

ESTABLISHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES POSITION IN ELT CONTEXT

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Abstract. *The present paper tries to explain how English language can be useful in establishing dominant positions in various situations. Globalization has become a reality, a fact that cannot be avoided by any nation in the world. As an Eastern country and nation, India now has to prepare a strategy – how to face the Post-Globalization Era. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a sphere of teaching English Language including technical English, Scientific English, English for medical professionals, English for waiters, English for tourism. Aviation English as ESP is taught to pilots, air traffic controllers and civil aviation cadets who are going to use it in radio communications. A great deal can be written about the origins of ESP. But there are three notable reasons common to the emergence of all ESP: the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics, and focus on the learner. This paper would focus on the rise and origin of ESP and how it has acquired its place in the broader categories of language. It is also categorized in different types with its special and unique characteristic features. In the latter part of the paper the learning methodology and future are discussed.*

Key words: *ESP, globalization, AIRSPEAK, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), course*

1. INTRODUCTION

Primary concern in this paper is with in-service teacher training programmes. I shall examine some aspects of English in a specific purpose situation to appreciate the teacher training needs which arise and it will help those who need to improve their English communication skill in relation to their jobs. This paper by the nature of the subject - teacher training - is bound to be concerned with the practical and the possible. But I consider that the general principles which have evolved over the last two years for our teaching staff development programme could be applied quite widely in the field of ESP. I start by stressing two important characteristics of the ESP situation for the teacher. First, he has to leave the security of the subject-based approach. Instead of 'This is the English Department, so we teach English', he finds, 'This is a natural gasfield and some of our technicians need English to work with their supervisors. Your job is to make them more effective in their work'.

This in turn means that the English language teacher is often a comparatively isolated specialist. He works alone or as part of a small team in a comparatively isolated situation

where his status may be uncertain and his organizational and resources requirements not apparent to others. The new skills demanded of the ESP teacher are often practical ones which can only be learned by exposure to the work itself.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 2.1. To assess the attitude of teachers of English towards writing and the English course.
- 2.2. To identify the expectations and the requirements of the students.
- 2.3. To design an ESP course that aims to develop the academic and workplace skills.
- 2.4. To get a full-fledged course after bringing about some changes in the course.

3. ORIGIN AND RISE OF ESP

The end of the World War II, brought with it an "...age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale. Thus, for various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the Post War World, the role fell to English". Second, the 'Oil Crisis' of the early 1970s resulted in Western money and knowledge flowing into the oil-rich countries. The language of this knowledge became English. The present article consists of the origin of ESP, characteristics, types, English for Science and Technology, English for Business and Economics, and English for Social Studies, English for Academic Purposes, and English for Occupational Purposes.

The second key reason cited as having a tremendous impact on the emergence of ESP was a revolution in linguistics. Whereas traditional linguists set out to describe the features of language, revolutionary pioneers in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) point out that one significant discovery was in the ways that spoken and written English vary. If language in different situations varies, then tailoring language in different situations varies, and then tailoring language instruction to meet the needs of learners in specific contexts is also possible.

4. TYPES OF ESP

4.1. English as a Restricted Language

The language used by air traffic controllers or by waiters are examples of English as restricted language. Mackay and Mountford (1978) clearly illustrate the difference between restricted language and language with this statement - the language of international air-traffic control could be regarded as 'special', in the sense that the repertoire required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined as situational, as might be the linguistic needs of a dining-room waiter or air-hostess. However, such restricted repertoires are not languages, just as a tourist phrase book is not grammar. Knowing a restricted 'language' would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situation, or in contexts outside the vocational environment.

4.2. English for Academic and Occupational Purposes

The second type of ESP identified by Carter is English for Academic and Occupational Purposes. In the “Tree of ELT” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) ESP is broken down into three branches:

- English for Science and Technology (EST)
- English for Business and Economics (EBS), and
- English for Social Studies (ESS)

Each of these subject areas is further divided into two branches:

- a) English for Academic Purposes (EAP)
- b) English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

An example of EOP for the EST branch is ‘English for Technicians’ whereas an example of EAP for the EST branch is ‘English for Medical Studies’. Hutchinson and Waters note that there is no clear-cut distinction between EAP and EOP: “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 student takes up, or returns to a job”.

Finally, self-direction is characteristic of ESP courses in that “.. Point of including self-direction... is that ESP is concerned with turning learners into users”. In order for self-direction to occur, the learners must have a certain degree of freedom to decide when, what, and how they will study. Carter also adds that there must be a systematic attempt by teachers to teach the learners how to learn by teaching them about learning strategies. But this not really a necessity.

5. ROLE OF ESP TEACHER

Many linguists admit that the ESP teacher’ work involves much more than teaching. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) prefer the term “ESP practitioner” as this definition seems to be more detailed and complete. They distinguish the following key roles of ESP practitioner:

- Teacher
- Course designer and materials provider
- Collaborator
- Researcher
- Evaluator

The first role as ‘teacher’ is synonymous with that of the ‘General English’ teacher. The methodology changes as the teaching becomes more specific. In the case of ESP classes, the teacher is no longer a ‘primary knower’. The students themselves are frequently the primary knowers of the content of material. The teacher’s main role is to create real, authentic communication in the classroom based on the students’ knowledge. The second role as a course designer and materials provider, teacher’s role is planning the course and providing materials for it. Provision of materials does not only mean choosing materials and making a suitable number of copies for the class; the teacher’s task also includes adapting material when published materials are unsuitable or writing his/her own materials. But, one of the main controversies in the field of ESP is how specific those materials should be to support materials that cover a wide range of fields, arguing that the grammatical structures,

functions, discourse structures, skills, and strategies of different disciplines are identical. The third role as collaborator, in order to meet the specific needs of the learners and adopt the methodology and activities of the target discipline, the ESP practitioner must first work closely with field specialists. This collaboration, however, does not have to end at the development stage and can extend as far as teach teaching, a possibility discussed by Johns et al. When team teaching is not a possibility, the ESP Practitioner must collaborate more closely with the learners, who will generally be more familiar with the specialized content of materials than the teacher him or herself. An ESP teacher should also be a researcher to fulfill the students' needs. First of all, s/he should research their aims in what they really want to achieve. Then, the research is necessary to design a course, to write teaching materials, and to find out the ESP students' particular interest. Many ESP practitioners are therefore left with no alternative than to develop original materials. It is here that the ESP practitioner's role as 'researcher' is especially important, with results leading directly to appropriate materials for the classroom. The final role as 'evaluator', which is not a new function and evaluation is present in General English classes also but in case of ESP, this role seems to be very important. All teachers should be involved in various types of evaluation and the most popular one is testing students. Tests are conducted to evaluate the students' progress and teaching effectiveness. However, in ESP classes an additional kind of testing should take place, which is the evaluation of course and teaching materials. As ESP courses are often well-adjusted, their evaluation is crucial. General English courses are well-studied and improved by a group of methodology specialists. On the other hand, ESP courses are unique, as it is not possible to create one ESP course that would satisfy all ESP students, therefore, the evaluation is a must.

6. TRAINING OF ESP TEACHERS

Training of the teachers is very important for ESP courses because they should be well specialized so that they can meet students' needs. Therefore, the staff or the teachers should follow some steps about themselves.

- General professional training as an educator and teacher. This element involves what all teachers need to know regardless of which subject they teach. This means that educational psychology, social psychology, and the principles of educational thought are crucial and the elements lead the trainee to understand the nature of education, outline the organization of education, know and manage the different skills of students, and also understand the role of syllabus and teaching materials.
- Special training as a teacher of a foreign or second language. This element is also important because special training of teacher make them understand students' needs better, which is in fact very important for ESP courses because based on what they need the teachers can offer them the appropriate knowledge and this knowledge would be very helpful to them.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper is mostly concerned with English for Specific Purposes (ESP). I tried to introduce the theoretical background concerning ESP and mentioned some characteristic features closely connected with process of ESP learning. The paper drew attention to organizing ESP course and selecting material as an important phase to accomplish its demands and to attain satisfying goals in ESP process of learning. I also pointed out some differences between the role of ESP and General English teacher and stressed the importance and possible ways of evaluation. It also covers the learning centered approach based on learners' needs, expectations and learners' way of learning language. They are mainly learners' needs that must be met rather than teachers' ones and it depends on learning strategies and teachers' attitude to ESP course that is why a motivation was emphasized as a necessary part of a learning process as well.

Moreover, the role of ESP teacher is studied in details and is seen as more complex and more responsible than teaching General English. The ESP teacher is more than a teacher, and he or she is rather a 'practitioner' who apart from teaching, provides material, designs a syllabus, collaborates with subject specialists, conducts research and evaluates the course and the students. The teacher's role is also to organize the class, to be aware of the class objectives, to have a good understanding of the course content, as well as to be flexible and willing to cooperate with learners and have at least some interest in the disciplines s/he is teaching.

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