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Language teaching policy: General English and English for Specific Purposes

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Abstract

This study explores Algeria's teaching policy concerning foreign languages, particularly French and English, within its educational system. Recognizing the critical role of languages in national development, Algeria has positioned French as the first foreign language to facilitate communication with the West and access technological advancements, while English serves as a second foreign language, mainly for business and professional communication through English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Despite these efforts, challenges persist in English language instruction, particularly in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary acquisition, as well as in the distinction between spoken and written English. Employing a descriptive research methodology, this study examines the historical trajectory of foreign language education in Algeria post-independence, with a focus on the current state of English language teaching. A case study was conducted on ESP learners at the University of Mascara to assess instructional effectiveness. Findings indicate that ESP instructors often lack specialization in the field, and learners' specific needs are largely overlooked. Consequently, this research highlights the necessity of targeted pedagogical strategies and specialized training for ESP instructors to enhance learning outcomes. The study concludes with recommendations to improve English language teaching at the university level, emphasizing the need for an informed, needs-based approach to ESP instruction in Algeria.

Keywords: General English; languages; specific English; teaching policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a tool for communication, but a powerful form of knowledge that shapes our interactions and understanding of the world. In today's globalized and interconnected world, knowledge is a key driver of competitiveness, and language plays a critical role in this dynamic. As industries evolve and societies become increasingly advanced, the ability to speak and understand multiple languages has transitioned from a luxury to a necessity. In an advanced industrial society, the knowledge of foreign languages is not just beneficial but often essential for individuals to participate in global markets, foster international collaboration, and stay competitive in their careers.

The rise of the internet has been one of the most transformative forces in the way we communicate, breaking down geographical and cultural barriers that once seemed insurmountable. With just a few clicks, people from different corners of the world can now engage in real-time discussions, share ideas, and collaborate on projects. This interconnectedness has made knowledge sharing more accessible and widespread, allowing individuals to access diverse perspectives and expertise that were previously limited by language or location.

Over the past few decades, millions of people worldwide have been able to connect with others who share similar interests, goals, and passions. Whether through online communities, social media platforms, or digital workspaces, language serves as the bridge that allows people to come together, exchange ideas, and innovate in ways that would have been unimaginable in the past. In this context, language is no longer just a means of communication but a gateway to a global exchange of knowledge, fostering understanding, collaboration, and progress on an unprecedented scale.

Thus, as the digital world continues to evolve, the importance of multilingualism becomes even more pronounced, influencing how we engage with the global community and contribute to the collective pool of knowledge that drives progress in all fields of human endeavor.

1.1. Purpose of study

This study aimed to research foreign language teaching in Algeria, by tackling English language teaching, starting from teaching foreign languages after independence and describing the difficulties met by Language Learners as far as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are concerned, shedding light on the difference between Spoken and Written Forms of English. The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- Are ESP teachers specialists in English for Specific Purposes?
- Are EST learners' needs taken into account?

The study's hypotheses are as follows:

- ESP teachers seem not to be specialists in English for Specific Purposes.
- EST learners' needs are somehow not taken into account.

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

2.1. Participants

The case study was focused on EST students at the University of Mascara. **3.1. Foreign language teaching in Algeria**

Foreign languages are of great importance, which is why Algeria urged to implement them in its educational system: since independence, Arabic has been the official language, French as the first foreign language, and English, the second foreign language; then, in the 1990's the state has included another third Letters and Languages'', in addition to French and English, they study one of the above languages.

At university, various foreign languages are taught in the departments of foreign languages: French and English being given priority, they are not only taught as the main languages in their respective departments but they are also taught in other departments such as the departments of "Biology, Sociology, Economics,

History, and so on." In addition to these foreign languages, other languages are taught in other departments such as: "German, Russian, and Italian, among others."

Since teaching is considered to be a noble job and is far from easy, a teacher is seen as a messenger who transmits knowledge, delivers lessons, and helps his students organize and conceptualize information in various ways through strategies that lead learners to success. It is up to him/her to choose the suitable strategies to attract these learners or make them flee his / her lectures since teaching is pain and humor, joy and anger.

A teacher is also seen as a facilitator who makes things easy for learners to grasp. Furthermore, the language teacher has to go beyond teaching: he is confronted with learners whose mother tongue is different. It is his role as an educator to motivate his learners by selecting the appropriate approaches, methods, and techniques (Anqi et al., 2024). He has to bring support and new materials, including new ways to bring learners nearer to learning and achieve success; this can be done through games, songs, video tapes, computer activities, etc. He has to take advantage of adolescents' passions, reduce risk with a firm structure, and collaborate to solve problems.

Teacher development is best affected when carried out hand in hand with curriculum development and goes on to examine the theoretical and practical implications for the management of educational change (Nazari et al., 2024). Language teaching professionals need to develop their critically-informed tradition of innovation, research, and practice. As a result, the teaching of foreign languages has emerged because of its importance such as the case of English language teaching and ESP teaching (Allahyari et al., 2023).

3.2. English language teaching in Algeria

Nowadays, English is the official language of Britain, the United States, most parts of the Commonwealth, and certain other countries and it is acquired as a second language by many more countries. English is a language with great influence: it is taught under various circumstances. It has evolved in two broad directions:

- a) instruction for people who intend to live in an English-speaking country;
- b) instruction for those who are outside English-speaking countries what Kachru (1985) calls

In "the inner circle", that is countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, English is commonly spoken by refugees and immigrants. This form of English, known as ESL (English as a Second Language) in the U.S. and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in the U.K., is learned to help individuals function in their host country and manage daily life necessities, such as attending school for children or securing employment for adults. Typically, these programs are part of citizenship initiatives, often funded by the host government to assist newcomers in settling into their adopted country. In contrast, English taught in non-English-speaking regions can be studied either in the home country as part of the regular school curriculum or in an English-speaking country, often as an educational experience before or after university graduation.

In Algeria, education in a foreign language begins in the fourth grade of primary school. Thus, Algeria continued to use French as a tool for modernization and development. However, today English is emerging as another linguistic option all over the world. That is why Algeria uses English to be in touch with the West to negotiate business. The 1990s brought various changes: English was introduced as an optional second language in 1992. It was introduced as a foreign language alongside French but pupils choose just one of the two languages, that is, either French or English. Since then, it has become an important part of the curriculum and is in great demand at all levels of education. Many TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) schools have been established throughout the country.

EFL is learned either to pass exams as a necessary part of education, or for career progression while working for an organization. EFL may be part of the state school curriculum where English has no special status which Kachru (1985) calls the expanding circle countries; it may also be supplemented by private lessons. ESL and EFL programs differ in the variety of English which is taught, so which variety to choose? Those studying English to fit into their new country will learn the variety spoken there. However, for those who do not intend to

change countries, the question is which English to learn. For those staying at home, the choice may be made in private language schools or state schools. For this reason, it is better to teach English as an international language (EIL) or English as a lingua franca (ELF). It is therefore associated with a particular country, and useful when, for example, an Algerian does business with a Chinese.

Teaching English therefore involves helping the student to use the form of English and exposure to regional forms and cultural styles to be able to comprehend meaning.

3.3. Teaching foreign languages after independence

After independence, Algeria was conscious of the French schooling policy that had a direct influence on traditional education, and Arabic was taught in the Koranic schools. This division between mosque and school has deprived the Algerians of their cultural heritage. Even with the departure of the French colonizers, the French culture still existed and affected the population.

This explains the different changes and readjustments that Algeria, as a new nation, has to undergo: from the system of Arabization, through which the government wanted Arabic to regain its prestige and value and that did not bring positive results since most Algerians were familiar with the French language and were trained in this language. For this reason, it was impossible to make Arabization in administrations, the system of bilingualism where teachers were trained in “Ecoles Normales” as well as teaching materials and programs were at the heart of the social reforms. Since the government realized that it could not get rid of the French language, it maintained it as an L2, being a tool for survival.

Another system emerged, where recently Algeria has realized that English is a language of power, it has decided to improve its economy and position in the world through the medium of this language. So being aware of the importance English has in the world, it has opened training schools specialized in preparing teachers of TEFL.

The Algerian government has introduced the English language in schools; it has become an important part of the curriculum and is in great demand at all levels of education. As Chomsky (1979) puts it “questions of language are questions of power”. While Steinberg (2010) echoes him in his own words when he argues that the language question flickers in and out of the constant interplay between culture and power.

In this regard, while learning a foreign language, individuals have the opportunity not only to understand a particular native’s language but to know its culture as well. Furthermore, we may protect ourselves from external evils as the famous saying puts it “who learns people’s language, avoids their betrayal”; for instance, colonizers, while invading a country, try to assimilate the natives by bringing them to their culture and language.

From this, Algeria took the following measures: it maintained Arabic as the first language (official), being a legitimate choice to repossess the fundamentals of the original culture and identity. For urging economic and technological development, it preserved French as the medium to have access to the West. It introduced English as the medium of science and technology and was a door for a faster way to scientific development which would lead the nation towards international recognition. However, Algerian learners of English who are familiar with Arabic and French meet some difficulties.

3.4. Difficulties met by language learners

At any age, learning a language by contact with native speakers in their society is the quickest and best way. It is much better than taking foreign language classes where one is forced to concentrate all the time, whereas immersion in the culture can lead to learning and it is an effective way of getting the new language into long-term memory. Consequently, second languages learned in adulthood are quickly forgotten if not used regularly. However, these languages usually come back to memory with a little study and practice.

It is not a matter of learning some grammar rules and memorizing some vocabulary words but a matter of learning a skill. It is like learning to swim; one has not only to understand the ideas and concepts and have information in hand, but to make his body accustomed to using that information in physical activity which

involves speaking, listening, writing, and reading. One needs then, not only to memorize and understand but also to practice as it is said: "Practice makes perfect".

Learning a second language can be affected by the patterns of the first language. This is referred to as "linguistic interference" such as in pronunciation, they tend to pronounce words with their native accent; in grammar, they may combine grammatical patterns of both languages. As a result of interference, they may translate idioms literally and it is known that idioms are difficult for non-native speakers to learn because they do not make literal sense.

In Algeria, the same difficulties often occur, in addition, people tend to perform mental tasks with the language in which they learned them. For instance, the majority of Algerians (born between 1956 and 1970) count in French but because of the Arabisation system, they have to study Algebra in Arabic. This is because they learned their counting skills and simple mathematics in French in primary schools and algebra in Arabic in secondary schools.

Language learners meet difficulties since English has several features; it is obvious that learning a second language involves more than learning the words and sounds. Communication breakdowns occur not only due to the more understood syntax and pronunciation difficulties but also because when learning a language, we also learn a culture. These difficulties can occur in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

a) Pronunciation

In pronunciation, the consonant phonemes: for example, /θ/, /ð/ common in English are rare in other languages; however, the consonant phonemes exist in Arabic so this does not create a great problem; Algerian learners pronounce these letters without difficulty. The vowel phonemes including the monophthongs, diphthongs, and triphthongs cause difficulties for learners in hearing and pronouncing them. Syllable structure also causes problems, learners may alternate or force vowels between consonants, e.g. desks become "desukusu". Learners whose languages end in vowels tend to make all English words end in vowels thus making /melk/ become /melkə/. Unstressed vowels can cause trouble for non-native speakers mainly in the case of replacing an unstressed vowel with schwa (from - frəm) or an unstressed vowel that may disappear "choc-lit". Natives can distinguish between "an able, enable, and unable," but this is more difficult for learners who tend to overpronounce these unstressed vowels, giving their speech an unnatural rhythm. English is a stress-timed language which is why learners speak disconcerting English to natives; so, stress for emphasis, contrast and apologies may be neglected by non-natives.

b) Grammar

Next, in grammar, the tenses, both simple and progressive, and perfect progressive forms add complexity. The function of auxiliaries where learners tend to find it difficult to manipulate the various ways of patterns in which English uses the first auxiliary verb of a tense, including negation e.g. (she has not understood me), interrogation e.g. (has she understood me?), short answers e.g. (Yes, she has, or no, she hasn't) and tag questions such as in (she has understood me, hasn't she?). The modal verbs have different meanings such as 'must' which can mean Prohibition (you must not smoke here) deduction (you must be ill), and obligation (you must be here at 8), this complexity takes considerable work for Algerian English language learners to master. Articles, including the definite, indefinite, and zero articles, are easy to learn but others are not, particularly since a learner's native language may lack articles or use them in different ways from English.

c) Vocabulary

Finally, in vocabulary, there may be difficulties in "phrasal verbs" since they have several meanings and different syntactic patterns. In "word derivation", some adjectives can be negated by using prefixes and others by being modified; in "collocations" where nouns and verbs go together (ride a bike / drive a car) learners make mistakes with collocations. In "the size of lexicon", where English has resulted in a very large vocabulary (old English and Latin-derived terms) this requires more work for learners to master the language.

d) Difference between Spoken and Written Forms of English

The difference between spoken and written English is that written English tends to use a more formal register than spoken language. In spelling, a learner may know a word by sound, but not be able to write it correctly or may use a word written but not know how to pronounce it. Also because of the changes in pronunciation that have occurred since a written standard developed, and the large influx of foreign words with different spelling patterns, English spelling is difficult even for native speakers to master.

Teaching English therefore involves helping the student to use the form of English and exposure to regional forms and cultural styles to be able to comprehend meaning mainly while dealing with specialized subjects such as ESP where the learner finds it difficult to understand the specific vocabulary used in texts.

Moreover, motivation in language learning is needed. According to d'Ailly and Blokhuis (2018), two types of motivation have been used to explain L2 motivation about autonomy: "Intrinsic and Extrinsic" motivation which lies on a continuum from self-determined to non-determined. According to them, a learner with a high level of self-determination is likely to demonstrate autonomy in his or her learning leading to higher achievement.

So, motivating learners means stimulating them and attracting them to do any activity that is enjoyable for the feeling associated with performing pleasurable tasks. They have to meet challenges, this is called "Intrinsic motivation"; in contrast to this, "Extrinsic motivation", where learners' behaviors are determined by sources external to the individual. These sources should be taken into account.

Being aware of the importance of languages as a tool or an asset, Algeria took the following measures: Arabic to be considered the first language (official language), French to be the first foreign language as an important part of the population not only knows it and masters it but has a pretty considerable knowledge of its culture; English, is the second foreign language. So, the state, in its reforms, in the 1970s first implemented French in the 3rd year of primary school and English in middle school. Then, in 1992 wanting to give importance to English, as being recognized international language all over the world and a manner of restricting French, the language of the colonial settlers, it implemented English in primary schools. The results were far from being satisfactory since the learners were somehow lost, and could not be assisted or helped by their parents who are not familiar with English but with French. Then, the state moved to a new reform in 1995 where it let the French language in primary schools and English starting from middle schools.

3.5. Strategies and approaches to reach success

Giving importance to languages in Algeria occurred and the state started adapting strategies and approaches to reach success. These strategies and approaches were introduced in different textbooks. In 2002, the Algerian state implemented the ICT education plan (Information Communication Technology), or IT (Information Technology) so information technology and computer skills were soon developed and the state decided to provide every school in the country with computers and expected teachers and students to work with (World Factbook, 2007). At first, the use of IT in Algerian education was limited to administrative services, then it incorporated computers into the classroom, and this plan was broadened to use the computer as a tool for teaching.

In 2002 President Bouteflika asked the government to make computer education available at all levels of the education system, and this new plan to computerize schools requires skilled instructors and teachers to train learners to reach the nation's educational objectives. Thereafter, in 2002, the Ministry of Education worked to set forth the integration of ICT. It placed weight on the development of this strategy to develop the educational system, paving the way for an ICT policy along with an implementation strategy: all secondary schools were equipped with computer labs (15 computers: 10 for students and 5 for teachers) connected to the Internet through ADSL; Half of the middle schools have adopted ICT as an integral part of the educational program. In the case of primary schools, the ICT policy remains limited to the administrative process and teacher training.

All universities have computer labs and Internet access for faculty students and administration in addition to the availability of digital libraries, such as the famous library in "Hamma / Algiers". Each university has its own ICT policy to accelerate the educational process and offer better learning opportunities. The plan is to

integrate ICT within the different subject matters to enhance learning and education. It therefore becomes a process of learning through the use of ITC rather than learning about the technology.

In 2006, Algeria moved to another reform, the one of implementing CBA (Competency-Based Approach) in the educational system where learning is learner-centered and the teacher's role is to help and assist the learners (CBA: Algiers, 2004). This approach, which focuses on different skills, can be built by the learner either as basic language skills or intellectual skills such as: thinking, guessing, listening, anticipating, analyzing, synthesizing, planning, and so forth. Therefore, the goal of these new methods is to develop the learners' skills. These methods do not rely only on the learner's competencies but also on self-knowledge that is, they rely on acquiring knowledge to develop their competencies.

CBA proposes certain tasks that help the learner break down this feeling of isolation in the classroom while working together such as in a project. Accordingly, learners, through this approach, can be autonomous. Furthermore, with the idea of integrating the project, learners can make challenges, CBA wants to motivate learners and let them be active in their studies under the guidance of their teachers and this is what makes them enjoy learning mainly through pair/ group work, using video/ cassette tapes, (songs, conversations, listening texts), cd's, games, research using the net to write projects, and many more.

While Algeria has prioritized language education, particularly English, recognizing its role as the language of science, technology, and economic advancement, the state has strategically introduced two types of English instruction. At the middle and secondary school levels, general English education focuses on foundational grammar, phonetic expressions, and essential language skills, providing a strong basis for further language studies. At the university level, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is implemented through specialized programs aimed at developing communicative proficiency in English within specific fields of science, work, and technology.

By using a foreign language, students gain professional and in-depth knowledge, access online resources, and leverage English to acquire global information on topics of interest. ESP is considered "content-based" as it is tailored to meet specific student needs. Specialized skills are developed through carefully selected texts that introduce domain-specific vocabulary, making it essential to choose materials relevant to the learners' fields, whether scientific, economic, or otherwise. Consequently, the boundary between language learning and subject learning becomes blurred. When learners recognize the importance of communication between nations, they are naturally motivated to acquire new languages.

Therefore, learning a language helps one to try to do his work properly since he can understand all that relates to that domain.

3.6. The teaching of English at university level

Within the educational system, English is integrated across all levels, with particular emphasis on the tertiary level, where it should be reinforced to equip students with essential language skills necessary for academic research and future professional endeavors. At Algerian universities, English instruction is broad and general within English departments, whereas in other disciplines, such as chemistry, physics, biology, economics, sociology, and medical sciences, it is tailored to meet specific academic and professional needs. However, the effectiveness of English language instruction is inadequate due to several challenges. Among these challenges are the following:

- a) The teaching staff of the language are not trained in specific and technical English.
- b) Inappropriate timetabling of English teaching,
- c) The students' levels are heterogenous,
- d) Insufficient timing schedule for the English module,
- e) Linguistic problems (interference)
- f) The inexistence of English programs and materials.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) extends beyond the study of general English, catering to learners who have already acquired fundamental language skills and require English for specialized purposes within their respective fields. ESP is designed to enhance learners' communicative competence (Widdowson, 1978), focusing on targeted linguistic elements rather than the comprehensive acquisition of the entire language system. Therefore, linguistic selection is a crucial aspect of ESP, tailored to meet specific learning objectives. A fundamental prerequisite for effective ESP instruction is a thorough analysis of learners' needs (Robinson, 1980), enabling practitioners to design appropriate curricula that align with students' expectations and professional requirements.

In an ESP course, the learner, rather than the teacher, is the central focus, making it a learner-centered approach (Richerich & Chancerel, 1978). ESP can be integrated into formal education as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or within professional settings as English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (Trent, 2024). A key subfield emerging from these two branches is English for Science and Technology (EST), which plays a critical role in both academic and professional contexts (Kennedy & Bolitho, 1984). In Algeria, EST is particularly relevant to students in scientific and technical disciplines at the university level, where it is positioned within the academic framework of EAP.

Overall, the teaching and learning conditions in these departments are largely uniform, with both instructors and learners encountering similar challenges. These shared difficulties underscore the need for well-structured ESP programs that effectively address the linguistic and professional needs of students in specialized fields:

- A lack of training for EST teachers who have received training in general English and find themselves incapable of giving an EST course as they have not been trained for this type of teaching. They find themselves teaching a specific domain and they ignore its contents (such as chemistry, economy, and so on).
- The inexistence of English during some years at university engenders a real problem in practicing the language. This negative experience is often lived by the EST teachers. In some departments, English teaching is held at the end of the term or in the middle in others. This will make learners forget English since they lack practice.
- The heterogeneousness of learners' levels is that not all learners have the same level.
- The timing schedule allocated to the EST module (2 hours per week) is not enough.

Consequently, it would be impossible to acquire a complete EST teaching. Due to the absence of an EST module during some years of university, the teacher finds himself obliged to provide various sessions of general English consolidation to refresh memories. Unfortunately, this is not the aim of EST. The teacher finds himself face-to-face with false beginners. Linguistic problems such as interference are inevitable for learners whose first language is Arabic or French. Likewise, the EST teacher must not neglect this interference and he has to try to find a remedy to avoid it.

The inexistence of a program and lack of material poses a problem for the organization to such a teacher who feels like a stranger in an unknown area "Exodus" (Hutchinson, 1987). In other words, the so-called teacher of EST is far from being a professional. All this series of problems shows that the teacher cannot undertake his task properly.

To reach an adequate and efficient EST teaching, some suggestions have been proposed:

- The different problems of EST teaching, having been taken into consideration, will allow for a remedy to obtain positive results.
- Concerning the training of EST teachers, there must be a collaboration between this teacher and the specialist teacher to design a specific program and produce appropriate teaching materials.

El & Moussa (2012) emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, asserting that "teachers of language must call upon teachers of science to determine the kind of material that their students must read." To enhance the effectiveness of English for Science and Technology (EST) instruction, it would be

beneficial for courses to be conducted throughout the academic year. This would help mitigate challenges related to scheduling conflicts and address the issue of learner heterogeneity.

Stevens (1988) argues that optimal achievement in foreign language learning occurs when skilled and dedicated teachers are supported by both society and their profession in fostering motivated learners. This support includes providing essential resources such as well-equipped laboratories, computers, visual aids, and appropriate teaching materials. When educators have access to these tools, they can perform their duties more effectively, creating an environment in which motivated learners are encouraged to engage actively in the learning process, ultimately leading to higher levels of achievement.

For students in Economics, lexical familiarization within economic texts is particularly valuable. While some scholars argue that teachers should not explicitly teach specialist vocabulary, they recommend employing strategies that enable students to deduce the meaning of newly introduced terms. This can be achieved through vocabulary recognition techniques that identify the writer's familiarization devices. Although specialist vocabulary poses a challenge, the functional approach to language teaching has shifted emphasis toward text cohesion and discourse features rather than isolated vocabulary instruction in reading comprehension.

Harvey and Yuill (1997) observe that "the study of vocabulary has been given a minor focus in classroom activities, perhaps partly due to more modern communicative approach methodologies." Swales (1985) echoes this sentiment, criticizing ESP practitioners and textbook authors for neglecting vocabulary instruction. Similarly, Higgins (1967) firmly states that it is not the English teacher's responsibility to teach technical vocabulary. Robinson (1980) supports this view, suggesting that course book writers should not focus excessively on specialist terminology, as students are expected to acquire it through their primary field of study. Instead, teachers should focus on equipping learners with lexical familiarization techniques and strategies for inferring meaning from context, fostering independent vocabulary acquisition within their specialized disciplines.

3.7. Teaching ESP

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is recognized as a learner-centered approach designed to address the needs of adult learners who require proficiency in a foreign language for professional or academic purposes. This approach is particularly relevant in specialized fields such as science, technology, and medicine, where language acquisition is tailored to domain-specific communication requirements (Topkaya & Çelik, 2024). In the literature the following definitions have been found:

a) Hutchinson (1987) sees ESP as an approach rather than a product. They mean that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language, teaching material, or methodology.

They suggest that the foundation of ESP is finding why this learner needs to learn a foreign language, the primacy of need in ESP. Need is defined by the reasons for which the student is learning English which will vary from study purposes that are the starting points which determine the language to be taught.

b) Streven's (1988) definition of ESP makes a distinction between four characteristics (absolute characteristics) and two variable characteristics.

The absolute characteristics are that ESP consists of English language teaching which is designed to meet the specific needs of the learner related in content (in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations, and activities centered on language appropriate to these activities: syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, and analysis of the discourse in contrast with "General English"

The variable characteristics are that ESP may be restricted as to the learning skills to be learned (for instance, reading only) and may not be taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

c) Robinson (1991) also accepts the primacy of needs analysis in defining ESP. Her description is based on two key defining criteria and several characteristics that are generally found to be true of ESP. Her key criteria are that ESP is 'normally goal-directed', and that ESP courses develop from a needs analysis, which aims to

specify as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English. Her characteristics are that ESP courses are generally constrained by a limited period, in which their objectives have to be achieved, and are taught to adults in homogeneous classes in terms of the work or specialist studies that the students are involved in.

Robinson (1991) finds that “ESP courses and the institutions around the world which offer them, are so varied that there can be no single model for the ESP teacher”.

d) Dubley-Evans and St John (1998), while defining ESP, stress two aspects of ESP methodology: all ESP teaching should reflect the methodology of the disciplines and professions it serves; and more specifically, in ESP teaching the nature of the interaction between the teacher and learner may be very different from that in a general English class this is what they meant by ‘specific ESP teaching has its methodology’. They also believe that language should be included as a defining feature of ESP. While the specified needs arising from needs analysis relate to activities that students need to carry out (rather than language), a key assumption of ESP is that these activities depend on the associated language that students need to be able to manipulate to carry out the activity.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is regarded as a distinct domain within English Language Teaching (ELT). While sharing certain methodological principles with ELT, ESP also incorporates its pedagogical approaches and draws from various disciplines beyond applied linguistics. It is fundamentally concerned with needs analysis, text analysis, and equipping learners with the necessary language skills for effective communication in their respective fields. Although some scholars argue that ESP lacks a unified theoretical foundation, others suggest that a theory could be constructed based on either the specialized nature of the texts learners must engage with or the needs-driven nature of ESP instruction.

What distinguishes ESP is its emphasis on aligning course design with learners' specific professional or academic needs rather than focusing primarily on theoretical frameworks. ESP adopts a learner-centered approach, catering to adult learners who require foreign language proficiency for specialized domains, as well as language professionals seeking to develop ESP courses in areas such as business English, English for healthcare professionals, and English for Academic Purposes.

In the context of English for Science and Technology (EST), ESP instruction is often delivered by general English teachers rather than subject-matter experts. Consequently, these instructors may have limited knowledge of the specialized content, which can result in insufficient consideration of learners' specific disciplinary needs.

3. CONCLUSION

As a goal-directed approach, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is not concerned with language acquisition for its own sake but rather with equipping learners with the linguistic skills necessary for success in their academic or professional domains. ESP courses should be developed based on a comprehensive needs analysis, which aims to identify students' specific requirements, including their objectives, the nature of their studies, and the language functions they must perform in English. This analysis should also determine how students interact with specialized texts and the strategies that can be implemented to facilitate their comprehension and use of such materials.

In Algeria, several challenges hinder the effective teaching of ESP. Efforts have been made to raise awareness among both language teachers and subject specialists regarding the complexities of ESP instruction. The most effective approach to overcoming these challenges is fostering collaboration between these professionals. An adequate teaching framework has been proposed, emphasizing a structured approach to addressing these difficulties. This framework consists of three key components:

- Differentiating between General English and ESP.
- Identifying the limitations and challenges associated with teaching English for Science and Technology (EST) at the university level.

- Proposing remedial strategies to enhance the effectiveness of EST instruction.

As a developing nation, Algeria recognizes that proficiency in English is crucial for economic and political development, as well as for achieving scientific and technological advancement on a global scale. English serves as an essential tool for international communication and is often regarded as a key to accessing new opportunities.

ESP practitioners aim to support learners in adapting authentic materials relevant to their chosen fields and critically evaluating various resources, including technology-based materials. Additionally, they assist in syllabus design, lesson planning, and assessment development based on learners' needs. To achieve these objectives, English language instruction is integrated not only within the educational system but also in professional settings. Given the increasing demand for ESP, it is imperative to recruit qualified ESP instructors or, at the very least, provide specialized training for General English teachers to effectively teach ESP.

In the context of globalization, foreign language proficiency—particularly in English—has become a fundamental driver of technological progress by facilitating rapid information exchange. Since gaining independence, Algeria's language education policies have undergone significant transformations. Initially, the country pursued a policy of Arabization to promote national unity, designating Arabic as the official language and French as the first foreign language. Later, English was introduced at the primary school level; however, students encountered difficulties, as parental support was limited due to a greater familiarity with French than with English. Consequently, the government revised its policy, reinstating French in primary education while deferring English instruction to middle school.

The teaching of ESP in Algeria has predominantly been assigned to general English teachers who lack specialized training in the relevant fields, making it difficult for them to design and deliver effective courses. To address this issue, EST instructors must collaborate closely with subject specialists to develop course materials that align with students' needs. For this reason, ESP teachers are often referred to as "practitioners," as their role extends beyond traditional teaching. They are expected to fulfill five key functions: teacher, course designer materials developer, collaborator, researcher, and evaluator.

Given the evolving language education policies in Algeria, corresponding changes in teaching methodologies have also been introduced. Approaches such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) have been implemented; however, their success has been limited. To achieve the desired educational outcomes, it is essential to provide targeted training programs for both General English and ESP teachers. Investing in teacher training will ultimately enhance the quality of ESP instruction, ensuring that students acquire the necessary language skills to excel in their respective fields.

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