

## THE IMPORTANCE OF NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ESP COURSE DESIGN

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**Abstract.** The growing importance of global English has led to the rise of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching, particularly in higher education. ESP focuses on the specific needs of the learners, concentrating more on language in context and on the students' need to acquire a set of professional skills and particular job-related functions. This study reports on students' interest in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), challenges impeding their effective learning and then finds out solutions moving to the action level.

**Keywords:** *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), challenges, teacher's role, interest, needs.*

**Annotatsiya.** Global ingliz tilining ortib borayotgan ahamiyati, ayniqsa, oliy ta'limda ingliz tilini maxsus maqsadlarda (ESP) o'qitishning kuchayishiga olib keldi. ESP o'quvchilarning o'ziga xos ehtiyojlariga e'tibor qaratadi, kontekstda tilga ko'proq e'tibor qaratadi va talabalarning kasbiy ko'nikmalar to'plamini va muayyan ish bilan bog'liq funktsiyalarni egallashga bo'lgan ehtiyojiga e'tibor beradi. Ushbu tadqiqot talabalarning maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tiliga (ESP) qiziqishi, ularning samarali o'rganishiga to'sqinlik qilayotgan muammolar haqida hisobot beradi va keyin harakat darajasiga o'tadigan yechimlarni topadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** *Maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili (ESP), qiyinchiliklar, o'qituvchining roli, qiziqishi, ehtiyojlari.*

**Аннотатсия.** Растущая важность глобального английского языка привела к росту преподавания английского языка для специальных целей (ESP), особенно в сфере высшего образования. ESP фокусируется на конкретных потребностях учащихся, уделяя больше внимания языку в контексте и потребностям учащихся в приобретении набора профессиональных навыков и конкретных функций, связанных с работой. В этом исследовании сообщается об интересе студентов к английскому языку для специальных целей (ESP), проблемах, мешающих их эффективному обучению, а затем находят решения, переходящие на уровень действий.

**Ключевые слова:** *Английский для специальных целей (ESP), проблемы, роль учителя, интерес, потребности.*

As globalization is evolving specific attention and demand to ESP (English for Specific Purposes) within language education is growing rapidly. ESP differs from typical language teaching by focusing on the specific linguistic requirements of learners in particular fields or occupations. ESP learners are generally adults with prior knowledge of English, studying the language to develop professional skills and carry out job-related

tasks. An ESP program is constructed based on an evaluation of goals and requirements, as well as the tasks that necessitate English.

ESP places a greater emphasis on language in a specific setting rather than on instructing grammar and language frameworks. Regardless of the field - such as IT, Business, International relations, Engineering, Law or Medicine - ESP focuses on providing learners with the language abilities required to succeed in their specific professional area. The main focus of ESP is integrating English into a subject that is relevant and significant to students, instead of teaching it as a standalone subject. The materials created for ESP classes, which comprise both English language skills and subject-specific content, must be consistent with students' genuine requirements when using a language for their educational pursuits and professional endeavors (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). The primary emphasis of English for Specific Purposes classes offered at a university level is on language abilities, such as linguistic structures and genres that students will probably come across in their future career. ESP education is designed to prepare students to efficiently utilize the English language for their particular work-related communication needs (Basturkmen, 2010; Bruce, 2011).

In fact, ESP integrates content and language instruction in English teaching. Students find this combination very inspiring as they can use their English class knowledge in their specific areas of study like diplomacy, business management, economics, computer science, or tourism. Using the vocabulary and structures learned in a meaningful context helps to solidify what is being taught and enhances their motivation.

The students' proficiency in their specific areas of study also enhances their capacity to master English. Having knowledge in a specific subject helps students comprehend the English being used in the classroom. Students in the ESP class learn how the topic content is communicated in the English language. The teacher can utilize the students' understanding of the topic to aid them in acquiring English at a quicker pace.

In ESP, "specific" refers to the particular objective for learning English. Students engage in the study of English by focusing on a subject that is familiar and important to them. This indicates that they can apply their new knowledge from the ESP class immediately in their professional and academic pursuits. The ESP approach increases the importance of what students are learning and allows them to utilize their existing English skills to further develop their English abilities, as their passion for their subject will encourage them to engage with other speakers and written materials.

Prior to designing an ESP course, it is necessary to conduct a needs analysis that focuses on meeting the specific needs of the learners. Needs analysis encompasses various components; in other words, the term “needs” covers a range of factors:

The goals and backgrounds of the learners, their language abilities, motivations for enrolling in the course, preferences for teaching and learning, and the circumstances in which communication will be necessary. In general, a needs analysis is a structured and continuous procedure that demands teachers to adapt their teaching as they gain more knowledge about their students.

The atmosphere in the classroom is shaped by teacher's abilities in communication and mediation. Teachers might be the sole English speakers accessible to students, and even though their time with each of them is brief, teachers can develop efficient communication abilities in the classroom. The teacher assists students in recognizing their language learning difficulties, discovering the areas they need to work on, and guiding them in taking ownership of their learning decisions. Teachers will act as a resource for students to track their language learning progress.

As Wlodkowski (2008) says, motivation allows us to create a knowledge base about effective ways to help learners begin learning, make choices and direct them in their learning, sustain and complete learning. The motivation problems occur when the teacher inquires on the ways to help their learners begin learning, to encourage them to put more efforts into their learning, and to create a relevant learning activity (Wlodkowski, 2008, p. 3). And our goal as educators is to assist students in feeling self-assured in the global setting and being able to use the language proficiently and achieve their objectives with its assistance.

Yet, educators might face difficulties and lack clear direction in determining the appropriate course of action in the learning process. Richard Smith (2018) recommends taking a moment to assess the problem thoroughly before proposing a solution, instead of hastily jumping to conclusions. It is best to take a moment to step back, create a space for reflection and exploration before making a decision.

Further exploratory action research will be beneficial in exploring, understanding and improving our practice as teachers. The initial step involves creating a strategy for investigation, which includes planning questions and collecting data. It is a step where we review our practice and decide on an area or situation we will focus on. I decided to do this research and investigate the reasons behind because I did not know whether the way I conduct my lessons was effective with a particular group where I observed some students lacking motivation to learn. Taking into consideration students' perception and their behavior, I initiated this study to answer the following questions:

1. *Why are some of my students in this group unmotivated to study?*
2. *How do I decide that my students are not motivated to study?*

Action research question:

3. *What should be done to make them engaged in the lessons?*

My main goal in this study was to determine my students' level of interest in English classes and then identify potential solutions and take action accordingly. It is important not only because it improves learning but also because it mediates learning and is a consequence of learning as well (Wlodkowski, 2008, p. 6).

According to Wlodkowski (1985), teaching motivated students can be a source of joy and excitement, particularly for the teacher. Students can feel highly motivated by their learning experiences and develop a curiosity for new subjects. Wlodkowski also suggests that when students engage in diverse and motivating learning experiences in specific subjects, they are more likely to continue learning in those subjects throughout

their lives (1985). If teachers have a responsibility to motivate students to attend class and to learn it is important for teachers to understand specifically how to motivate students (Cagri, 2011, p. 2)

To find answers to the questions set within my study, I employed exploratory action research as a research approach. To investigate, various research tools were employed: surveys, observations, note-taking, journals. At the same time, I kept a diary and made some notes for myself. The questionnaire was implemented on the web-based platform Telegram where my law students should write their opinions and suggestions. Participants were also informed that the result of the questionnaire was only for research, it will not affect their grades; their personal information will be confidential. These are the questions that have been administered:

1. *What are your feelings about English and its importance for your future career?*
2. *What are your problems in learning English?*
3. *Which activities in the classroom do you enjoy the most?*
4. *What is your attitude to group working and pair working?*
5. *Which language skills' needs (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in ESP (English for specific purposes) are the most important for your English learning and major study? Why?*
6. *Given a chance, what changes you would like to see in your English lessons?*  
(Please, also feel free to suggest any ideas/ sources/ activities/ books, etc. if you want)

For the first question, overall all students showed their interest in learning the English language, about its essence in their future career. Alongside the role of internet and multimedia in global communication, English becomes nowadays popular, widely used as a means of instruction in a large number of educational institutions, language centers and universities, a pathway to accessing all fields of knowledge and academic research sources across the world and the best tool for foreign language learning/teaching. (Abdulsalam, 2015, p. 2) Due to the importance of English, as international language students replied that they need English for the following reasons:

- to be an ambassador or an international lawyer;
- because it is the most common language;
- to explain legal cases with the help of language;
- to work in the field of international law;
- to be able to conduct with foreign colleagues.

In the open-ended questionnaire, some students express their suggestions to improve remote lessons. They have suggested:

- to increase fun sessions in group work activities;
- to apply more strict rules to reluctant students as they are distracting other students;
- to increase reading based on true stories and discuss them;



-to keep going on usage of different activities with handouts, as they read the cases, situations, information on those handout materials and explain to the rest of the class and by listening each other they will learn a lot;

-to increase writing activities as they write legal documents, advices and students want to improve their writing skill;

-to keep using the activities with the help of Kahoot, Nearpod.com as they help to revise all materials and new words.

I also discovered that certain students were well-prepared before entering university but after they just stopped working on their language skills so that nowadays they are studying with that basic level of English. The other couple of students mentioned about the lack of confidence and attention, fear of public speaking in front of others and laziness.

Nearly all students provided favorable feedback regarding the utilization of pair work and group work activities. They mentioned that collaborating in groups enhances their knowledge, broadens their perspective, allows for sharing opinions with other students, and learning new things from each other. They have the ability to engage with one another and provide mutual assistance.

By learning about each student, their background, their motivation, and their characteristics and capabilities, instructors can become aware of the psychological needs of their students (Crump and Charla, 1995, p. 5). Having analyzed students' replies, it was time to think of changes to bring to class and find the answer to the last question *“What should be done to make them engaged in the lessons?”*

My further action plans must include my students' suggestions and their needs. As Crump (1995) says, teacher immediacy can help motivate students by meeting their needs. We should create a classroom in which collaborative and cooperative learning takes place. Teaching strategies such as group activities, peer tutoring, student-led discussions, and classroom debates help create an environment in which there is the independence of group members working toward a common goal (Crump and Charla, 1995, p. 9)

From this encounter, I will implement a few alterations: integrate problem-centered education, team-based learning, hands-on activities, student showcases, small-group talks, role-playing, real-life scenarios, exhibitions, idea generation, reading books and discussions, and inquiry. Tug'ulbey states that the use of these technologies enables increased student engagement and provides students with the chance to apply newly learned skills and knowledge (as cited in Cagri, 2011, p. 6). And when students anticipate different, interesting things happening each class session, they are motivated to attend regularly (Crump, 1995, p. 14). To interact with students, teachers have unlimited sources in which they can make the lessons various.

As Crump notes, instructors should relate games to the objective currently being taught. Regardless of age, most students enjoy the pleasure of playing, the active participation, and the suspense about the outcome of games (1995, p. 9). And the sources based on the topic and with games I used were: YouTube video materials connected with the topic; britishcouncil.org, Kahoot, quizlet.com, Nearpod.com for creating quizzes and

cards. I found them very interesting, I use a variety of these sources for the majority of my lessons, and students really enjoy them. Some students even said that they wrote about the usage of online games in their questionnaire responses and appreciated me considering their interests.

The process of taking action is ongoing, but I can confirm that engaging in exploratory action research will be beneficial for both teachers and students. By establishing a connection with your students, you can inquire about their hobbies and ideas, enabling you to listen to their thoughts, requirements, and recommendations attentively. Teachers can make changes based on students' needs and suggestions, which will make lessons more engaging and interactive.

Another advantage is that it allows teachers to enhance their creativity by trying out new ideas or incorporating different techniques in their lessons, leading to personal development. Regarding the advantages for students, I can affirm that it enhances students' confidence in teachers, enabling them to freely communicate, express their thoughts, passions, and recommendations will be given due attention. Students will play a role in the project, as they will be the driving force behind making changes to the class. Input from students is valuable as they are sharing their views from within the classroom, where they are actively involved. Prioritizing students' needs over external suggestions is beneficial.

To sum up, it can be said that an ESP teacher should act as a mentor. Books are not enough for education. Teachers should develop fresh activities tailored to students' needs and interests, motivating them to engage with the lesson. Being aware of these things enhances the efficiency of learning ESP.

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