

The Importance of Adjusting the ENS English Curriculum under the Umbrella of EDP.

The case of the Algerian ENS English Department.

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ABSTRACT:

The Algerian Ecole Normale Superieure (ENS) English department trains students for five years and awards them the degree of Teacher of English as a foreign Language (TEFL). The Algerian ENS has fulfilled this role, but to some extent is it practical to continue teaching English without regard to developmental issues. Thus, EDP comes to revitalize and re-adjust the curriculum in terms the learners' awareness about the issues and the problems related to the development of their communities as the society at large. Contrary to what we see in the usual ENS curriculum which is based on how to teach or learn how to become a teacher. In EDP, teaching English is not viewed as a mere tool to help learners cope with their working environment, but rather as a way of enabling them to grasp the relevant issues of their community and foster its development (*Gueye,1990:249*). To trace an outline for our objective, which is to show how can EDP meet the demands of our modern world and break the limited frame of workplace, some related and leading questions are to be set including the following: ? 1-Does the ENS English curriculum serve the needs of development? 2-how about our graduates, are they able to integrate their gained knowledge everywhere (like enterprises, companies...) apart from those workplaces like secondary, middle...schools 3- Do teachers nowadays, really, need to consider English as a key that will give them access to science, technology and world culture? 4- what needs to be done to the traditional ENS English curriculum to make it more relevant to our development needs?

Key words:

ENS: Ecole Normale Superieure **TEFL:** Teacher of English as a foreign Language **EDP:** English for Developmental Purposes

Introduction and Context:

It's inevitable that the Algerian ENS has the responsibility of training the students to become teachers in different school levels including that of primary, middle and secondary. These latter, underwent a deep reform in their what is called curriculum. Since then teachers of primary, middle and secondary school have started to complain about the complexity and the inability of coping with the nature of the exported and adopted learning content. This has been noticed to be due to the willing to serve the needs of development that the world of education is witnessing in all its aspects. So, if we come back to the aforementioned unchanged responsibility of the Algerian ENS and, in particular, that of English department; we would say that it requires an update in the delivery of its curriculum's content. In this way, the ENS English curriculum should come to pave the way for its graduates who are being asked to use their knowledge of English for much wider purposes and with regards to developmental issue than simply teaching English in high schools for example. And this is exactly what English for Developmental Purposes (EDP) aims at. This has been discussed in different teaching forums mainly in the third-world countries citing Mali, as an affected country, in ***English Teaching Forum, April 1997***. From here it came to our mind the idea of suggesting EDP while revising the ENS English curriculum for our graduates to meet the demand of our modern world and break the limited frame of the workplace which is tied only to middle and high school. Thus, this short paper comes to make a case of the Algerian English Curriculum and the need to be updated for our future graduates to be autonomous and flexible when facing the current competitive and global education. Some ENS teachers of English and those students who are about to graduates helped us to give concrete facts on the current adopted curriculum through a spontaneous interview the results of which served practical suggestions to a better need driven curriculum. Yet, important questions must be asked about:

1-Does the ENS English curriculum serve the needs of development?

2-how about our graduates, are they able to integrate their gained knowledge everywhere (like enterprises, companies....) apart

from those workplaces like secondary, middle...schools 3- Do teachers nowadays, really, need to consider English as a key that will give them access to science, technology and world culture?
4- What needs to be done to the traditional ENS English curriculum to make it more relevant to our development needs?

The state of the ENS Curriculum (through interview analysis)

To be objective in our discussion about the role and the state of the currently adapted English curriculum in the Algerian ENS, we have been in contact with some of the ENS teachers as well its students. This was through a natural and free interview on the extent of reliability and consistency of the English curriculum. It's worth to note that this paper was produced in undesirable conditions so we couldn't undertake or have the necessary materials to extend it to more analysis and details. In this way, an interview with the maximum number of teachers as well students held to ensure two main things: 1. the content and the nature of the English curriculum in delivering successful students in both school and life 2. Implications needed for more flexible and upgraded curriculum in the **changing world**.

From the information based on the undertaken interview, we can say that it's true

that the ENS English department has fulfilled its role to some extent but this role should change and adjust itself according to the demands of our modern world and the unemployment problem faced by all ENS graduates. We mean by this, the limited number of workstations in high and middle schools while in development we can notice a great need for language skills mainly those of English language (***supported by English Teaching Forum, April 1997***). English teachers, in this context, should be trained enough in preparing their graduates to take part in business life of the country (Algeria) and the world. And this is nearly the case of ENS English departments. Why then preventing our professionals to have an open and boundless professional life ***think some of our interviewed undergraduates***. Teachers are not found in high, middleschools only. But also in places where more challenges are found and English language is extremely needed. For example, teachers nowadays English teachers work in great organizations, embassies, oil and mining companies, translate documents, act as interpreters or tourists

guides...etc. as we see here, English is deemed as an opportunity in business, economics and administrations. Contrary to what we receive as attitudes and what we observe in the Algerian English curriculum when we come to talk about the Algerian ENS. In point of fact, The ENS English curriculum doesn't teach its graduates to use their knowledge of English for much wider purposes than teaching English in high schools. Always based on the interview results, we can get the fact that more subjects related to civilization, literature are focused on regardless of those subjects which help the learners getting well in the basic skills of English language and those which helps them contribute positively to the resolution of some problems facing our communities. Following the right saying of *Hutchinson and Waters (1987:72)*:

...Learning can, and should, be seen in the context in which it takes place. Learning is not just a mental process; it is a process of negotiation between individuals and society.

So, the mission of the ENS English departments should be redefined only according the new definition dictated by the need of our society or we can say that any curriculum content should follow the **developmental purposes**. In addition to all this, our English teachers set the point of the use of educational technology. Though technology is highly recommended and dictated by the authority, many things should be done about. Meaning that neither teachers are trained to use educational technology nor the learners are exposed to high definition and trusty technology. With this latter, students need to be comfortable which enables them to collaborate across international boundaries. All this and that can be observed in the coming conversations with few of our English teachers and those students who are about to graduate and others graduates (Appendix 1 and 2).

What is EDP:

The concept of EDP, which means English for developmental purposes, comes into use with the work of the *Malian* researchers **Mamadou Guey**. This latter suggested a kind of revision of the ENS curriculum in Mali under the influence of nowadays continuing development. And from here it comes the used concept of EDP. This last can be defined through the work

of *Gueye (1990:249)* when he attempted to show the differences between ESP and EDP though there are similarities between them saying:

“One of the main differences between ESP and EDP is that whereas ESP tries to provide the learner with skills to communicate in the work field, EDP tries to heighten learners’ awareness in terms of issues and problems related to the development of their communities as the society at large. In EDP, teaching English is not viewed as a mere tool to help learners cope with their working environment, but rather as a way of enabling them to grasp the relevant issues of their community and foster its development. In EDP, needs analysis should be supplemented with roles analysis.”

So we can say briefly and summarily that EDP is a kind of an updating for the learners’ needs and roles in the changing demands of our society or rather our professional life.

The importance of considering EDP under the dominated aspects of the modern world:

The mission and the role of EDP can be summarized in the following quotation from the work of the Malian researcher *Gueye (1990:246-47)* stating:

“Given that most third-world countries see English as a key that will give them access to science, technology and world culture, I think that, in preparing learners of English, curriculum designers should map out priority issues relates to various aspects of the socio-economic and socio-cultural development of the learner’s community. The English teacher should then rely on this information to help learners not only to realize the importance of the roles they will take later on in the development process of their community after formal teaching is over, but also to develop critical thinking.... In terms of methodology, EDP should be eclectic and rely on techniques used in EDP and other language-teaching theories such as Community language learning, Suggestopedia, and so on.”

As we understand from this well summarized and studied definition about the role and the place of EDP in any given curriculum, EDP acts as a flexible concepts depending, as we

earlier mentioned, on the current needs of the learners and the different roles they desire to act in their society as a whole mainly in their future professional life. Finally, it's worth to state that EDP is not a cure unless some pre-conditions are achieved. We mean by that, before applying EDP many points must be adopted for more guaranteed success such as the availability of teaching and learning equipment, the early training of the training on those imported items or being specialized teachers (teachers of ESP for example) . However the advice of **Dubain and Olshtain (1986:92)** is noteworthy when they averred:

“A good language syllabus should have a well-specified goal towards which all are moving; it should organize the material so that the learners can consistently progress in their acquisition by using generalization as stepping stones...”

Practical suggestions to refresh the Algerian ENS English curriculum in the light of EDP:

Based on the talk held with a few of the ENS English teachers and students, about the state of the current adopted curriculum and its helpfulness in the professional life according to our future leaders of our country, and relying on the work of the Malian ENS English teacher (*Mamadou Gueye*) the proposals of whom served us well in giving practical recommendations to revitalize and re-adjust the ENS English curriculum in the light of EDP, it's in this sub-title that we are going to set some handy points which must be taken into account to make traditional curriculum more relevant to our development needs.

- Because the learners' expectations and objectives change from one given period to another and from one community to another, needs analysis followed by roles analysis as we previously explained in the course of this paper. According to **Gueye (1990:247)**, this will give us information about the learners' identity and objectives in the English class, the learners' assessment of the socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions of their community in addition to their anticipated future roles in terms of their desire or reluctance to bring about social, cultural, or economic changes in their community life.
- As mentioned by our interviewees the fact of studying in the last years of studies British with American civilization, British

with American literature and African civilization. So do we think that it's really necessary to teach English or American literature in the present economic atmosphere (*English teaching forum, April 1997:55*). As a replacement for, Gueye suggested buttressing the students' basic skills in speaking, listening, writing and reading along with grammar, translation, composition and phonetics. This is to ensure that our graduates will take hold of English language being learnt in the same way. After that we can think about integrating important issues related to education, health, environmental education....in their classroom communications.

- *Gueye* also encourages the introduction of modular scheme, mainly in the third and fourth year, including matters related to economics and management, democracy and development under the form of lectures presented by specialist in the field.
- Since the first year is suggested to be the year of the basic skills which are deemed as those courses necessary for a good level of English, the reduction of hours for those theory based modules in the second and third year for example. This can be phonetics, linguistics.... and free the curriculum from those subjects related to medieval English, religion in America, etc. In the same truck, *Gueye stated in the April 1997 English Teaching Forum* “*Teachers must determine which aspects are relevant to an EDP course in the syllabus.*”
- Practice based curriculum is called for. For example under the radiance of EDP in the last years of studies students should be encouraged to have field visits at the business companies of the countries where English are extremely needed for various purposes. Because throwing our undergraduates and spreading them all over the country to get them on training at high and middle schools is not paving them a way to meet the current professional challenges in addition to the limitation of the working domains. While in www.kariyer.net (a web site for job advertisements) we find a bundle of vacancies which needs the domination of field specific English.
- Learners and teachers should be well trained on the new technologies, especially for teachers, and on what they are learning (mainly for learners). More practice and palpable learning are needed. Chiefly in the level of higher education

where students are prepared to meet professional challenges and transmit a productive knowledge for future coming generations. On the tongue of **Gueye (1989:70-79)** we read the following: “...I think that it is still worth trying to use microcomputers in TEFL in a developing country. In language learning tasks, they can help students improve their reading and writing skills. In the future, with the advent of new technologies, computers will help develop listening and speaking skills as well”. This is what we are now.

In a nutshell, we want to make it clear that this simple paper dictates to us the importance of considering field-specific English and how it varied from one time to another. This is why the concern of the Algerian ENS should change its direction which is turn dictated by the demands of the developing world. So any Curriculum should be flexible and is exposed to adjustments at any given time and in relation to the students’ need and role in their working life.

Limitations of the research:

Before closing this informative paper we need just to clear it up to our consultant that this research is not really meant to concentrate on the structure of it content but rather on conveying and applying the issue that has been discussed restrictively based on The Malian ENS. So the only reliable source of information relied on when trying to clarify the notion of EDP. This is in addition to the difficulty of being in touch with our interviewees. Some of our interviewed teachers and students are from relatives and those we know more living nearby. We would have liked to make much more an action study but much backing is needed like tools, time, availability of participant here in Algeria. But this should be kept as a stepping stone for near future alike studies implementations.

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APPENDIX ONE

Interview questions for Teachers

1. Since you are an English teacher in the Algerian ENS, do you enjoy teaching with the currently adopted syllabus? Give us the details please!
2. Sincerely when teaching, do you rely, at 100%, on the given program? say why please for
3. Do you think really that the current role of the English curriculum matches the students' needs and roles in their future professional lives?
4. If you are teaching those students who are about to graduate, would you tell us to what extent they are they able to integrate their gained knowledge everywhere (like enterprises,

companies....) apart from those workplaces like secondary, middle...schools

5. Could you tell us what is right and wrong with the ENS English curriculum in terms of the nature academics subjects being taught, the number of hours given to each subject, their indispensability in the students' learning process and their professional lives?

6. What needs to be done to the traditional ENS English curriculum to make it more relevant to our development needs?

APPENDIX TWO

Interview questions

for

students

1. Sure you are a student of English, would you tell us why you have chosen this foreign language as a source for your future professional life?
2. Now and you are in the final mission to get your diploma, how do you feel in terms of your readiness for professional life?
3. Say what satisfies you and what doesn't satisfy you in the course of your studies with the curriculum content dealt with?