

HOW IS IMPORTANT TO TEACH ESP (ENGLISH SPECIFIC PURPOSE)

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article was to determine the importance of English Specific Purpose which not related English specific is used in real life. Furthermore it express the difficulties and how to solve them to learn language easily.

Keywords: ESP, ELT, specific goals, assessment, English proficiency, subject matter knowledge, well-built learning strategies, improper qualification.

In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) concerns the specific English language needs of the target learners/students. It refers to teaching a specific genre of English for students with specific goals which is oriented and focused on English teaching and learning. ESP is designed and developed based on an assessment of purposes and needs and the activities for which English is needed. There are many teacher's roles, such as asking to organize courses, setting the learning objectives, establishing a positive learning environment and evaluating the students' progress. While, the learners are related to a specific interest in learning, subject matter knowledge, and well-built learning strategies. In the implementation of ELT, there are any difficulties or problems related to the teacher in teaching ESP, such as the low quality of lectures and textbooks, teachers' improper qualification and teaching methods and lack of a theoretical framework of teaching ESP. Difficulties related to the students, such as demographic characteristics and demands of learning ESP, English proficiency, differences between different languages, lack of vocabulary, depending on the dictionary and lack of skills in using dictionary especially ESP terms. While, the difficulties related to the environment and others are lack of teaching materials, classes with a too large student number, and heavily focused on the examination

An ESP course is a course which teaches the students English related to a specific discipline. This is in contrast to teaching General English which focuses on the English needed to communicate in general everyday situations. Rather it looks at the language used in a particular situation. This includes the language used in the discipline, the content and any related customs or practices.

Of course, a student learning English for a specific purpose will likely also need to know how to use and understand English in a more general context, but this is a secondary concern for these classes.

Who needs English for Specific Purposes?

English language learners who take ESP classes do so for a very specific purpose. They have a particular language goal in mind, related to their lives and often their jobs. ESP students already have some foundation of the language and are usually adults with higher levels of English. These students are usually highly motivated because their goal is clear. Many times, their work will depend on their English proficiency. As a result, their motivation and dedication levels are high.

Examples of ESP classes are English for Aviation (for air traffic controllers or pilots), English for Hospitality (for hotel staff), English for Tourism (for travel agents and tour guides), English for Medicine (for nurses, doctors and other medical staff), English for Banking, and Legal English. Business English and English for Academic Purposes are ESP courses but they are mainstream so have their own categories.

How to teach English for Specific Purposes

The first need that is important in an ESP class is a needs analysis. A needs analysis will tell the teacher exactly what language and skills the students need to know and why they need to know it. It will provide a background for the teacher so they have a better understanding of the necessity of the classes for their students. ESP classes will often focus on a particular language skill or particular language points, which is in contrast to General English classes which will be sure to include all four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

In contrast, ESP classes are more focused on specific language and contexts rather than grammar and language structures. In other words, instead of teaching the present perfect for past experiences, or phrasal verbs, an English for Hospitality teacher will focus on functional language such as greetings or dealing with customer problems. Any language work that comes out will be a result of necessity rather than focus.

One important aspect of teaching ESP which you must remember is that these lessons are essential for the learners for their daily lives. While they will naturally be highly motivated, they will expect you to be professional and knowledgeable. They will want to enjoy the learning situation but they will not want to do activities without a clear purpose or without a direct relation to their goal. They will also expect to see results. In other words, ESP classes are generally more serious than other classes – but that doesn't mean they have to be boring!

Difficulties of teaching ESP

Chen (2011) describes language pedagogy as the challenge of ESP in Taiwan. One main problem is the widespread opinion that there is no solid theoretical basis to

support the teaching ESP. There were confrontations whether ESP should be viewed as a tool or a discipline, whether ESP should be considered a practical skill or knowledge capital and whether ESP instructors should be “insiders” or “outsiders”. It is argued whether language teachers or subject teacher that should teach ESP. The paper concludes with the dilemma that differentiating ESP instructors into “language teacher” and “subject teachers” only continues the rigid power structures within the academic hierarchy.

Other study, for example the one conducted by Ho (2011), revealed that course designers and teachers encountered problems related to the design of the course, the task, assignments and the teaching methods. The researcher described the teaching ESP in a university in Hong Kong which emphasized on developing students’ English communication skills needed in workplace and/or in academic setting. The students were expected to learn to write and engage in spoken activities related to a number of documents over a period of 13 weeks. They should learn for example how to conduct a meeting, write an agenda, minutes, a memorandum report, a letter and a technical proposal and give oral presentation. Due to the need to achieve so many learning outcomes in a short period, the problems arose.

The other problem in ESP is related to students’ reading skill. A study conducted by Rezaei, Rahimi, & Talepaskan (2012) showed that mostly learners have problems in understanding the concepts of syntactic units in reading text. For example, they do not understand what is the concept of subordinate clause or passive forms. It has also been observed that they did not have problems in understanding the meaning so the researcher assumed that the learners have problems in the form of language. The research proved that the learners encountered problem in syntactic units. The problem arose due to the different structure of English and Persian language.

Learners and their needs in higher education are also problems in the teaching of ESP. These problems are found in the study written by Suzani et.al (2011). The data showed that the learners complained about several things. First, the inappropriate time of conducting ESP course which is offered in the lower semester. They thought they were not ready enough for the course. Second, the class was usually too crowded so the students could not concentrate on their study. Third, it concerned with inappropriate class hours. It was claimed that class’ hours were usually postponed. Fourth, summer course could reduce learners’ motivation. It was due to the shortage of time and excess of specific materials. Fifth, the learners found incompatibility between their previous knowledge and ESP course they have. Sixth, most in ESP classes, the students were just required to memorize terminology. They feel frustrated for not applying them in authentic context. Seventh, the students stated that sometimes the teachers were unable to cope with unwanted problems of teaching ESP in their educational setting.

The study also discussed about problems in relation to course books and teaching materials. There are some points concerning this problem. First, the students did not know about the goals they would achieve and the materials they should prepare for exam. Second, the students felt dissatisfied with the translation method used by the teacher because they think they did not learn anything practical out of the textbook. Third, memorizing a large numbers of terminology is also shortcoming in the method. Fourth, there was not enough tie in vocabulary learning and the last is, after having exam, the learners usually soon forget the vocabulary they learn.

Can I teach English for Specific Purposes?

There is no reason any TEFL teacher cannot teach any ESP class. There is no need to panic if you find yourself about to teach an ESP course related to a field you know nothing about. You do not need to have any experience in that field – just like you don't need to be a businessman or –woman to teach Business English – though of course it will help if you do. If you don't, all you need to do is do your research. These days there are books dedicated to specific ESP courses which you can use to identify the language and the skills needed for that particular class and as the basis for your lessons, just as you would any General English course book.