Teaching and Learning Specific English Language at

ENS- Bouzaréah

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Introduction

The main concerns of ESP have always been, and remain, with needs analysis, text analysis, and preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their study or work situation.(T, Dudley-Evans et al, 1998) The expansion of English language use in science, technology, and research discoveries, leads to the development of English language as international and to its specificity. According to JC, Richards, 2001 there are   scientific English, Business English and technical English. In other words, ESP is designed to meet specified needs of the learner. (Streven in T.Dodley et al, 1998) From the 1960s (T.Dudley-Evans et al, 1998) or 1970s, (C.Richards, 2001) the definitions provided about ESP differ. It was first defined as an approach"by JC. Richards, 2001 and Hutchinson and Waters in T.Dudley-Evans et al, 1998 to respond to

• The need to prepare growing numbers of non-English background students who wanted to pursue their studies at American and British universities;
• The need to design syllabuses to teach non-English background learners who had mastered general English but needed English to use in specific jobs as doctors, nurses, engineers;
• The need to be used for business purposes;
• The need of immigrants to deal with job situation.
(JC.Richards, 2001)

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Most of researchers agreed that learners' needs constitute the primacy in ESP.

This characteristic is so important that the syllabuses and courses should develop from needs' analysis (Robinson, 1991 quoted in T.Dodley, et al, 1998). Needs refer to wants, desires, demands, expectations…. They are described in terms of a linguistic deficiency that is as describing the difference between what the learner can presently do in a language and what he or she should be able to do. (JC. Richards, 2001).

Our aim, in this project, is to seek how this specific English related to teaching is translated in the curriculum developed, what content is privileged and what skills are advantaged to acquire this specific English to be able to take and adapt what is appropriate in their classes.

We will inquire teachers and learners about the curriculum via questionnaires and interviews to confirm the different data and seek whether they converge or diverge to draw conclusions suggesting possible recommendations.

ESP at the ENS

In ESP, needs are described in terms of performance that is to say in terms of what the learner will be able to do with the language at the end of a course, the goal of an ESP course is to prepare learners to carry out a task or a set of tasks (Robinson, 1980 in T.Dodley, et al, 1998) Thus, learners in ESP study to perform a role.

According to this definition we can assert that the ENS teacher training higher school prepares learners to carry out the task say, teaching practice or perform the role of middle or secondary school teachers. The specificity according to those learners corresponds to all the subjects related to educational field like pedagogical approaches, applied linguistics, syllabus design,

teaching act, the management of a class, the use of material and the supporting materials used as aid in teaching /learning and so forth. They all require specific terminology, specific methodology and more over specific learners' needs that should be taken into account to provide them with a curriculum including appropriate modules that help prepare efficient and qualified teachers.

It is clear that all what is new needs reflection and it is honest to say that from its apparition up to now teaching ESP remains difficult. Most of teachers dealing with such a subject wonder whether it is a matter of approach to use with learners, terminology, specific grammatical structures, or rather a question of strategies to be used to master this specific knowledge. All these questions, teachers' needs, wishes, desires and worries have been taken into account in our questionnaire, to collect data to draw officials, educational administrators, and teachers' attention on the present issues.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is intended to gather data from 40 female and 40 male learners from the Arabic and French departments. Those student-teachers learn English in order to develop themselves professionally via documents, internet…

After analysis, we registered the following results:

• The majority of learners are worried about their future;

• Some of them find it difficult to study with an enormous lack of material and documentation;

• All of them find teaching of ESP traditional in which the teacher is "the encyclopedia who knows everything" and students "empty heads" to fill in, so they are limited to listen, repeat and answer teacher's questions. In other words, there is no interaction

between the learners themselves, and between the teacher and the learners.

As a conclusion, we noted that some questions were ambiguous according to the responses we got. Thus, we decided that rewording those questions was imperative and a second distribution of the amended questionnaire took place which provided the following results:

To the questions about their participation, and teaching skills:

• the outcomes showed a great passivity from the learners during the teaching process while we registered 28.50% for listening , 21% for speaking according to the subjects scheduled to be taught. In addition, we noted 16% for grammar and reading and 17% for the writing skill.

To question related to the program of the subject:

• 10% of the learners estimate that the syllabus is inappropriate, 10% found a part of it appropriate, but 40% found it appropriate and their level of achievement depended from them, in other words, it was due to their absence of motivation.

For the question dealing with difficulties encountered:

• Learners find a lot of difficulties when dealing with texts since they are full of new, complex, specific words.

For the question dealing with supporting materials:

• The majority of learners questioned found the didactic tools and the supporting materials insufficient and inefficient. And moreover there are no opportunities to get their own documents.

According to learners' evaluation:

• For 100% of learners, Evaluation is reduced to examinations or summative evaluation scheduled officially by the administration.

Interview

The results registered from the questionnaire remain insufficient, thus the interview of experienced teachers became the plausible solution to provide satisfaction and credibility. This tool is conducted to get more details and the experimented teacher is invited to this face-to-face discussion. The questions were spontaneous and focused on what was dealt with in the questionnaire.

Results

According to the interviewee,

• the major objectives were to use this English as a tool of research in order to read to renew their acquirements, to exploit their findings and adapt them in their teaching to meet their students' needs;

• the general English is taught in daily-life situations that students appreciate since they react actively and positively;

• teaching practice takes into account grammatical structures practiced in the form of "drills", repetition, and substitution cues to master the structure of the day followed by pronunciation repetitions. The session of one hour and a half takes into account the four skills. However, after grammar and pronunciation, the focus is put rather on reading and writing;

• According to the teaching-learning process that the interviewee called "method" it is relied on

1. A presentation of the structure or the topic of the day's lesson used in a daily life situation;

2.   Followed by some oral exercises of application on pronunciation, repetition to reach drills;

3.   Followed by written production made up of filling gap exercises, sentence construction and writing paragraphs on the structure or topic of the day.

But concerning the program, it seems to be inexistent since according to the administration we inquired about the program the response was that

"English subject for teachers of Arabic and French is not important since it is not a fundamental subject. They are to be teachers of Arabic, French".

The teacher interviewed improvised through a small evaluation he conducted at the beginning of the academic year to determine the language points he found his students in need. As a part-time teacher of translation, he decided to use Arabic to explain difficult words or structures. This is a positive approach especially with adults.

Results of the Questionnaire and the Interview

These results are the outcomes of the converging method.

Concerning

•   The objectives, the interview confirmed the fact that they are appropriate according to learners' needs;

•   The language aspects, it seems that there is divergence in the sense that the interview privileged reading and writing to speaking. But in fact, the teacher favored speaking since he started his lessons with the presentation phase during which students repeat the language point of the   day. Oral reputational as an important skill is confirmed by the respondents of the questionnaire;

•	The positive point we registered is the interference of Arabic language in the translation of some elements;

•	The grading is the speed with which the student progresses, how much new material is introduced in a given number of hours, how close together or how far apart new grammatical structures are in relation to each other, how much new vocabulary is introduced in each unit and so on." (A, Cunnings worth, 1984) the grading is respected;

•	The program seems to be useless since most of them even the syllabuses intended for the principal subject consist of lists of items to be taught.

•	Supporting materials such as documents, audio-visual aids… are reduced to what the teacher owns and uses in his teaching. The teacher and students, use internet for personal use.

Program Analysis

This analysis requires the construction of a rubric, including the selected criteria: adequacy, relevance, updating.

This analysis made by the researcher provides qualitative data concluding that the programs designed for Arabic and French middle and secondary teacher training are obsolete according to their structural entrees while they should focus on the specificity to achieve the objectives set for them. They use traditional methods and approaches of teaching and evaluation which focuses on rote recall as it was the case in the first Normal Schools(ER, Ducharme, 1993). Very often what they store in their short term memories and then deposit on their exams vaporizes after they have passed their exams (LP, Maki; 2004) because English language, like the administration confirmed, is only a foreign language.

Educator Professional Development

Teacher professional development is most of the time neglected. To confirm their needs and provide them to the authorities, we decided to collect them with the commonly used tool: questionnaire because they are more efficient for gathering various information on large scale than are many of the other procedures. (JD, Brown, 1995).

Our sample counted twenty (20) teachers of English in Arabic and French departments having in charge student-teachers' training.

The results may be summarized as follows:

• All of the informants questioned confessed their weaknesses according to ESP teaching, but they think they make their best to update their acquirements, through documentations or internet, and master the new approaches and strategies to improve their ESP teaching and therefore achieve the objective expected that allows student-teachers" to inform in order to form". This task is hard since it requires teachers to be skilful to apply what they learnt theoretically;

• According to conferences or seminars on ESP teacher training question, the majority agreed that they are inexistent because the module is "a sub-module" held only by part-time teachers of English, the only teacher-training provided is what 2% of them pursue in private schools. The latter were set in Algeria a decade ago run by British or American experts of ESP. These schools offer training abroad but they are very expensive teachers could not afford that;

• According to their needs, 70% of them seem to be disoriented to approach ESP teaching because they lack most of basic conditions. In addition to this, ESP is a recent subject that designers and curriculum developers do not include elements to

facilitate teaching practice. The absence of everything such as supporting materials, recommendations from experts how to approach the subject , teacher professional development, discourage teachers feeling guilty of not being competent in their teaching process;

• According to what they think about ESP teaching. Most of them think of specific terminology to teach but this requires specific texts. For instance in our case, the texts to be selected should be various, since students are intended to teach in middle or secondary schools and moreover they are going to use English to improve their levels and update their acquirements through articles, accounts of conferences, journals….

Conclusion

ESP is unknown in Algeria, since none knows the place and quality of this discipline. It's the role of specialists to make the authorities aware of this subject and the benefits students can have from it so that policy-makers may provide it the important place it deserves. Furthermore, syllabus designers should take students needs into account to select appropriate content in order to meet their needs.

It is evident that according to the development of technologies, the growing of trademarks and globalization leading in Algeria like everywhere in the world to the settlement of foreign firms requiring from their new recruits to speak English fluently this is a sine qua non to apply for jobs there and deserve the higher salary they offer.

Teachers in higher school of ENS teaching ESP in Arabic and French departments are conscious of their weaknesses due to their incomplete initial training and to the lack of means and conditions that may help them in their implementing lessons and managing classes.

Suggestions and recommendations

Efficient ESP teaching requires:

• Revision of the curriculum taking into account

1. The appropriate list of items meeting students' needs;

2. The list of competencies that should be developed during the continuum of students learning;

3. Various class activities guaranteeing learners improvements;

4. Balance between the different functions of the foreign language allowing a better learner participation in teaching and learning consequently a better management of the class for the teacher and students;

5. Introduction of the ICT

• Professional development training in forms of meetings of teachers to share their own experience, conferences held by foreign experts, workshops, or summer trainings guaranteeing promotions for those who attend them because they doubtless find a familial or personal reason to miss them;

• Training on how to build questionnaires or appropriate tests to determine their students' needs in order to set appropriate objectives, adapt the content that will respond to their students' expectations;

• Training on formative evaluation to capture their students' progress in forms of assessment class activities, and summative evaluation and how to render it more objective and more representative of the actual students ability;

• Update the library, providing it with specific documents related to English language as a specific language, its teaching, evaluation and the use of ICT.

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