a Technical High School “Lutfi Musiqi” in Vushtrri, and most importantly, the benefits for the students, who can use this acquired knowledge in their future professions as well. In spite of the fact that most of the students are likely to get employed after they graduate from this school, there will always be some of them, who might continue their studies at a Technical University. Having a sound base of English, ESP will equip students with the relevant professional vocabulary and language skills needed for their further professional studies. The students were 17 up to 18 years old; they're attending the 12th grade in the secondary Technical High school. The total number was 56. Because of the nature of this school there were more male students than female. This research was realized by the quantitative and qualitative methods through questionnaires I used with my students.

Keywords: ESP, research, technical high school.

1. Introduction

This research should serve as a thorough overview, highlighting important points and facts, and specifically the need to introduce ESP courses for the specific fields of study which will help students to prepare on a more professional level for their future professional occupations. It should aim to motivate all English teachers to improve ESP courses, by using Professional English books for the specific fields of study, by selecting additional related materials, if necessary by consulting experts of the field and by designing their syllabi according to the needs of the students for their future professional occupations.

2. The Definition of ESP

By the term English for Specific (or Special, Specified, Specifiable) Purposes is meant that type of language learning which has its focus on all aspects of language pertaining to a particular field of human activity (Wright, 1992, page 3).

ESP is a relatively new discipline within Applied Linguistics that bids a new learner-centred approach to English language teaching whose methodology is based on the specific needs of the learner. Kennedy and Bolitho (1984, page 3)

point out that ESP is based on „an investigation of the purposes of the learner and the set of communicative needs arising from these purposes”. Mackay and Mountford (1978) indicate that the term ESP is generally used to refer to the teaching of English for a clear utilitarian purpose. El-Minyawi (1984) pinpoints that ESP courses are based solidly upon the need to express the facts and ideas of some special subjects after which the student should be able to read the specialized subjects confidently and speak about them fluently. In my point of view I think the best definition for ESP is the one which defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), they defined it as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning, they added also that the term ESP implies that, it is English which is somehow peculiar to the range of principles and procedures which define that particular profession.

ESP is contrasted with EGP, or English for General Purposes. If English is taught as a second language along with other subjects for educational purposes as some useful subject to the learners in the future, then this is EGP. In this type of learning, there is generally no immediate requirement for the learners to use English for any real communicative purposes. In contrast, if English is taught for specialized learners with some specific vocational and educational purpose in mind, then this is ESP. ESP is learning and learner oriented, with a conception and preference for communicative competence.

2.1 Absolute and variable characteristics of ESP

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, page 4-5) provide a more comprehensive characterization of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) “as language teaching designed to meet the specific needs of the learners through employing effective teaching methodologies and teaching activities”. The absolute and variable characteristics of ESP are as follows:

2.1.1 Absolute characteristics

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners.
- ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.
- ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

2.1.2 Variable characteristics

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines.
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English.
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level.
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students.
- Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems. English for science and technology or EST is a sub category of the larger field of English for Specific Purposes in which it shares some basic characteristics with the larger field of ESP. It emphasizes purposeful and utilitarian learning of English.

The communicative needs of the learners are important consideration of course design. EST (English for science and technology) is concerned with both the oral and written discourse of English for academic or professional, occupational or vocational purposes.

3. Selecting Materials

The selection of ESP materials is of great importance for effective and task-based learning and should depend on the needs of the learners in relation to their future vocation. Material selection determines how the course is run as well as underlines the content of the lesson. Good material selection helps the teacher in organizing the course appropriately, with the aim of supporting the learning process of students. It may be worth highlighting that ESP teachers are not required to have specialized subject knowledge, nevertheless, having a positive attitude and willingness for an understanding of the subject area they teach, helps in the deliverance of effective teaching. “They should truly reflect what you think and feel about the learning process.” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1992, page 107) sums up this attitude.

A good material selection means a variety of interesting texts and activities which should focus on a wide range of skills (reading, listening, vocabulary etc.). Focus should also be aimed at students’ goals, as well as their motivation to learn the language. Teachers can act as facilitators and encourage students about the subject matter in question, for

example, encourage them to share their own experiences and knowledge while actively participating in the learning process. Materials should also function as a link between already learnt ('existing knowledge') and new information (Hutchinson and Waters, 1992).

4. Types of Activities with Text

In ESP teaching, text is one of the learning materials widely used as an important component in the classroom. It is used for learning, practicing and processing a great variety of skills. Text helps to actively involve all students' skills and motivate learning. The combination of written text with listening to audio or video material enhances learning further, thus creating an opportunity for an advanced form of effective learning. Teachers should strive to select or design texts that will stimulate real-life vocational situations as closely as it is possible, thus, keeping the study context central to the teaching.

5. Historical Background of the Technical High School "Lutfi Musiqi" in Vushtrri

Vushtrria, is an ancient city, located in the northern part of the Republic of Kosovo. Earlier it was called Vicianum. In north it is bordered with Mitrovica, in south with Kastriot, in east with Besiana, southwest with Drenas and in west with Skenderaj. It lies in an area of 345 km², with approximately 70.000 residents, contained in 67 villages.










High School in Vushtrri

Besides the opening of primary schools in other places, there were attempts for opening high schools in Vushtrri. The first high school was opened in the school year 1945-46, an Economy High School, only in the Serbian language, whereas in the school year 1951-52 in the Albanian language too, with a two year duration.

In the school year 1962-63 the first high school classes began, within the economic school. In the school year 1975-76 the High School and the Professional High School join as "The secondary education oriented centre" and later on as QMSH "Muharrem Bekteshi".

5.1 Technical High School

In the school year 1992-93 the Technical High School is named in the beginning "Gjin Gazulli" and later "Marin Beçikemi". In the Teachers' Council meeting (with approximately 90 teachers) held in September 1992 by the director Qazim Azemi and deputy director Tefik Maloku planned to form 58 parallels in directions to the profiles:

-  Machinist
-  Welder
-  Electrician
-  Auto mechanic
-  Plumber
-  Telecommunication
-  IT
-  Manufacturing operator
-  Professional Practice

Professional practice offers the latest theoretical and practical knowledge from the applied electro technical area and is needed for the professional work in businesses that deal with informational technologies as well as their application to lead businesses, public services, etc.

The professional practice program offers opportunities so students can be equipped with knowledge and dexterity according to the required dimensions of the market economy. The offered knowledge from the applied professional practice area will help students execute their gained knowledge. The enabling process of pupils, in the computer cabinets will help them gain the necessary practical skills. In the cabinets of informatics, students during the professional practice win a high degree of knowledge of: the programming application software, leadership with the data bases, the designing of information systems, multimedia technologies, etc. The strong bond between the theoretical knowledge with the practical training is the base of work in this school.

The professional practice remains one of the most important duties for which the education authorities and school commune must work. The lack of facilities and especially the cabinets of informatics make it very difficult to hold the professional practice. The relevant authorities promise that in future they will create the conditions for the holding of professional practice in all profiles.

6. Research Methodology

This research was carried out by the quantitative method through questionnaires I used with my students. The participants of the study were fifteen to eighteen years old high school students. The total number was 56 students. First of all they were asked to do a placement test and then a needs analysis with a questionnaire, in order to identify the student's language level and how they can implement their knowledge in their work environments. All questionnaires were returned anonymously.

Four informal interviews were also conducted with the English teachers of the Technical High School "Lutfi Musiqi" in Vushtri, to collect their diverse experiences, which will be incorporated in ESP.

6.1 Aims and Objectives

This research was aimed to:

- ✚ introduce students to selected substance scopes
- ✚ enable students to understand ESP texts
- ✚ prepare students for their selected future occupation or future studies

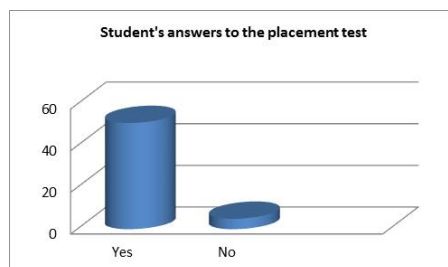
As an English language teacher, I have always been concerned to identify the student's needs for their future occupation. Thus I would direct my students to learn more about the specialized vocabulary of their own fields, like ESP does. In the school where I work there are different profiles, such as, machinist, welder, electrician, auto mechanic, plumber, telecommunication, IT, manufacturing operator etc. The aim is to mix the materials that we use to teach them, in order to prepare them for their selected future occupation, and to develop their autonomy and interaction in order to succeed in their employability and to meet workplace needs. In order to support quality teaching with equal opportunities for work and expression for every learner, every teacher should be aware of the diverse interests within a classroom.

7. Data Analysis

Data analysis is conducted in three sections. The first section performs the results (outcomes) from the placement test that was carried out with the participants of the (research). While the second section shows the questionnaire done by the students, and is illustrated with charts and one table. The third section deals about the informal interview with the school's teachers, in order to analyze the importance of ESP in English language classes from the perspective of the teachers.

7.1 Students' proficiency based on the placement test

Since ESP is not preferable for students on the beginner's level, the placement test was done to ensure that they would be prepared for such a course. According to the outcomes from the test with multiply choice, conducted with the students, it can be seen that the majority posses pre-intermediate language skills, while 24 % intermediate and only 5 % elementary.

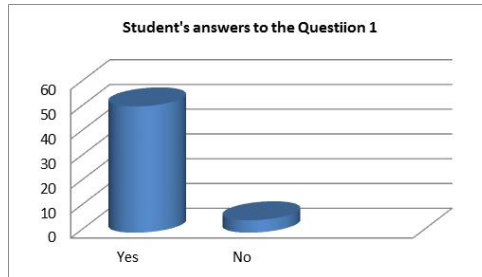


8. Results from the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was arranged in yes/no question pattern for the students so the results will be shown in the following way: the charts for the questions, and one table including all the questions and the results.

8.1 Question 1:

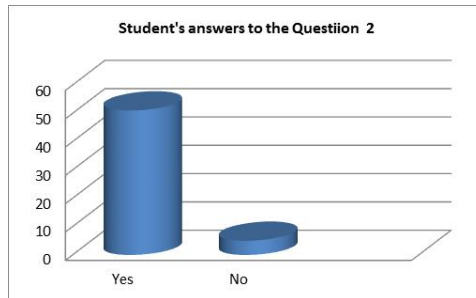
Do you think that learning English will help you in your future employment?



The chart above provides the information from the first question. As it can be seen, all students, except one, state that English will help them in their future employment.

8.2 Question 2:

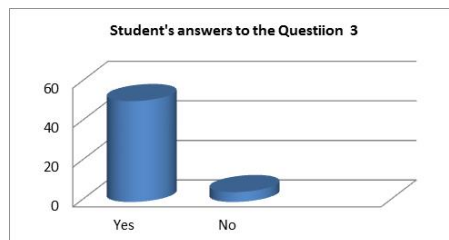
Are you satisfied with the level of English language learning in your school?



The above chart shows the information from the second question. The students answer results show that most of them are very satisfied with the level of language learned in their school, where 47 students answered with Yes, while 9 students replied with No.

8.3 Question 3:

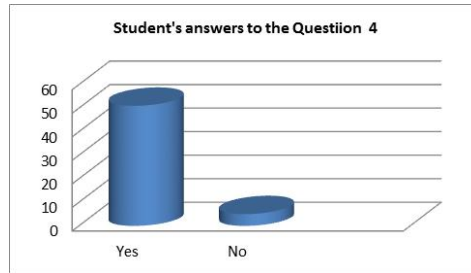
Are teachers prepared sufficiently for the subject?



The above chart presents the outcomes of question 3. The results show that the students are satisfied with their teachers' preparation for the subject. The more detailed score is that 45 students said Yes and 11 said No.

8.4 Question 4:

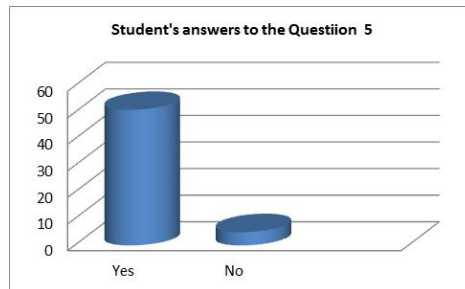
Do you have any knowledge about English for Specific Purposes, ESP?



The above chart presents the outcomes of question 4. The results show that the majority of students have general knowledge about ESP. The more detailed score is that **32** students said **Yes** and **24** said **No**.

8.5 Question 5:

With the term English for Specific Purposes is meant a kind of English language teaching with specialized subjects, such as your directions; Computing, Telecommunications, Mechatronics, Electronics, Mechanical Engineering, etc., would like to know more ...



The above chart shows the information from the fifth question. The students answer results show that they are very interested in learning more about their profiles of learning they have. **51** students answered with **Yes**, while **5** students replied with **No**.

9. Conclusions

This research was undertaken to explore the need and importance of integrating ESP teaching in the Professional High School „Lutfi Musiqi” in Vushtrri, and other such schools within Kosova as well. It should serve as a thorough overview, highlighting important points and facts, and specifically the need to introduce ESP courses for the specific fields of study which will help students to prepare on a more professional level for their future professional occupations. It should aim to motivate all English teachers to improve ESP courses, by using Professional English books for the specific fields of study, by selecting additional related materials, if necessary by consulting experts of the field and by designing their syllabi according to the needs of the students for their future professional occupations. The research attempts to answer three main questions and confirm the hypotheses.

- ✚ What benefits would students gain by learning ESP?
- ✚ How can teachers define the student's level and their learning needs?
- ✚ Should the materials be a mixture of general and specific language?

Since students possess already a more or less general knowledge of English from their previous education in

school, ESP courses will give the learners the possibility to improve their professional English knowledge, skills and abilities of how to apply the newly acquired proficiency in their future occupational environments. Our country is currently experiencing difficult economic times, which as a consequence drives many young people to seek their fortune in other countries. Therefore, having foreign language skills, especially English as one of the most spoken language in the world, will enable them to adapt quickly to the relevant labour market, and to find a good job. Otherwise, since English is the second official language in Kosova, and many foreign officials are working and living here, and in some cases even with their families, they depend very often on various services performed by the domestic workforce. Therefore a lot of jobs require English knowledge. Furthermore, our country expects a growing cooperation with foreign companies, and new investments in the economy of Kosova, where qualified workers with professional language skills will have an advantage.

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