ESP (English for Specific Purposes) TEACHING PROCESS, METHODS, ASSESSMENT AND ISSUES

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Abstract: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is generally defined as an approach to learning English which is based on the goals/needs of the learner. In context learning English in Uzbekistan at both high schools and universities, especially for students outside the English department, the ESP approach is a popular choice. The application of this approach is also in line with government policies in education which emphasize the objectives of learning English, namely to improve the ability of students to use English, especially for academic needs and professional careers with an emphasis on reading skills that allow students to understand authentic material topics according to their majors. This article puts forward a theoretical study regarding the basic concepts of ESP including its definition and role as a learning approach, along with related issues including needs analysis as the main feature of ESP, syllabus, learning objectives, materials, methodology, and evaluation of ESP-based English learning.
Keywords: ESP, method, assessment, issue, field, criteria, language, course, learners, adequacy, motivation, sequence, diversity

Defining ESP

As with most disciplines in human activity, ESP was a phenomenon grown out of a number of converging trends of which we will mention three most important:

1)   the expansion of demand for English to suit specific needs of a profession,

2)   developments in the field of linguistics (attention shifted from defining formal language features to discovering the ways in which language is used in real communication, causing the need for the development of English courses for specific group of learners), and

3)   educational psychology (learner's needs and interests have an influence on their

motivation and effectiveness of their learning).

Definitions of ESP in the literature are relatively late in time, if we assume that ESP began in the 1960s. Hutchinson and Waters[1] define ESP as an approach rather than a product – meaning that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language, teaching material or methodology. The basic question of ESP is: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language? The purpose of learning English became the core. Strevens'[2] definition of ESP makes a distinction between 1) absolute characteristics (language teaching is designed to meet specified needs of the learner; related in content to particular disciplines, occupation and activities; centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, text, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of the discourse; designed in contrast with General

[1]Hutchinson,T. and Waters, A. (1987). English for Specific Purposes: a Learning Centred Approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

[2]Strevens, P. (1977). New Orientations in the Teaching of English. Oxford: Oxford University Press

English) and 2) two variable characteristics (ESP may be restricted to the language skills to be learned, e.g. reading; and not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology). Robinson's[3] definition of ESP is based on two criteria: 1) ESP is normally 'goal-directed', and 2) ESP courses develop from a needs analysis which aim to specify what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of

+English, and a number of characteristics which explain that ESP courses are generally constrained by a limited time period in which their objectives have to be achieved and are taught to adults in homogenous classes in terms of the work or specialist studies that the students are involved in.

ESP is traditionally been divided into two main areas according to when they take place: 1) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) involving pre-experience, simultaneous/inservice and post-experience courses, and 2) English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) for study in a specific discipline (pre-study, in- study, and post-study) or as a school subject (independent or integrated). Pre- experience or pre-study course will omit any specific work related to the actual discipline or work as students will not yet have the needed familiarity with the content; the opportunity for specific or integrated work will be provided during inservice or in-study courses.

Another division of ESP divides EAP and EOP according to discipline or professional area in the following way: 1) EAP involves English for (Academic) Science and Technology (EST), English for (Academic) Medical Purposes (EMP), English for (Academic) Legal Purposes (ELP), and English for Management, Finance and Economics; 2) EOP includes English for Professional Purposes (English for Medical Purposes, English for Business Purposes – EBP) and English for Vocational Purposes (Pre-vocational English and Vocational English); in EAP, EST has been the main area, but EMP and ELP have always had their place. Recently the academic study of business, finance, banking, economics has become increasingly important especially Masters in Business Administration (MBA) courses; and 2) EOP refers to English for professional purposes in administration,

[3]Robinson, Pauline C, ed. Hywel Coleman. Working with Language: A Multidisciplinary Consideration of Language Use in Work Contexts. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989. 1 May 2007 medicine, law and business, and vocational purposes for non-professionals in

work (language of training for specific trades or occupations) or pre-work situations (concerned with finding a job and interview skills).

The classification of ESP courses creates numerous problems by failing to capture fluid nature of the various types of ESP teaching and the degree of overlap between "common-core" EAP and EBP and General English - e.g. Business English can be seen as mediating language between the technicalities of particular business and the language of the general public, which puts it in a position between English for General Purposes (EGP) and specialist English. Therefore, some authors suggest the presentation of the whole of ELT should be on a continuum that runs from General English courses to very specific ESP courses.

"English for specific purposes is a term that refers to teaching or studying English for a particular career (like law, medicine) or for business in general." There is a specific reason for which English is learned.

Pauline C. Robinson describes ESP as a type of ELT (English Language Teaching) and defines it as: "Goal-oriented language learning." that means student has a specific goal that is going to be attained. The origin of ESP and its development is closely linked with learners´ interest in various specific disciplines e.g. ´Law English´, ´English for Hotel Industry´ or ´English for Tourist Management´. Students learn English for a specific purpose, represented by studying subject matter, to gain and develop appropriate knowledge and skills through English. That is why English language is not seen as the main goal in the process of learning, but rather a vehicle for its acquirement. "Students study ESP not because they are interested in the English language as such but because they have to perform a task in English. Their command of the English language must be such that they can reach a satisfactory level in their specialist subject studies."

The fact that "learners know specifically why they are learning a language" is a great advantage on both sides of the process.

The group of ESP learners is going to achieve the same goal in the field of studying branch, so learners´ motivation, in a form of the same aim, enables teacher to meet learners´ needs and expectations easier. Learner and the way of learning (´acquiring language´) are considered to be the main factors in the whole process. Hutchinson and Waters emphasise ESP to be an approach not product that means language learning not language use is highlighted. They draw the attention to a ´learning-centred approach´ "in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner´s reason for learning".

Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John divided characteristic features of ESP in two groups according its ´absolute´ and ´variable´ attributes.

Concerning the absolute characteristics (according to Dudley-Evans and St John):

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;

- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;

- ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities;

- The variable characteristics are seen in five points;

- 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;

- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students.

Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

Hutchinson and Waters do not emphasise any concrete limits of students´ level or age, they emphasize learners´ individual needs and specialist knowledge of using English for specific purposes. Although there exist several aims and different purposes why learning English, the way of learning may be same.

"Though the content of learning may vary there is no reason to suppose that the processes of learning should be any different for the ESP learner than for the General English learner." They add that ESP methodology "could just as well have been used in the learning of any kind of English.".

Role of Teaching Materials in ESP

Choosing ESP materials determines the running of the course and underlines content of the lesson. Good material should help teacher in organizing the course or what is more it can function as an introduction into the new learning techniques, and support teachers and learners in the process of learning. Materials are also a kind of teacher reflection, "they should truly reflect what you think and feel about the learning process."

Good material should be based on various interesting texts and activities providing a wide range of skills. Teachers determines which aspects of ESP learning will be focused on but one piece of material can serve for developing more than one skill,

e.g. reading, listening, vocabulary etc. "Teaching materials are tools that can be figuratively cut up into component pieces and then rearranged to suite the needs, abilities, and interests of the students in the course."

Teachers should be aware of the fact if the material is suitable not only for a particular discipline and answers given course goals but also for teachers and learners themselves. Materials should also function as a link between already learnt (´existing knowledge´) and new information.

Concerning the selection of ´General English´ material and ´ESP´ material some criteria must be matched as well. Language teacher is responsible for selecting an appropriate text that contributes to students´ effectiveness that means he or she should pay attention to suitable criteria for its choice. Wallace28 suggests those main criteria:

- Adequacy - should be at the appropriate language, age level;

- Motivation - should present content which is interesting and motivating for students work. It goads into students effectiveness, interest and pleasure of work;

- Sequence - it is important if there is some relation to previous texts, activities, topics not to miss the sense of a lesson;

- Diversity - should lead to a range of classroom activities, be a vehicle for teaching specific language structure and vocabulary and promote reading strategies;

- Acceptability - it should accept different cultural customs or taboos.

Selecting an appropriate material regarding the main criteria is an essential phase in organizing each course. It may happen that learners´ needs and expectations are not met due to wrong choice of material. "Materials provide a stimulus to learning. Good materials do not teach: they encourage learners to learn.»

Hutchinson and Waters, recalling the importance of reading skills for specific target language use areas, associated the stage of finding appropriate materials with searching for a suitable text.

English for Science and Technology has two distinct areas: lexis and grammar that the text

should reflect. Hutchinson and Waters found out that some forms typical for scientific texts were not covered in materials of General English. Those forms were: compound nouns, passives, conditionals. Today, the situation is different. The forms listed above form part of the curriculum of general English.

Materials selection, adaptation, or writing is an important area in ESP teaching, representing a practical result of effective course development and providing students with materials that will equip them with the knowledge they will need in their future business life.

One of the most important issues regarding ESP materials selection and/or writing is whether the materials selected should be solely or primarily subject specific and what the most appropriate ratio of general materials to subject-specific materials is. General materials focus on one's general ability to communicate more effectively, while subject-specific materials focus on a particular job or industry30. When carefully selected, both general and subject-specific materials will equip the students with the necessary skills and knowledge, but subject-specific materials nevertheless better cater for ESP learners' specific needs. Consequently, ESP learners will very often feel more affinity for materials that they find relevant to their area of specialism. The use of subject-specific textbooks is also more in line

with the realization that students are individuals with different needs, styles, and interests and with some central traits of cognitive theory, which, as Skela points out, are the following:
It focuses on purposeful learning;

The learner is seen as an active processor of information;

Learning is the process by which the learner tries to make sense of the information by imposing a meaningful interpretation or pattern on it;
One of the basic teaching techniques is problem-solving;

Recently it has been associated with a focus on deliberate acquisition of a language as a logical system;
The importance of carefully selected rules, which can provide an important shortcut in learning process.
According to Prabhu, another important issue regarding materials is that they should be used as sources: "The fact that materials need to be used as sources rather than as pre-constructed courses should not be regarded as a weakness of task-based teaching; it can in fact be a strength for any form of teaching".

Typology of ESP Materials

ESP materials can be done for different reasons and can be presented in different forms. Kennedy and Bolitho points out that ESP materials are helpful in making students read then get the meaning, read then write such as summarizing or paraphrasing, listen when teachers read from them, speak when the teacher motivates his students to communicate, or do different tasks when the teacher integrates different skills. Activities are very useful means in language teaching. They are of different forms: reading, listening, speaking and writing. Each specialty is based on some skills according to students' needs and the form of the present lesson.

Materials for Reading

Materials for reading are the texts given to learners to practise them in order to achieve a specific aim or various ones. In Oxford Dictionary, activity is defined as "a thing that you do for interest or pleasure, or in order to achieve a particular aim". According to Kennedy and Bolitho, materials for reading play the role of activities; students are asked to read and try to comprehend as they are allowed to use dictionaries to learn new structures and vocabulary. Students have to skim, scan, relate graphs to text, relate diagrams to text, predict and sequence the structure of a text, and understand elliptical writing-telexes. Such activities are means of joy as well as of teaching and learning. They help students in using and practising their available language recourses as to develop their own skills, strategies and level of comprehension; they are the practical contribution of theoretical lessons. Each material for reading is given to students in order to make them master specific points which themselves are helpful for their studies.

Materials for Writing

When students are given a text and after reading it, they are asked to write something. Here, the aim of the material is to serve the skill of writing. Since students are not English ones, they are not asked to write using great styles. Instead, they have to write correct grammar and simple wording. Kennedy and Bolitho insist on the importance of being coherent when writing.
Some adult ESP students do not experience too many problems with coherence as there is classroom evidence to suggest that the ability to organize writing coherently is largely

transferable from the mother tongue. Conversely, an absence of this ability in English in an adult student is bad news for the ESP teacher as it may signal lack of practice in writing coherently in any language.

When implementing written activities, students also must have a purpose. There is no activity without one aim or more as their answers should be relevant to them. ESP students are asked to write reports, take notes, summarize a text, write descriptions of processes and systems, and write letters and telegrams.

Materials for Listening

According to Kennedy and Bolitho, materials for listening might be the most difficult choice. They have to be selected in an appropriate way in order to motivate students and make them listen without getting bored. ESP students may listen to lectures, instructions, seminars, meetings, and committees. Then they have to get key words, main ideas, speakers' attitude, and switches of register. The teacher's role here is to be attentive concerning students' reactions and to the atmosphere of each lesson so that to attract students' attention and satisfy their needs in an appropriate way without making them get bored or confused.

Materials for Speaking

Though those activities need more work for teachers but it is worth using them. They make the speaking process seems easier and more active as they help in making the students' involvements more obvious. So, the use of speaking activities would highly improve students' retention. Such activities add variety to range of learning situations, maintain motivation, refresh learners during formal learning, encourage students' interest, help in making teacher-student distance less marginal, and provide more student-student communication. The more students get motivated, the more students get comfortable and can speak confidently.

Materials for Integrated Skills Activities

Materials for integrated skills are those integrating two skills or more:

speaking, listening, writing, and reading on the same activity. The use of activities should help in making the lesson well prepared and organized. Moreover, the teacher has to confirm the presence of all available facilities. Teachers must confirm that activities are simple and can provide the instructions that are intended to do. Philips35 emphasizes that "the activities should be simple enough to understand what is expected of them.", but some activities may require the four skills and they have a considerable value. Simulation, games and information gap activities, and project work are integrated skills activities.

Teaching an ESP classroom means to have certain qualities in order to help students in satisfying their needs. ESP students need to know the basic foundations of their specialism. They need to learn the common vocabulary and master different grammar rules in order to achieve the ultimate aims of teaching and learning process. ESP materials are useful when doing so since they provide helpfulness through appropriate selection of materials that teach vocabulary content and grammar rules.

Teaching Vocabulary content

Vocabulary is the backbone of ESP classroom teaching. Ur defines vocabulary as "… the words we teach in a foreign language." Thornbury states that vocabulary and lexis in English are frequently used interchangeably. However, words are the building blocks in a language. One cannot develop his knowledge of a specific specialty unless he gets a rich background of its lexical items. English learners may face big problems when learning vocabulary and even when moving from one level to a higher one. Macaro spots the light on vocabulary when

learning a foreign language, especially if it deals with different disciplines where sub-technical vocabulary exists and which are considered as the most crucial type of vocabulary to be learned in order to enhance the teaching and learning process within an ESP classroom. When selecting ESP materials, a great consideration must be given to vocabulary content since it presents the main concern of students' needs. In ESP, "specialized texts of any sort, whatever written or spoken, exhibit various characteristic lexical features." Technical abbreviations, symbols and formulae, highly technical vocabulary, and subtechnical vocabulary are the lexical features of ESP texts. Kennedy and Bolitho (ibid) maintain that teaching vocabulary to ESP students starts from word formation (prefixes and suffixes and identification of word classes) then moves to word relationships (synonymy, contextual clues, selection from alternatives, building up sets, and collocations. ESP materials are of different forms and contain different vocabulary content; the selection depends on the needs of the course, intended language and the degree of authenticity, and the students' level and specialty.

Words do not exist as isolated items in language. They are integrated in a complex system in which different levels of a lexical item is produced in order to supply a suitable understanding in receptive skills and provide an adequate production of ideas in productive ones. Richards and Renandya say that "vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write."

Teaching Grammar Rules

It has been remarked that vocabulary takes a great part within ESP classrooms. But knowing vocabulary without mastering grammar rules does not help students in their studies since grammar has its importance as well. Though discourse can be understandable with wrong grammar rules' use, but it would not be coherent and appropriate, and the meaning of the discourse would not be accurate. Ur defines grammar as "… a set of rules that define how words (or parts of words) are combined or changed to form acceptable units of meaning within a language" Grammar can be taught through two different approaches as Harmer states. "There are basically two ways in which a learner can achieve understanding of a rule, the deductive (rule-driven) path and the inductive (rule-discovery) path". Deductive approach is based on teaching grammar from rules; students are asked to retain the definitions, the rules, the examples, and the exceptions. It is very helpful for students to gain more time in practicing excercises. Inductive approach is based on teaching   grammar   from examples and   students are asked   to discover the organizational principles and formulate a set of rules. Inductive learning can be an effective means of teaching grammar. Learning inductively means studying examples of language in use, and exploring underlying patterns and rules. This approach is very helpful in making learners more active through giving more chance to interaction and discussion when giving them the opportunity to extract rules from the examples.

Macaro proposes two ways that teachers may use when wanting to provide helpfulness to their learners in order to get better memorization and understanding of grammar rules. First, practice might be a good solution. It is controlled, contextualized or communicative. It contains series of stages based on activities that are helpful to transfer the information from short to long memory. Second, consciousness-raising is the other solution. It is an attempt to motivate learners in grammar rules understanding so that their knowledge can be discovered.

The ESP materials that are used to teach grammar rules should respect two principles: efficiency-factor and appropriacy-factor. On the one hand, to be efficient is very crucial. According to Harmer, "when considering an activity forthe presentation or practice of

grammar the first question to ask is: how efficient is it?". Efficiency might be measured according to three elements: economy, ease, and efficacy. On the other hand, appropriacy is the second crucial principle of grammar teaching. Learners are different concerning their interests, level, needs, and goals, beliefs, values, attitudes, age, materials and resource, experience and expectations, cultural factors, group size, educational context, and the constitution of the group. These variations must be taken into account when wanting to be appropriate. These factors are interrelated and cannot be taken separately.

The assessment of any ESP learning process has two main reasons: assessment can be used as constructive feedback to support learning acquisition and also as a quantifiable measure of competence. For engineering students, assessment can be a motivational tool, in order to get them involved in their own language acquisition. This is in accordance with what is perceived as one of the primary reasons for conducting language assessment in the classroom: to promote "meaningful involvement of students with material that is central to the teaching objectives of a given course" [2]. In the case of technical language teaching, the material which is relevant to the teaching objectives of the syllabus / curricula is directly derived from the students' field of interest, which therefore increases the chances of intrinsic motivation for learning. Assessment can also benefit teachers. "When the results are in, the teacher can see how well the students did on the material being assessed and check for any discrepancies between expectation and actual performance. This information may indicate how well the students are learning or if they have mastered the material, how well the teacher has put across the material, and how well the item was written. Such feedback to the teacher can suggest areas for instruction, for review, or for improving future assessment" [2]. Given the complexity of the technical English language teaching, dealing not only with purely linguistic objectives but also with specialized content, a comprehensive understanding of assessment should probably emulate the distinction drawn by Cheng and Fox (2017), who distinguish between "assessment for learning" and "assessment of learning". [3] The latter traditionally employs classical test, often serving administrative purposes, usually happens at the end of a learning process and has little or no effect on learning. The former, the assessment for learning, takes place during the learning process in order to "decide where students are in their learning process, where they need to go and how best to get there" [3]. It involves both teachers and students and its role is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the learning and teaching process, to provide feedback in order to improve. An even more accurate perspective on assessment in the context of English for specific purposes is the one provided by Icy Lee who coins a new term: "assessment as learning", defined as "a subset of assessment for learning" [4]. The learner is seen as the linking element between the assessment and the learning process, having a crucial role in assessment. Assessment as learning is connected to assessment for learning: "Assessment as learning encourages students to monitor and exert self- regulation over their thinking processes and stresses the importance of fostering students' capacity overtime to be their own assessors. Students take a proactive role in their learning, use assessment information to self-assess and self-monitor their learning progress, reflect on their learning, and make adjustments in their thinking so as to achieve deeper understanding and to advance their learning"[4].

2.1.   Assessing writing skills While writing may not be one of students' favorite tasks, it is an endeavor with which engineers are confronted daily. What is essential for a correct assessment of writing skills is the provision of adequate input and the specification of purpose and audience. The input must be connected to the students' interest, it should have a practical application in real life and activate students' vocabulary in terms of specific terminology. Especially in the case of technical English, the input is often in visual form: a graph, a scheme, a diagram, a table, a drawing, a pie chart. The specification of purpose and

audience of the writing task is also important as this information guides students in terms of register choice and specific terminology, while also setting a standard for the teacher to facilitate assessment. The use of holistic rating scales to the detriment of analytical ones is preferable in the case of ESP. Holistic scoring draws on an assessor's response to an entire performance produces by the student. These rubrics generate a single score for a performance. Their drawback is that they do not provide specific information about individual components or subskills [5]. However, the choice of holistic scales to assess written production of most types in the ESP language class seems to be the adequate choice. The reason lies in the fundamental objective of any the ESP teaching process, that of making the future engineer perform well in a professional environment requiring English language skills. The fluent production of coherent and cohesive texts prevails over the otherwise significant issues regarding, for example, specific language structures. 2.2. Assessing reading skills The practice of reading skills in the context of teaching foreign languages for engineers has much in common with the Content language integrated learning (CLIL) approach. The common point is the obvious focus on content and on creating motivation for the learner to acquire not only language skills, but also specialized knowledge. While the general English teaching is usually concerned with reading material which should be interesting and arouse students' curiosity, the professional learning context implies this and much more. Given the specialized aspect of reading material, assessment practices should include a series of tasks (classically questions) which should make it impossible for students to know the answer from previous knowledge, without reading the text. Bearing this in mind, the instructor may design the classical indirect items to check understanding: multiple choice, true/false, matching tasks, gap fill, short answers questions, ordering tasks, integrated tasks.

Assessing listening skills

In the ESP class, listening is usually assessed in integrated activities. However, there are cases when specific listening tasks are in order, for example in the case of formal exams which require objectively quantified results. In this case, the same activities used to assess reading skills may be used: multiple choice, true/false, matching tasks, gap fill, short answers questions, ordering tasks, integrated tasks. Information transfer is an activity which can be successfully implemented with engineering students given its practical nature. Students are expected to listen to a text and fill in a table or label charts and diagrams based on the information they receive. Just like in the case of assessing reading skills, when designing listening tasks one should primarily focus on the subject of the audio material which should reflect students' academic interest.

Assessing speaking skills

Since modern methodologies of English language teaching all focus on the importance of the speaking skill to assess learning progress, the same importance should be given to the practice and assessment of speaking skills in ESP classes. Since it is a special, essentially interactive skill, its design, practice and assessment methods may become a challenge for the ESP language instructor. This special status is formally acknowledged and tereated accordingly in methodological literature: There is a lot of interest now in oral testing, partly because teaching is more than ever directed towards the speaking and listening skills, particularly in the early stages. Naturally, this should be reflected in the testing. In order to free oral tests from the burden of conventional language testing wisdom, they should be considered as a class of their own." [6] The selection of input is essential for the language instructor. They must select them in such a way that the subject is relevant for the general purpose of the ESP class and it should simultaneously be generous enough to stimulate discussion, task which may be difficult to achieve with essentially technical topics. Among

the most common assessment methods for ESP purposes are presentation, interviews, group discussion tasks, reacting to a stimulus (describing pictures and other types of visual inputs, compare and contrast, explain trends in graphs, offer opinion, give instructions in a given situation etc). The assessment of the speaking skill should focus on various aspects such as fluency, accuracy, specialized lexical range, grammatical structure, pronunciation. To assess all these correctly, the language instructor may resort to rating scales which are objective standards against which students' English speaking level is measured

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