

## Course 1: What is meant by English for Specific Purposes/ESP

### 1 Introduction

English has become the dominant language in the globe in the twenty-first century due to various factors, essentially the economic one which is the representation of the political power of industrial countries. A variety of domains are actually the subject of English use on an international level as pinpointed by Graddol (1997:8):

- English is the language of tertiary education.  
It is the working language of international organizations and conferences.
- It is the international language of science and technology.
- It is used in international banking, economics affairs and trade.
- Advertising for global brands is done in English.
- English is the language of audio-visual and culture product.
- It is the language of international tourism.
- It is the language of international safety in the fields of aeronautics and sea
- It is the language of international law.
- It is a relay language in translation.
- It is the language of technology transfer.
- It is the language of internet communication.

The British Council's statistics suggest that more than twenty percent of people on earth

currently understand English. TEFL courses are therefore scheduled worldwide, among them all the special or specific kinds of purposeful teaching (ESP), including all sub-varieties such as English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE)

## 2. ESP Defined

ESP has been one of the most involved branches of applied linguistics in general and, in

particular, of teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) since the 1960s.

As previously stated, the advent of English as a world language is among the factors that

could explain its vitality and its growth, so the need to cope with the various teaching situations and needs of that such a position brings about .

This need implies a knowledge of its development, Types and the various teaching concepts of ESP. It is, however, of great importance to begin with the main definitions of ESP stated by many linguists.

It is possible to observe obvious differences in the understanding of ESP definitions;

some scholars advocated the definition of ESP as simply being English teaching for any reason that could be stated.

However, others defined it more specifically as the teaching of English used for vocational or technical purposes “ESP is generally used to refer to the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose.” Mackay and Mountford (1978)

That is to suggest that, using actual circumstances, English should be taught to acquire specific language skills in a way that helps them to use English in their future career, or to understand English discourse relevant to their field of expertise.

Generally the Students study English “not because they are interested in the English Language or English culture as such, but because they need English for study or work purposes” (Robinson, 1991: 2). In ESP, “language is learnt not for its own sake or for the sake of gaining a general education, but to smooth the path to entry or greater linguistic efficiency in academic, professional or workplace environments” Basturkmen (2006: 18).

This suggests that ESP's function is to help language learners build up the skills they

need in order to use them in a particular field of study, profession, or workplace.

According to ESP evolution over time, these definitions were stated, the latter is seen in more detail in the following section.

### 3. ESP Origin

As far back as the Greek and Roman empires, the origins of teaching Language for Particular Purposes (LSP) can be traced .(Dudley-Evans and ST Johns,1998:1).

In the same way, Strevens (1977) pointed out that the history of LSP goes back to "at least half a century"

The ESP was not a coherent and prepared campaign, for Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 6), but rather a phenomenon that developed out of a number of converging trends".

but we can identify three main reasons common to the emergence of all ESP."(Ibid, 1987: 6):

- ✚ The demands of a brave new world,
- ✚ a revolution in linguistics, and
- ✚ a new focus on the learner.

The New World after 1945, knew age of unprecedented and a huge growth in all the fields especially the technical, economic and scientific ones, governed by two divergent powers, inexorably it engenders a demand for an international language, this duty was accredited to English for different reasons. As a result, "... it created a new generation of learners who knew specifically why they were learning a language..."(Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 6)targeting to satisfy the regular requirements of knowing the simplest brochure or manuals to the most complicated discourse genres like scientific articles

Knowing the changes in the world, some linguists started to concentrate their study on the ways in which language is used in specific circumstances. The conventional

approach to language research centered on the grammatical rules regulating the use of language, although it was found that the discourses differ depending on the context.

The teaching and learning methodologies had to be reorganized and the basic aspects of each case had to be the basis of the learner's courses. As a consequence, the English used by physicians, linguists or officers is not based on the same terminological words, the teaching and learning process was based on the use of particular corpora for each area.

The subject study of educational psychologists was the motivation of learners to acquire a foreign language; they have distinct attitudes, needs and interests. The premise was based on asking me what you need English for and I'm going to tell you the English you need.

It was a logical extension of this theory for each set of unique learners to plan special courses. Strevens (1977:152) notes: "...the existence of a major 'tide' in the educational thought, in all countries and affecting all subjects. The movement referred to is the global trend towards 'learner-centered education'".

The English language teaching changed with it, as did the world, language research and educational ideas radically changed, and knew the birth of teaching English for Particular Purposes, which is regarded as the direct result of the evolution of the world.. However, in terms of its features and functionality, ESP is seen differently by the students.

#### **4. ESP Characteristics :**

ESP, with some special features, is a recognizable English Language Teaching (ELT) operation. DudleyEvans and St. Johns (1998) attempted to apply a variety of features, some absolute and some variable, to outline the key features of ESP

##### **1.Absolute Characteristics:**

- ✚ ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners;
- ✚ ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
- ✚ ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genre appropriate to these activities.

## 2. Variable Characteristics:

- ✚ . ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ✚ . ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English;
- ✚ . ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
- ✚ ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems, but it can be used with beginners.

(Dudley-Evans

& St. John, 1998:4)

- It is clear that the absolute features are unique to ESP because the needs of learners are of central importance when developing language activities.
- With regard to the variable characteristics, ESP courses can be built using particular teaching methodology for a specific

category, but all groups and disciplines of learners can be concerned

with ESP. For this reason, ESP should be simply considered as an 'approach' to teaching, or what Dudley-Evans and St. John illustrate as an 'attitude of mind'. Similarly, Hutchinson and Waters' (1987:19) stated that, "ESP should properly be seen not as any particular language product but as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning".

- ❖ There is a great similarity between ESP and General English

Purposes (EGP) as teaching methods in the form of the statements suggested below, recognizing that each technique is set up to satisfy particular social criteria, So, in what terms do they differ?

### **5.The Difference between ESP and EGP**

- ✓ Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stated that there is no difference between the two in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice.
- ✓ The teaching approach to ESP is considered to be learner-centered where the needs and objectives of learners are of supreme importance, while the general English approach is language-centered and focuses on learning language from a broad perception covering all the English-speaking community's language skills and cultural aspects.
- ✓ General English courses are provided to pupils as compulsory module at schools. Their unique purpose is to succeed in the examinations. learners of ESP are mainly adult with a certain degree of awareness concerning their language needs
- ✓ Basturkmen (2006) argues that the teaching of the General English Language tends to go from a definite point to an indeterminate one, while ESP aims to speed up learners and direct them to a known destination in order to achieve specific goals. "The emphasis in ESP on going from A to B in the most time- and energy efficient manner can lead to the view that ESP is an essentially practical endeavour" (Basturkmen, 2006: 9)

## References

1. Hutchison, T. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: a learner-centred approach*. England: Cambridge University Press.
2. Dudley, E. and St Johns (1998) *Developments in ESP a Multi-Disciplinary Approach Cambridge*: Cambridge University Press.
3. Basturkmen, H. (2006). Ideas and Options in English for Specific Purposes. London and New jersey: *ESL and Applied Linguistic Professional Series*: Eli Hinkel, Edition.