

A Comprehensive Method for Teaching English for Specific Purpose

Muhammed Ali Chalikandy
Department of English
Al Buraimi University College
Buraimi, Sultanate of Oman

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

1. Introduction

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.

2. The Origin of ESP

ESP did not begin just because of some new theories or ideas in any field. It was mainly because of the necessity of the time which shaped ESP in the present form. The proverb 'Necessity is the mother of invention' is very relevant to the origin of ESP. ESP has been changed since it originated because of the developments in education, business, computer, information technology, global economy, applied linguistics and ELT. There were many events which paved the way for ESP. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) the demands of a brave world, a revolution in linguistics and focus on the learner were the three common reasons for the birth of ESP. They further argued that Second World War and the Oil Crisis of 1970 were the two historical events that were responsible for the origin of the ESP. Firstly; the Second World War changed the world politics drastically, the immediate result of which was the emergence of the US as the world super power, the expansion of science and technology, growth of global economy and becoming English as the international language for communication. Secondly, because of the Oil Crisis of 1970, western money and new knowledge flowed into the oil rich countries. Naturally, English was the language of this knowledge. As a result, there was a pressure on ELT to modify its approaches, methods and materials according to the needs of the learners and clients. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) aptly said, "English now became subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers" (p, 7).

Around this time, changes took place in linguistic in general and in ELT in particular. For instance, traditional linguistics viewed language as an object to be described and segmented into discrete elements like phonemes, morphemes and words while the revolutions in linguistics forced linguistics to view language as means of communication used in the context. Consequently, language has been viewed that it varies depending on the context, participants and purposes. In addition, there was a shift from teaching method and the teacher to the learning and the learner due to the popularity of Communicative Language Teaching. Learners use different learning strategies as they are different and their needs are divergent. In fact, all this lead to the importance of considering learners' varied needs in learning context. Focusing on learner and learning resulted in adapting the language instruction according to their needs and designing a course that suitable to the specific needs of the learners.

3. ESP Vs General English

Generally, ESP is a branch of EFL or ESL, which are the main branches of English Language Teaching (ELT) in general. According to Hutchinson and waters (1987) ESP is an approach to language learning based on learners' needs and centered around the question: "Why does this

learner need to learn a foreign language?" (P. 17). Scrivener (2005) differentiated both terms clearly:

ESP contrast with the rather mischievous acronym LENOR (Learning English for No Obvious Reason); it implies that we are going to take the client's needs and goals more seriously when planning the course, and rather than teach 'general English', we are going to tailor everything to his or her character and particular requirements. (p. 324)

According to Strevens (1988) ESP is designed to meet learners' specific needs by choosing content from particular disciplines and using activities, syntax, lexis and discourse suitable to these activities, and he added that ESP may not use any pre-planned instructional methodology. Dudley- Evans and St. John (1998) revised Strevens definition and accepted most of his claims. However, they elaborated and broadened the concept by adding more variables such as:

- ESP may be related to the specific subjects;
- It may use teaching methods and situations different from General English (GE);
- It may be designed for adult intermediate or advanced learners. (pp. 4-5)

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined ESP more broadly as "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and methods are based on the learners' need for learning" (p. 19). These definitions, thus, makes it clear that learners' specific need is the foundation on which the entire edifice of ESP is established. Although every learner has their own reason to learn a language such as improving communicative skills, passing exam, these are too vague in General English. Basic interpersonal communication skills refers to the language skills used in everyday informal contexts with friends, family and co-workers, while academic skills refers to a language skills required in academic setting. Successful communication in an occupational set up requires the ability to use the particular jargon specific to that context, and use everyday communicative language effectively in non- occupational context, for instance, chatting over a lunch with a colleague. Unlike General English, ESP has to blend both interpersonal communication skills and academic communication skills effectively and naturally. It is the challenge of the ESP practitioner to integrate all these skills effectively in the ESP course naturally by balancing and blending structures, lexical and discourse into the course.

4. Types of ESP

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. Whereas, EOP refers to English required for professional communication in professional context like medical, engineering, aviation and business. According to Hamp- Lynos (2001) EAP is:

a branch of applied linguistics consisting of a significant body of research into effective teaching and assessment approaches, methods of analysis of the academic language needs of students, analysis of the linguistic and discorsal structures of academic texts, and analysis of the textual practice of academics. (p. 126)

In the view of Strevens (1977) EAP is a shift from teaching literature and culture of speakers of English to teaching English language for communicative purpose. He added that English language should be matched to the needs and purpose of learners.

EAP takes place in a variety of setting and circumstances. The students need EAP for higher education. The teachers may be native or non- native speakers. The course may be pre- sessional (full time), in- sessional and usually part time. It may be a short term or long term. The course may include formal teaching program, self access situations, distance learning materials or CALL (Computer Aided Language Learning). GE (General English) course teaches learners conversational and social genres of the language, whereas EAP course teaches formal academic genres and EOP course teaches genres related to occupation. To be precise, EAP and EOP are specific because they teach language skills required for learners' immediate purpose by selecting vocabulary, grammar pattern. In addition, they use the topic and themes that are relevant to learners' immediate needs and address learners' immediate communicative needs.

4.1. Current Practice of EAP

Unlike General English, EAP begins with learner and situation and teaches academic genres. According to Swales (2001), it started with a goal, genre and focus which are different from literary language in the 1960s, to which many additions and adaptations have been done since then. Carkin (2005) has stated that EAP has broadened its scope by including more disciplines and texts to it, for instance, EAP course in Agronomy and ESP course in computer repairs.

Currently, EAP is offered in variety of international setting. Dudley- Evan and St. John (1998) reports that there are four types of EAP offered in higher education contexts. The first type of EAP is taught either intensively or extensively in English speaking countries like the USA, the UK and Canada where it is done for international students of graduates and undergraduates. The second type is offered in countries like Singapore and Zimbabwe where many native languages exist and English is recognized officially in education. The third type of EAP can be seen in Middle East countries where subjects like medicine, technology, business, science and IT are taught in English in higher education. The fourth type of EAP is taught in South American countries where higher education is in L1 (mother tongue), but English is recognized as an auxiliary language. According to Snow (1997), in English speaking countries EAP is largely a pre- university bridge program, in which it links English language with content courses and both ESL instructors and content instructors work as a team. The aim of such program is to enable the learners to enter university directly by making them proficient in English language required for a specific academic program. Furthermore, such courses assist second language (L2) students in acquiring language skills needed for successful work in higher education. Whereas, in non- speaking English countries such as Middle East countries EAP is a part of academic program, in which students are required to take a compulsory subject like study skill as an intensive program, which is a part of pre- planned syllabus.

Generally, an EAP course "usually consists primarily of study skills practice (e.g. listening to lectures, seminar skills, academic writing, reading and note taking, etc.) with an academic register and style in the practice texts and materials" (Hamp- Lynos, 2001, p. 127).

5. ESP Around the World

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" (p. 43).

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.

6. Future of ESP

According to Nunan (2001), the demand for English language education around the world is increasing because it is the language of international business, technology and science. Therefore, ESP will flourish and grow more in non- native English speaking countries.

ESP will use computer based curricula and authentic texts. In other words, ESP will use more sophisticated learner centered curricula. Since ESP is sensitive to the learners' background and the context in which the learners use English, it will be sensitive to cross cultural issues (Connor, 1996). As a result, ESP will research the cross cultural issues related to ESP learning. ESP will still use need analysis, however, the focus of need analysis will be shifted because ESP will be done more in non native English speaking countries.

ESP will be the part of ESL or EFL teaching, which will be the part of English Language Teaching in general. Developments in applied linguistics will certainly influence ESP teaching in particular. Furthermore, Content Based Instruction and Task Based Instruction will become more popular in ESP.

7. Characteristics of ESP

What makes a course really an ESP course? There are many features that stand out in an ESP course. Firstly, ESP is a multidisciplinary activity; therefore, it is necessary to understand how

written and spoken text works in a particular discipline or profession and essential to be sensitive to cultural differences both academic and professional world. Secondly, it uses authentic materials which are used as vehicle of information rather than linguistic object. Thirdly, ESP exploits learners' previous and current academic skills and knowledge and professional experience. In the ESP classroom the teacher may not have the knowledge of the content, but learners have. For instance, an ESP teacher may not know how exactly a business run, but they know what language and how it is used in it. Therefore, the ESP practitioner must use the learners' greater knowledge of the content. Furthermore, the practitioner needs to include specific subject content and balance content level and language level to have real content as language learning approaches and subject learning approaches are integrated in an ESP course. Fourthly, distinctive teaching methodology which is different from General English is used in ESP except pre-study or pre-work ESP where learners have not started their academic study and professional activity. For instance role play, case-study, project work and task based teaching are commonly used in ESP classes. Fifthly, ESP is designed for specific discipline or profession for limited duration or longer duration and for learners who are often advanced or intermediate adults with at least some basic knowledge and skill of English. According to Dudley- Evans (2001) need analysis is the central feature of ESP. Chambers (1980) calls the initial need analysis as target situation analysis since it provides information about the target situation and the purpose of the course. Present situation analysis provides information about learners current level in English, weakness in English and skills needed. Register analysis is another feature because certain grammatical and lexical items are more frequently used in particular subject and occupation. To illustrate, simple present and passives are used in scientific and technical English, and vocabulary items like consists of, contains; enables appear more in academic writing. Therefore, register analysis is done to identify the grammar, syntax, lexical items which are particular to the specific ESP. Last not the least feature is, discourse analysis. It is done to find out specifies discourse used in a particular discipline and explains why certain text is preferred how they are used in the text. Dudley- Evans (2001) "... the ESP teacher considers the (written or spoken) texts that the learner has to produce and /or understand, tries to identify the texts' key features and devises teaching material that will enable learners to use the texts effectively"(p. 134).

Authentic discourse, vocabulary and situation are very important in ESP since ESP consists of special English and contexts. How to provide authenticity? There are two traditions according to Johns (2001), the first of which is to deliver the course onsite target situation like oil rigs, dockyard, military and police training centers, banks, factories and other work places and delivering the lesson concerned university departments as a part of academic subjects. Raof and Yousof (2006) have found ESP course embedded with learners' work place or discipline is very effective because learners acquire knowledge about their specific subject and future work place as it provides authentic input. Moreover, learners interact with the professionals and gain knowledge about their subject. The second tradition is to provide specific oral or written discourse (creating artificial target situations through role play, real play and simulation play).

8. Structure of ESP Course

It is impossible to run an ESP course haphazardly since the basic structure of the course is definite. There are certain building blocks which form an ESP course. Analyzing needs, preparing syllabus, designing the course, developing materials, selecting methods and evaluating the course are the necessary steps involved in an ESP course.

8.1. Need Analysis

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" (p. 133). 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.

8.2. Syllabus

Need Analysis will give the necessary background to draw up the syllabus. Basically, a syllabus is a specification of what is to be included in an ESP course. Designing a syllabus involves examining need analysis and establishing objectives of the course. It then entails the selection, grading, sequencing the language and content and the divisions of the content into units. (Jordan, 1997)

8.3. Course Design

After obtaining the syllabus, the next step is to design the course around the syllabus. According to Hutchinson and waters (1998) "course design is the process by which the raw data about learning need is interpreted in order to produce an integrated series of teaching – learning experience, whose ultimate aim is to lead the learners to a particular state of knowledge" (p, 65). There are two types of course design available for a designer: fixed and flexible. According to

Nunan (1988) a fixed course design is prepared in advance and rarely deviated from it, where as a flexible one allows changes and modification based on negotiation with the learners and feedback from learners. For instance, if an EAP is a part of an academic program and is assessed, it follows a fixed course design.

Designing an ESP course is not easy, but a really challenging task. In ESP, it is the teacher who develops the course after analyzing learners' needs to suit their requirement. The ESP teacher has to investigate a number of issues before taking decision. They are: whether the course is intensive or extensive; it is assessed or not; it meets immediate needs or delayed needs; it is done as a pre-study or work, while study or work; the learners are homogenous or heterogeneous.

In short, course design is to adapt or write materials in accordance with the syllabus, to develop a methodology for teaching those materials and to establish evaluation procedure by which progress towards the specified goals will be measured.

8.4. Material Development

It is important for ESP teachers to have a great deal of experience both in teaching and material development – providing and writing. According to Jones (1990) “ESP teachers find themselves in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs a group of learners, but are expected to do so with no, or very limited, preparation time” (p. 91). Even though plenty of commercially published ESP textbooks available now, none of them are suitable to meet students' specific needs. Consequently Jones (1990) argues that there is no book to be called as an ESP textbook and suggests having a resource bank with variety of materials for the teachers to choose. It does not mean that every ESP practitioner needs not be a good material designer, but needs to be a provider of suitable material, be creative with the available material, modify according to learners needs and supplement with extra materials.

There are certain key issues that ESP practitioners must consider when they develop materials. ESP materials need to be more visually illustrative to help learners showing the processes of relationship, and the language used in the illustration has to be functional. Therefore, ESP material should be visual based in order to improve learners' visual literacy like increasing the power of observation and reporting what they observe. As a result, video clips, sound files are compulsory in ESP material. As ESP follows learner centered approach, it should explore technology to provide learners varied choices. Furthermore, ESP should use topics, themes, activities and methodology that are specific to subject and the profession. To demonstrate, an English course for medical students use medical situations like diagnosing and performing a surgery to present appropriate language and discourse. Dudley Evans (2001) argued that “ESP is a materials- led field. Most materials, however, are prepared by individual teachers for particular situations, and there is not a huge amount of published ESP material” (p. 135). In addition to this, in an ESP class the group generally has mixed abilities. Therefore; it is required to have an eclectic approach to material catering every learner.

Adaptation and revision of ESP materials are part of any ESP program whether published or tailor made material is used. In EAP, ESP teachers consult with the content teachers or work with them as a team to provide and update ESP materials suitable to learners' academic program and EOP teachers include specific language skills and linguistic items required in a particular job.

8.5. Methodology

ESP makes use of the methodology of other content subjects. This is the strength of ESP methodology that integrates language learning approaches and subject learning approaches. Widdowson (1983) wrote “ESP (or ought logically to be) integrally linked with areas of activity (academic, vocational, professional) which... represent the learners’ aspirations” (pp. 108- 9). For instance ESP uses case studies, project work and tasks. Furthermore, a typical ESP class uses video discs, CD-ROM, the internet, e-mail and Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL). Role play, real play and simulation play have a key role in an ESP classroom. Content Based Instruction and Task Based Instruction are very useful in ESP classrooms.

ESP teachers make use of learners’ specific subject knowledge, which makes classroom interaction and methods different from General English. A good ESP teacher will try to minimize the negative effects of the learners' emotional reactions to learning and will instead try to boost the positive emotions by using the following strategies:

- Use pair work and group work to minimize the stress of speaking in front of the class, for example, pyramid discussion;
- Structure the task, i.e. introduce the task, remove hurdles, give clear instruction, concept checking, demonstrating the task, run the activity, close the activity and give feedback;
- Give time to think and do, listen to the learners, ask questions, give enough time to think and answer, allow them to complete;
- Emphasis on the process rather than the product as the correct answer is not the most important issue but getting the answer is important;
- Include fun, variations, varieties;
- Avoid monotonous and mechanical teaching.

9. Evaluation

In narrow sense, evaluation is the process of gathering, analyzing and interpreting information about what is done to make a judgment about it. Nunan (1998) views evaluation more broadly:

The data resulting from evaluation assist us in deciding whether a course needs to be modified or altered in any way so that objectives may be achieved more effectively. If certain learners are not achieving the goals and objectives set for a course, it is necessary to determine why this is so. We would wish, as a result of evaluating a course, to have some idea about what measures might be taken to remedy any short comings. Evaluation, then, is not simply a process of obtaining information, it is also a decision- making process (p. 118).

It is imperative to evaluate an ESP course since the ESP course normally has specified objectives and the learners, sponsors, course designers and practitioners of the course want to see the end result of their effort. They want to see how far their divergent objectives are achieved, what went wrong what went according to the plan. This would give the plat form for the future. There are two kinds of evaluation that are used in ESP teaching. They are: learner assessment and course evaluation

9.1. Learner assessment

Brindley (2001) defined the term assessment as “a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner’s language ability or achievement” (137). “Assessment refers to the processes and

procedures whereby we determine what learners are able to do in the target language” (Nunan, 1992, p. 185). Both formative and summative (Brindley, 2001) form of assessment should be used to get the desired results. According to Douglas (2000), a specific purpose language test is: One which test content and methods are derived from an analysis of the characteristics of a specific target language use situation, so that test tasks and content are authentically representative of the target situation, allowing for an interaction between the test taker’s language activity and specific purpose content knowledge, on the other hand, and the test tasks on the other. Such a test allows us to make inferences about a test takers capacity to use language in the specific purpose domain. (p.19)

According to Day and Krzaanowski (2011), assessment depends on the objectives of the course and should be based on need analysis. The test we administer should be the one that captures the kind of behavior, skill or performance we are interested in studying and attempting to evaluate. Furthermore, ESP assessment should be appropriate to the context of learning. To illustrate, if the ESP is learner led, assessment should evaluate learners’ performance in the work place. In ESP there are three basic types of learner assessment. They are: placement test, achievement test and proficiency test.

9.1.1. Placement tests

A placement test is used at the beginning of the course to place the learners in the course most suited to their needs. It is done to see the learners' proficiency in the beginning and it is also a tool for need analysis. According to Harmer (1998), generally it tests learners’ linguistic competence and assess their four language skills to determine their level, after which suitable syllabus and materials are decided. Placement test are done in relation to previously decided levels.

9.1.2. Achievement tests

An achievement test is done to assess the learners' progress. It can be done at any time during the course. Harmer (1998) has observed that “these tests are designed to measure learners’ language and skill progress in relation to syllabus they have been following” (321). He further argues that like a progress test, an achievement test should indicate learners’ progress not the weakness as it is based on the syllabus and course objectives. Achievement tests decide whether or not the learners have successfully achieved what they are supposed to learn if they have done at the end of the course. In short it is done to see how much progress has been made in terms of goals.

9.1.3. Proficiency tests

A proficiency test is to assess whether the learners can cope with the demands of particular situation or not. According to Brindley (2001), it “refers to the assessment of general language abilities acquired by the learner independent of a course of study” (p. 137). Standardized commercial language proficiency test like IELTS and TOEFL are used to assess students’ proficiency before they enter a university in native English speaking countries. According to Harmer (1998), proficiency tests assess learner’s general language ability, not their progress since they are not based on any syllabus or curriculum. On the other hand, they measure the degrees of proficiency of learner in the skills or sub skills of a language.

9.2. Course evaluation

This is very important because the future of the course depends on the feedback it receives. The ESP course is to satisfy a particular educational need; therefore, evaluation helps to understand how far it has achieved its objectives. Furthermore, evaluation tells us that whether the course is capable of meeting its stated and required needs of the clients. Course evaluation includes assessing the syllabus, the materials, teaching and learning methods. Generally, it is done through both formal methods like evaluating test results, questionnaires, discussions and interviews, and informal means like chatting or comments. As a common practice, ESP teachers, the learners, the sponsors or a special body evaluate the course. They have many options like during the course, at the end of the course and even after the course.

10. Role of an ESP Practitioner

ESP involves more than teaching; therefore, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) use the term “practitioner” rather than “teacher” to emphasize that ESP work involves much more than teaching stressing the varied role of the ESP teacher. Generally teachers’ role in an ESP class matches the expectation and needs of the learners. The teacher usually provides information about skills and language and controls the activities. Therefore, teachers are provider of input and activities. They manage rather than control learning. In reality, they are the facilitators and consultants. As a result, they negotiate with students about what is appropriate to include and when to include or what to exclude. Johns (2001) observed that “there is considerable demand for ESP teachers who can perform variety of need assessment tasks, such as collecting authentic discourses and analyzing them, making appropriate observations, and consulting various stakeholders-and then produce curricula sensitive to the students and context” (p. 52). A typical practitioner has four key roles: teacher, course designer and material provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator.

10.1. As a Teacher

ESP focuses on helping students to learning; therefore, the practitioner is not the primary knower of the content of material. On the other hand, students know more than the teacher. Accordingly, the practitioner has to organize the class, negotiate with the students to exploit the students’ knowledge and skills and their work experience to achieve the objectives more effectively. Since the relationship between teachers and students is more of partnership, traditional IRF (Initiation- Response- Feedback) will not work. In contrast, it is learners who ask and the teachers who answer learners’ questions. ESP practitioners have to be flexible to accommodate what comes up during the lesson. Furthermore, they have to be prompt to respond to the events. Apart from these, they need to take risks in their teaching which is one of the key points in succeeding as ESP practitioners.

10.2. As a Course Designer and Material Provider

ESP practitioners often have to plan their course that they teach and provide material. Generally, they need to choose suitable published materials if there are, adapt materials or even write if there are no materials available.

10.3. As a Collaborator

ESP teachers have to work with subject specialists because ESP often involves using specific subject content material. This can be either a simple cooperation like discussing syllabus or tasks

in the academic context, or specific like integrating specialist subject studies or activities and the language. For example, the teacher uses a chapter on surgery as a reading part of English for medical profession. Here the subject teacher acts as the content provider, whereas language teacher prepares learners for the subject lecture, conference or seminar. In another situation, both content teacher and language teacher can team teach ESP class. To demonstrate, a language teacher and business trainer work together to teach both the skills and the language related to business communication, or a subject teacher and language teacher work together to help students to prepare a project or a thesis.

10.4. As a researcher and a Evaluator

ESP teacher needs to be in touch with research to incorporate new things that ongoing research brings because they are doing need analysis, designing a course or writing materials. Furthermore, they need to do research in order to explore the discourse of the text that the students really need to use. ESP practitioners use various types of evaluation techniques. They evaluate students' performance, the course and teaching material. They do evaluation while the course, at the end of the course and even after the course.

ESP teachers are not specialists in learners' specific content material, but they are expert in language teaching. Their main aim is to help students who have better knowledge and skills about their subject and profession and skills than their teachers. ESP teachers enable learners acquire essential skills in their academic studies and profession. Therefore, they need to shift from one subject to another and use authentic, updated and relevant material from learners' specialized subjects.

11. Conclusion

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.

About the Author:

Muhammed Ali Chalikandy is a lecturer at English Department, Al Buraimi University College, Burami, Sultanate of Oman. He has master degrees in Linguistics and English. He holds PGCTE and CELTA. Currently I am working on my doctoral degree.

References

- Brindley, G. (2001). Assessment. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (pp. 137- 143). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Burmfit, C. J. (1984). *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chambers, F. (1980). A re-evaluation of need analysis. *ESP Journal*, 1, 25-33.
- Dudley-Evans, T. (2001). English for Specific Purposes. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (pp. 131- 136). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in ESP: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eslami, Z. R. (2010). Teachers' Voice vs. Students' Voice: A Needs Analysis Approach of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Iran. *English Language Teaching*, 3(1), P3.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (2001). English for Academic Purposes. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (pp. 126-130). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harmer, J. (1998). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. England: Longman
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Iranmehr, A., Erfani, S. M., & Davari, H. (2010). A call for the reengineering of Iranian ESP textbooks. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 7(7), 23-30.
- Johns, A., & Dudley-Evans, T. (1991). English for specific purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25, 297-314.
- Jones, G. (1990). ESP textbooks: Do they really exist? *English for Specific or Special purpose*. 9, 89-93.
- Jordan, R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liton, H. A, Mahmoud, M.H. & Alom, Md. K. (2012). Effectiveness of ESP Course for Business Administration at Community College of Jazan University: An Evaluative Study. *Language in India*. 12(10). Retrieved from www.languageinindia.com
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-Centered Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2001). English as a global language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(4), 605-606.
- Raof, A. H. A. & Yusof, M.A.Md. (2006). ESP Project Work: Preparing Learners for the Workplace. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, Volume 8 Issue 1.
- Scrivener, Jim. (2005). *Learning Teaching*. Oxford: Macmillan Education
- Stevens, P. (1977). Special-purpose language teaching: A Perspective. *Language Teaching and Linguistics Abstracts* 10, 3.
- Stevens, P. (1988). ESP after twenty years: a reappraisal. In M. Tickoo (Ed.), *ESP: state of the art*. (pp. 1-13). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Wang, A. (2007). A Research and Discussion Note. Teaching aviation English in the Chinese context: Developing ESP theory in a non-English speaking country. *English for Specific Purposes* 26, 121-128. Retrieved from www.elsevier.com/locate/esp.
- Widdowson, H. (1983). *Learning Purpose and Language Use*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Copyright of Arab World English Journal is the property of Arab World English Journal and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.