

## THE DIFFICULTIES THAT HINDER THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING ESP IN THE LAW DEPARTMENT

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**Abstract.** *Teaching English for specific purposes is an essential issue among EFL teachers. This paper attempts to determine how to overcome the difficulties of teaching/ learning English in the department of law at Abou Bakr Belkaid University. Although Algeria is trying to integrate ESP into tertiary education to respond to this growing demand for English, some fields still are not taught English since secondary school. Students in the department of law lack competence proficiency in English. A case in point is students of master who start learning English in the last year of graduation. They haven't practised English for at least four years. Hence, the utility of learning English is likely to be more apparent when writing their final thesis because they need to consult references and documents. The department staff must take the initiative in conducting the necessary needs analysis, designing an appropriate syllabus, preparing suitable materials, meeting and getting to know the students, teaching the course, and devising and administering appropriate tests. Hence, we will achieve a kind of professionalism.*

**Key words:** *The challenges, Teaching ESP, The teacher's role the opportunities.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As time is pressing the Algerian to open their market to the economic world, English has become necessary to communicate with foreigners, leading to a need to devise, design, and teach English for Specific Purposes (ESP)courses. In these courses, "language is learnt not for the sake of gaining a general education, but to facilitate the path to the entrance to professional or workplace environments" Basturkmen (2006:18). English has started to be taught in the fourth year (i.e., master's degree). However, most graduates cannot read, collaborate correctly, or understand the English language in general and practise legal rhetoric in formal contexts in particular. Such a cavillous situation is that in the tertiary studies, English courses are not provided.

Therefore, this study investigates the experts' perceptions of the English language in the field of law. It's worth mentioning that the overwhelming majority of these students

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will be future lawyers or administrators after graduation. However, a small minority will carry on postgraduate studies after taking a competitive exam. This is why the present research will identify the target needs relevant to students' future work.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

### 2.1. Definition of ESP

The changes like teaching and learning the English language have instigated the beginning of ESP as a sub-field of English language teaching. ESP refers to imparting students with scientific and technical jargon based on their needs while learning English. A key concept in ESP teaching is to teach the students the bits of English related to their field of specialization, such as science, engineering, and medicine. In this respect, (Hutchinson et al. 1987) write: ESP is an approach to language teaching as content and methods are based on the learner's reason for learning.

Although there are many definitions of ESP, one may conclude that there are two main common characteristics that most researchers agree on. First, ESP is based on a particular context. Second, ESP is based on the learners' specific needs.

### 2.2. Characteristics of ESP

Generally speaking, ESP courses differ from that general language courses. The syllabus and the materials used are based on the learners' needs. In this respect, (Mundy 1978) defines them as: Those where the syllabus and the materials are determined by the prior analysis of the learners' communication needs.

Carver (1983) adds some characteristic of ESP course, summarizing them as follows:  
- Purpose –related orientation. - Self- direction. - Authentic materials. According to him, ESP courses are almost purposeful, aiming to help learners be competent in their target settings.

Hence, ESP courses are practically self-directed, including "...turning learners into users" (Carver, 1983). These courses are based on the learners' needs; .This gives them much more freedom to decide what, how, and when to study.

In this view, ( Robinson 1991) argues: An ESP course is based on a needs analysis that aims at specifying as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English.

## 3. Research design and situation analysis:

The researcher has chosen to construct her investigation upon master students because they are advanced in their studies and, consequently, more conscious of their needs and the importance of learning English.

This research concerns master students at the law Department, Faculty of Law and Politics, Tlemcen University. One hundred and sixty(160) students out of eight hundred and forty (840) students were dealt with.They were split into three groups (public law, economic law, and international law ). They are between 21 and 26 years old, except

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them were 38 and 53 years old; (administrators, lawyers, and judges are carrying out their studies with a long experience in workplaces.

### **3. The study:**

This study aims to investigate the experts' perception of the English language in the field of law. It's worth mentioning that the overwhelming majority of these students will be future lawyers or administrators after graduation. However, a small minority will carry on postgraduate studies after taking a competitive exam. This is why the present research will identify the target needs relevant to students' future work.

#### **3.1 Students**

This research concerns graduate students at the Department of Law and Politics, University of Tlemcen. We chose to focus on first-year master students because they are promoted in their studies. Accordingly, more conscious of their language needs and the importance of English as recommended in (Kennedy & Bolitho 1984): "The older the learner is, the more likely he is to have his definition, ideas on what and why he is learning English: the utility of learning English is likely to be more apparent."

#### **3.2 ESP Teachers**

The role of teachers changed in the history of language teaching with the change of teaching methods. As Richards and Rogers (2001) mention, some methods depend on the teacher as a source of knowledge; others see his/her role as consultants, guides, counselors, etc.

Vančová (2007) points out the different roles of teachers concerning other teaching methods. She describes the role of a teacher as a source of knowledge and a controller in Grammar-Translation Method; the role of a prompter, guide and organizer in the Direct Method; the role of a native-speaker in Audio-Lingual Method; the role of a facilitator, organizer, guide, researcher, assessor and manager in Communicative Language Teaching; and the role of a counselor and psychologist for example in Suggestopedia.

As Harmer (2001) mentions, a teacher's role depends on what the teacher wants his/her students to achieve; the teacher should switch between various functions and be aware of carrying them out.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claim that ESP teachers needn't have specialist subject knowledge but just the knowledge of the subject-matter's fundamental principles and should have a positive attitude to the ESP subject-matter. The authors mention that the knowledge of teachers of the subject-matter is not static and that it has been developing in the course of the lessons by teaching the subject materials and talking to students.

The methodology of teachers: ESP courses may not differ from that of general English teachers. However, in many cases, ESP students are experts in the content, and the teacher's role, in this case, is to establish real communication in the classroom using the students' knowledge. It should react promptly to contributions in discussions, assess homework, tests, and do one's best to meet students' demands.

According to Weinstein (2001) states that teachers are also learners. They should respond to new circumstances, manage their roles despite challenging conditions, analyse

their experience, collaborate on projects, share ideas, lesson plans, etc. Communities of teachers online can provide mutual support in fostering the development of adult literacies.

#### **4. The difficulties that interrupt the Effectiveness of teaching ESP:**

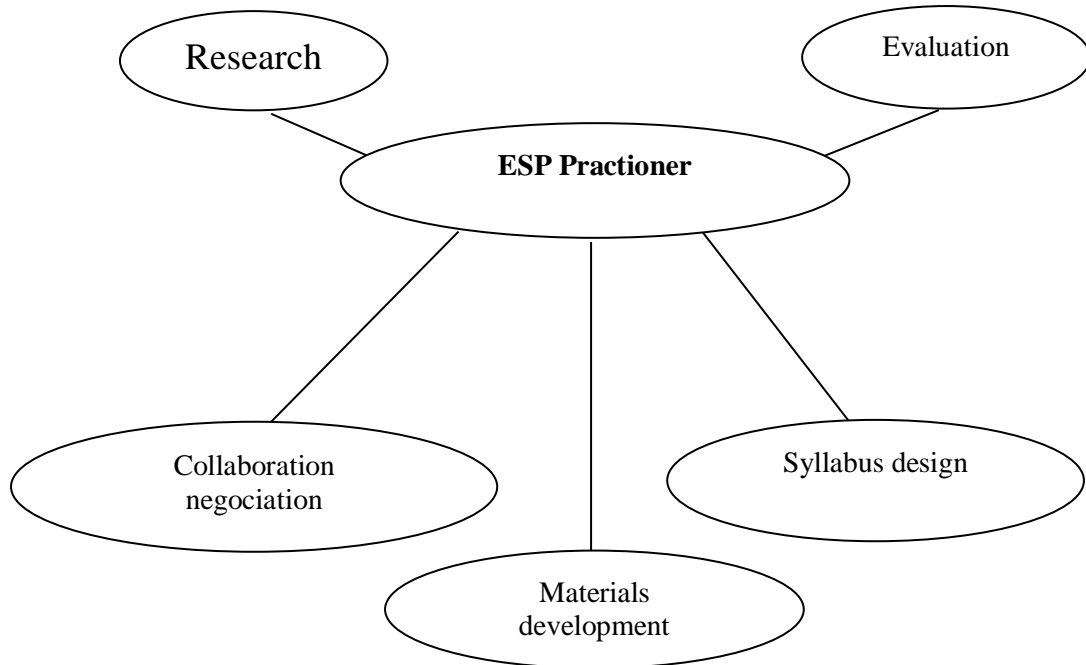
Thence, students of the department are conscious of English's importance for their studies and professional careers, though they are still a novice in this language. The study also conceded their demand to learn a mixture of general and specific English terminology, language forms and structures, and acquisition to master the four language skills with a suitable syllabus that focuses on receptive skills.

These future administrators and lawyers are the representatives of the Algerian government. However, they lack an essential competence – mastery of English – which means they face many difficulties in situations where English is needed. They have not received any specific training in legal English at the tertiary level of their education. Therefore, it seems essential to investigate the following questions:

1. Why do Law and Political Science students need the English Language?
2. What do they need to learn?
3. What kind of syllabus and pedagogical materials would be appropriate to these students?

The above research questions will help in designing an ELP course for Law and Political Science students by first undertaking a Needs Identification and Analysis (NIA) as "needs analysis is the cornerstone of ESP and leads to a very focused course" (Dudley-Evans & St John 1998: 122). In this enterprise, we should consider two types of needs: target needs, i.e., what the learner needs to do in the target situation, and learning needs, i.e., what the learner needs to learn (Hutchinson & Waters 1987). For this purpose, this study is split into three steps: first, it investigates the use of English in Algerian institutional and official workplaces; then it identifies and analyses the language needs of students of Law and Political sciences taking the case of students at the University of Tlemcen. Finally, it gives suggestions for the design of an English course that would answer this future elite's needs.

### 5. The Roles of the ESP teacher:



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### 5. The idea behind adjusting

Once the process mentioned above is done, the ESP teacher will have good support for writing materials.ESP teacher should gather information about the weak and strong points his or her students' possess.

According to Strevens [2] "The ESP, methodologies conform to the same language learning/teaching process as does any other form of language teaching. That is to say; the basic teaching activities are these:

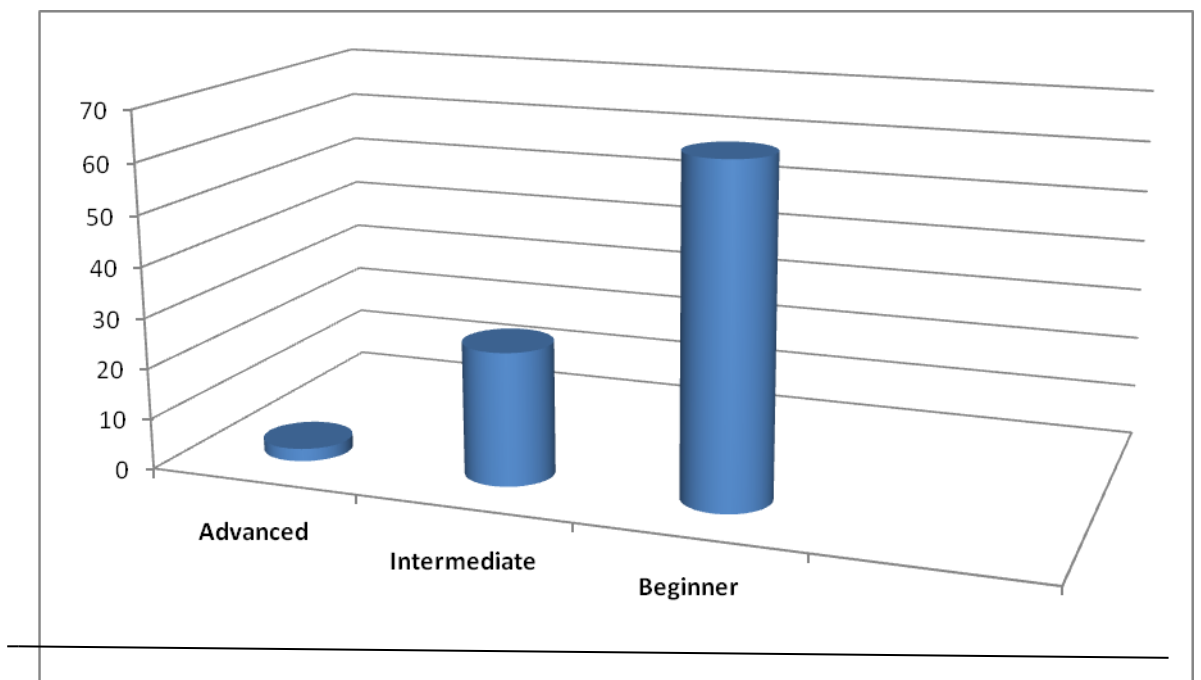
- Shaping the input.
- Encouraging the learner's intention to learn.
- Managing the learning strategies.

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-Promoting practice and use."

### 6. The language proficiency level

Students who graduate from the Department of Law and Political Sciences have a low English proficiency level than their high educational level and professional aptitude. Their lack of English competence constituted a real handicap in dealing with specific administrative and judicial affairs and turned to the beginner's level. The students' lack of English (more than four years in graduation)' resulted in a low proficiency level. They have not received any English courses during their university studies; they also mentioned that they had never used English in their research work or studies.



*Fig 1* English proficiency level of law students

Conscious of this low level, teachers appeal to introducing English courses for the Department of Law students from the first year till their final year of graduation. Moreover, all students expressed their desire to learn English during their whole years of graduation because it helps them in their research work, as many references are in

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English. It allows them to participate in international conferences, and it offers them working opportunities.

#### CONCLUSION:

The present article has argued for the significance of teaching English in the ESP context. It has also pointed to the sensitiveness of this task. Within this research area, the main issues and challenges relating to teaching English for the law students had been explored and discussed with a particular focus, on the case of teachers, at the University of Tlemcen.

As indicated earlier, the great majority of EFL teachers in these departments are part-time teachers and receive no training in English for Specific Purposes teaching. Most of all, if our syllabus will be based on the learners' needs, it is likely to motivate them. As a result, they will notice the apparent relevance of what they are studying and hopefully combine it with their professional careers.

The intention was not merely to list these problems but rather to sensitize the teachers and institutions to their impact on students' learning, and therefore, a plea was made for the necessity to cope with them.

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