

## **ESP courses in Kosovo higher education system**

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### **Abstract**

This paper will discuss the English for Specific Purposes (further in this text ESP) and addresses its main notions and examines issues of ESP in Kosovo. The content of the paper is determined by a needs analysis. The educational goal is, first of all, to get an insight into the basics of the English terminology systems and training of students for orientation in the professional literature on foreign language. In this way, students provide a solid basis for further training in the specific area in which they work or will work.

Learning and teaching general English language has always meant the previous adaptation of teachers and teaching materials with the level of students' knowledge and purpose. The links with English for Special Purposes (Eng. ESP), which is interwoven with the general English language in several areas, thus making learning or teaching English for special purposes implies solid knowledge of general English language (Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984).

**Keywords:** *ESP, needs assessment, learner, teacher*

### **Introduction**

The goal of this paper is to conduct an in-depth study in the importance of development of ESP in Kosovo, the use of ESP in university level and the teachers and students' attitude towards use of ESP.

Little attention was given to the creation of a strategic plan for learning English for specific purposes, the adequacy of the selected textbooks, as well as the needs and aspirations of students in relation to this course.

One of the major problems is the lack of harmonization between the knowledge and skills that students possess and the level of the course they attend. Students' needs analysis are of a crucial importance before the ESP course itself; may result in a course that would in the best possible way meet the needs of the students and therefore prepare them for the real situations they may encounter afterwards.

In the past, a long time has been learned General English for various professions, which has not always been of great help when applied to the actual situation of different areas of specialization, such as the engineering,

medicine, tourism, science and technology, and so on. This great number of different professions prompted the need for specialization of ESP, by sharing some common features with special needs, specialized technical vocabulary and specifically working environment, etc.

## **What is ESP?**

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) involves teaching and learning the specific skills and language needed by particular learners for a particular purpose. The P in ESP is always a professional purpose – a set of skills that learners currently need in their work or will need in their professional careers (Jeremy Day, Mark Krzanowski, 2011, p.5).

Growth of ESP began in the 1960s and is today one of the most prominent areas of teaching English. Development of ESP is reflected in the growing number of universities offering master's degrees on ESP. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) ESP does not include some sort of a special kind of language, materials or methodologies, but the essential object is important, or answering the question why a learner needs to learn a English language.

## **Definitions of ESP**

ESP as a teaching method concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures. It covers subjects varying from accounting, nursing or computer science to tourism and business management. The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world (or wishes); instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners (Lorenzo Fiorito, 2005). ESP has been the subject of a variety of definitions by scholars; Duan and GU (2004) define ESP as: "... a pedagogy in which the syllabus, contents, and methods are determined according to the needs of learner's specialized subjects" (Duan and GU 2004: 01)

The most well-known definitions of ESP are that of Hutchinson and Waters (1987) who state that ESP is an approach and not a product to language teaching. Strevens (1988) defines ESP by stating two sets of characteristics: absolute and variable characteristics. Robinson (1991) claims that ESP is a goal-directed and its courses are developed from needs analysis (Strevens 1988 and Robinson 1991 cited in: Dudley-Evans & ST Johns 1998). During the 70s, in the U.S., doctors, lawyers and business professionals rang the alarm for problems they faced with communication

in their work. In fact, professional contexts highlighted the linguistic breaches and miscommunication between medical personnel and patients. As the number of non-native speakers entering the professions in English-speaking countries grew larger, there has been a greater demand for teachers of ESP. this gave birth to English for Science and Technology (EST), which “grew out of analyses of scientific research articles and other scientific texts” Van Naerssen and Eastwood, 2001 (as cited in Nawel KRARZIA, 2013).

“In spite of its relatively young age, English for Specific Purposes is today quite literally the most global of language disciplines and exists, in some form or the other, in practically every country in the world”(as cited in Shaeda Isani,2013). Growth of ESP began in the 1960s and is today one of the most prominent areas of teaching English. Development of ESP is reflected in the growing number of universities offering master’s degrees on ESP. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) ESP does not include some sort of a special kind of language, materials or methodologies, but the essential object is important, or answering the question why a learner needs to learn a English language.

ESP is also known as "applied general English", because the content and target classes are determined according to the needs of the group. The students’ needs and of course, methods of expanding knowledge, make ESP focused on students.

ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners and makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves. Also ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre(Lorenzo Fiorito, 2005).

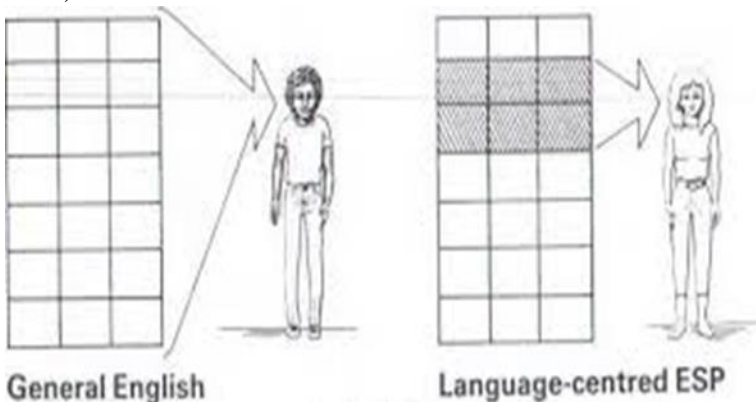


Figure 1: Difference between EFL and ESP (taken from Vani 2015, p 3)

## **ESP Approach**

ESP as a course is a learner - centered and goal directed approach to teaching English with a main focus on specific discipline such as; ESP for Law, ESP for Medicine, ESP for IT etc. Learners are exposed to English Culture and real situations. The ESP approach leads to developing language skills which are needed by individuals to success in their professional careers.

## **The place of ESP within language teaching**

ESP as a teaching method is different from General English, and the main aspect of this difference is the “teacher”. The feature that distinguishes the ESP teachers are their roles. The ESP teacher has got more roles to play in addition to be a teacher; he/she has to be a course designer, material selector, researcher, and an evaluator (Dudley-Evans and ST John 1998). These roles cannot be fulfilled the learners’ needs are not previously analyzed.

ESP teachers do not fulfill all the roles assigned to them as ESP practitioner since they missed the role of a collaborator. So, we can say that ESP teachers should not neglect any of the roles, because each role is connected to the others by. For instance, coordinating with colleagues can help in understanding the type of material your learners’ require, and by doing so we are, also, fulfilling the role of a researcher.

## **Needs assessment**

Needs analysis has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out English for Specific Purposes. The role of needs analysis in any ESP course is indisputable. Informal needs analyses have to be conducted by teachers in order to assess what language points their students need to learn. Needs analysis is the first step in course design and it provides validity and relevancy throughout the entire course.

Today, there is an awareness of the fact that different types of needs analyses are not exclusive but complementary and that each of them provides a piece to complete the jigsaw of needs analysis. All the works done in ESP have sought to promote the communicative nature of language teaching.

Needs analysis should not be (and is not) of concern only within the field of ESP, but also that of General English because the needs of the learners is of paramount importance in any language process.

### **Review of the literature**

A broader definition of ESP is proposed by Hutchinson and Waters propose (1987, p.19). They theorize that ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that there is no difference between the two in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice. ESP differs from EGP in the sense that the words and sentences learned and the subject matter discussed are all relevant to a particular field or discipline. Strevens (1988as cited in Popescu 2010, p.1), defines ESP by identifying its characteristics. He states that ESP consists of English language teaching which is:

- 1) Designed to meet specified needs of the learner;
- 2) Related in content to particular disciplines, occupations, and activities;
- 3) Centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis; discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of the discourse and
- 4) In contrast with general English.(Popescu, 2010)<sup>1</sup>

The design of syllabuses for ESP is directed towards serving the needs of learners seeking for or developing themselves in a particular occupation or specializing in a specific academic field.

The general effect of all this development was to exert pressure on the language teaching profession to deliver the required goods. Whereas English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers (Hutchinson and Waters, 1907, p.7).

### **The role of the teacher in the ESP Approach**

The term "specific" in ESP refers to the specific purpose for learning English. Students approach the study of English through a field that is already known and relevant to them. This means that they are able to use

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<sup>1</sup> A GENERAL VIEW ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ESP AND EGP  
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[http://www.cls.upt.ro/files/conferinte/proceedings/2010/08\\_Popescu\\_2010.pdf](http://www.cls.upt.ro/files/conferinte/proceedings/2010/08_Popescu_2010.pdf)

what they learn in the ESP classroom right away in their work and studies. The ESP approach enhances the relevance of what the students are learning and enables them to use the English they know to learn even more English, since their interest in their field will motivate them to interact with speakers and texts. ESP assesses needs and integrates motivation, subject matter and content for the teaching of relevant skills.(Lorenzo Fiorito, 2005).

From the preceding part of the introduction it can be concluded that the ESP teacher's role is multidimensional. A number of observers have drawn attention to different roles of the ESP teacher. For instance, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) provide five key roles that should be performed by the ESP teacher: teacher, analyst, syllabus designer, materials provider, and evaluator.(ELLE MÄE, 2013).

Further to this "ESP teachers will often have to orientate themselves to difficult problems with little or no guidance" (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 160).

## **Conclusion**

As regards to Kosovo higher education there are only two educational institutions in Kosovo that offer ESP courses; "ESP courses offered in two University of Prishtina academic units: Faculty of Philology and Faculty of Economy" (Shykrane Germizaj, Shpresa Hoxha, 2014 p. 1) and Faculty of Philology in University of Gjakova.

For decades English language is considered in addition to computer literacy one of the imperatives of an educated man. There is a growing demand worldwide for ESP courses, but we do not see this happening in Kosovo higher education happening. Kosovo higher education is not ready for the global needs for the new graduates to meet the international job market demands based on their English proficiency.

Even though Kosovo signed the Stabilization Association Agreement (SAA), received the good news about the visa liberalization(yet a pending process), it is putting efforts to achieve a place in the EU and global market due to globalization, it is believed that it is was not devoted on time enough attention to learning and promoting English language in the lower and higher education system of our country which eventually led to certain consequences which are nowadays especially noticeable when it comes to the level of English of future professionals.

As a conclusion, it has not been given much thought to ESP in Kosovo higher education so far. But, if future or precisely young professionals are

looking forward to expand their job or business abroad ESP courses are the key to the success if they wish to compete globally!

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