

"BRIDGING THE GAP: DESIGNING HOLISTIC COURSE FRAMEWORKS
THAT BALANCE LANGUAGE AND SKILL-CENTERED APPROACHES"

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Abstract: *The 21st century is characterized by its rapid shift towards a global as to a technological movement. To this end, many disciplines witnessed many changes. The domain of education is not an exception. A part from this, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is seen nowadays as a critical agent in resolving many problems in different domains where English is taught. ESP course design has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of EFL teaching since the early 1960's. It is a phenomenon that grew out of a number of covering trends. This article explores how educators and curriculum designers can integrate language-focused methodologies with skill-centered course design. It emphasizes fostering both communicative competence and practical, transferable skills. The discussion could cover innovative frameworks, assessment strategies, and examples of courses that blend linguistic development with real-world applicability, like designing programs for professional contexts, academic readiness, or intercultural communication.*

Key words: *ESP, course design, language centered approach, skill centered approach, innovative framework, communicative competence.*

Абстракт: *21 век характеризуется быстрым переходом к глобальному движению, как к технологическому. С этой целью многие дисциплины стали свидетелями множества изменений. Сфера образования не является исключением. Отчасти это касается и английского языка для специальных целей (ESP), который в настоящее время рассматривается как критически важный фактор в решении многих проблем в различных областях, где преподается английский язык. Разработка курса ESP стала одной из самых заметных областей преподавания EFL с начала 1960-х годов. Это явление, которое выросло из ряда охватывающих тенденций. В этой статье рассматривается, как преподаватели и разработчики учебных программ могут интегрировать методологии, ориентированные на язык, с разработкой курсов, ориентированных на навыки. В ней подчеркивается развитие как коммуникативной компетенции, так и практических, переносимых навыков. Обсуждение может охватывать инновационные структуры, стратегии оценки и примеры курсов, которые сочетают лингвистическое развитие с применимостью в реальном мире, например, разработку программ для профессиональных контекстов, академической готовности или межкультурной коммуникации.*

Ключевые слова: *ESP, разработка курса, подход, ориентированный на язык, подход, ориентированный на навыки, инновационная структура, коммуникативная компетентность.*

Abstrakt: *XXI asr texnologik harakat sifatida global miqyosga tez siljishi bilan tavsiflanadi. Shu maqsadda ko'plab fanlar ko'plab o'zgarishlarga guvoh bo'ldi. Ta'lim sohasi bundan mustasno emas. Buning bir qismi, maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili (ESP) bugungi kunda ingliz tili o'qitiladigan turli sohalaridagi ko'plab muammolarni hal qilishda muhim vosita sifatida qaraladi. ESP kursining dizayni 1960-yillarning boshidan boshlab EFL o'qitishning eng mashhur yo'nalishlaridan biriga aylandi. Bu bir qancha yorituvchi tendentsiyalardan kelib chiqqan hodisa. Ushbu maqola o'qituvchilar va o'quv dasturlari dizaynerlari tilga yo'naltirilgan metodologiyalarni mahoratga asoslangan kurs dizayni bilan qanday birlashtirishi mumkinligini o'rganadi. U ham kommunikativ kompetentsiyani, ham amaliy, o'tkaziladigan ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirishga urg'u beradi. Muhokama innovatsion asoslar, baholash strategiyalari va lingvistik rivojlanishni real hayotda qo'llanilishi bilan uyg'unlashtiradigan kurslar misollarini qamrab olishi mumkin, masalan, professional kontekstlar, akademik tayyorgarlik yoki madaniyatlararo muloqot uchun dasturlarni loyihalash.*

Kalit so'zlar: *ESP, kurs dizayni, tilga asoslangan yondashuv, mahoratga asoslangan yondashuv, innovatsion asos, kommunikativ kompetentsiya.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Robinson, (1991), 'English for a specific purpose is now a major activity around the world. It is a company engaged in education and training and practice and has taken up three main areas of knowledge: language, pedagogy and specific areas of interest for students²³. The advance of the 21st century has resulted in a huge expansion of technology, and thus, English in particular. Accordingly, what is generally viewed as the Americanization of the world under the concept of globalization. This process is aiming at unifying the world under the same political system (Democracy), the same economic system (Capitalism and the Free Market System), the same religion (Monotheism or to believe in one God), and the same educational system (the LMD). Apparently, the above mentioned issues gave birth to the spreading of English all over the world and through all domains. In other words, English nowadays has been given the status of being the first international language; or also known as the universal language; the global language; the language of technology, or a lingua franca. This is why; most countries are obliged to rethink about the position of that language within their jurisdictions. This is why the need to learn English in all aspects of life has become huge demand in the job market as well. There are few ways to learn and teach English. Regarding this and more precisely within higher education districts, a new branch is integrated namely ESP or English for specific purposes. This new discipline is fundamentally based on needs specification and thus, process adaptation, i.e., the English taught in the ESP situation should mainly based on learners' needs in terms of skills notably: reading; speaking; listening; and writing which, in fact, represents many difficulties encountered by our EFL students at both EGP situation

²³ Dudley-Evans, T., and M. J. St. John, *Developments in English for Specific Purposes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

and ESP context. Course design is the process by which the raw data on a need for learning is interpreted for an integrated series of experience in teaching-learning. The objective of the design of course is to bring the student to a specific state of knowledge. In practice this includes using available theoretical and empirical information for producing a curriculum, selecting, adjusting or writing of materials in line with the curriculum, developing a methodology to teach those materials and setting out evaluation procedures to measure progress towards the specified objectives. The ESP course design approach is probably numerous, as there are course designer approaches. However, three key types of course design can be identified: language-centered, skill centered and learning-centered. Course design is a series activity to design course or learning activities. Hutchinson and Water define Course design is the process of interpreting the raw needs analysis data to produce "an integrated series of learning experiences to lead learners to a particular state of knowledge"²⁴. While According to Munby, "ESP courses are determined in all essentials by the prior analysis of the communication needs of the learners"²⁵.

Methodology

The current article attempts to describe the research design, methods, and procedures. It states the rationale behind using the case study. It also gives a more or less clear idea of the combination of the research methods adapted to both quantitative and qualitative methods and essentially used to analyze the obtained data. In this respect, a semi-structured interview, a questionnaire, and content analysis have been exploited as research instruments.

DISCUSSIONS

Course design is the process by which the raw data on a need for learning is interpreted for an integrated series of experience in teaching-learning. The objective of the design of course is to bring the student to a specific state of knowledge. In practice this includes using available theoretical and empirical information for producing a curriculum, selecting, adjusting or writing of materials in line with the curriculum, developing a methodology to teach those materials and setting out evaluation procedures to measure progress towards the specified objectives.

The ESP course design approach is probably numerous, as there are course designer approaches. However, three key types of course design can be identified: language-centered, skill centered and learning-centered. Let's first look at the approaches to course design:

Firstly, language- centered approach is the simplest and more familiar kind to English teachers. It is an approach that focuses on the linguistic performance of the learner in the target situation²⁶.

This approach aims to draw direct connection between target situation and the content of ESP course. It begins with the students and their needs, and thus can be based on every significant sense of the word.

The student is used simply to evaluate the objective condition.

²⁴ T. Hutchinson, and A. Waters, *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 6-8.

²⁵ J. Munby, *Communicative Syllabus Design*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 2.

²⁶ T. Hutchinson, and A. Waters, *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 65.

Installed as in general English, only a small portion of the target language is taught instead of taking the whole language and teaching it to the student. The student is only used to find the limited area. After that, the student doesn't play a further role.

As we have shown, students should be considered at any phase of the process when evaluating need analysis. However, this model doesn't take account of the learning needs of the students. Therefore, it is not based on learners but is clearly limited by learners. One of the appealing characteristics of this model is its systematic appearance.

In doing so, however, it induces the false belief that systematic learning itself generates systematic learning in the learner by systematic examination and presentation. The role of systematization in learning is unfortunately not so easy.

There are definitely many evidence to suggest that information systemization plays a vital role in the learning process: by integrating individual pieces of knowledge into a meaningful prediction system.

But the key point here is that it must be a system created internally and not a system implemented externally. The systemic analysis and systemic presentation of information in no way means that it will be learned systematically.

The system must be relevant to the learner. And we must admit, sadly, that we don't know enough about the mind to construct its inner information structure.

However, we must avoid the error of the Audiolingual approach that explaining this structure causes structural learning, since language has a system which can be represented.

Secondly, skill centered approach can also be considered here.

This approach aims at helping learners to develop skills and strategies which will continue after the ESP course. Its aim is not only to provide language knowledge but to make the learners into better processors of information. It is based on the principle that learning is totally determined by the learner even though teachers can influence what is taught but what the learners learn is determined by the learner alone.

Learning is seen as a process in which the learners what knowledge or skill they have in order to make sense of the flow of new information. Learning therefore, is an internal process, which is crucially dependent upon the knowledge the learners already have and their ability and motivation to use it.

The term learning-centered approach introduced by Hutchison and Waters²⁷. It is seen as a process in which the learner use what knowledge or skills they have to make sense of the flow of new information.

It is an internal process, which is crucially dependent upon the knowledge the learner already have and their ability and motivation to use it. It is a process of negotiation between individuals and the society.

Society sets the target and the individuals must do their best to get as close to that target as is possible. Skills centered model views language in terms of how the mind of the learner processes it rather than as an entity in itself. In addition, it tries to build on the positive factors that the learners bring to the course, rather than just on the negative idea of 'lacks'.

²⁷ T. Hutchinson, and A. Waters, *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Finally, it frames its objectives in open-ended terms, so enabling learners to achieve at least something. Yet, in spite of its concern for the learner, the skills-centered approach still approaches the learner as a user of language rather than as a learner of language. The basic theoretical hypothesis is that underlying any language behavior are certain skills and strategies, which the learner uses in order to produce or comprehend discourse. A skills-centered approach aims to get away from the surface performance data and look at the competence that underlies the performance.

The pragmatics basis for the skills-centered approach derives from a distinction made by Widdowson²⁸ (1981) between goal-oriented courses and process-oriented courses. Holmes (1982) points out that: 'In ESP the main problem is usually one of time available and student experience. Holmes puts his finger on a contradiction that arises from interpreting 'needs' in the narrow sense of 'target situation necessities'.

If the ESP course is design in terms of goals, there is in effect a tacit admission that a large number of students will fail the course. Since ESP is by its very nature process that is intended to enable people to achieve a purpose, it is at best a little odd to frame the course in such a way as to almost predict failure. The process-oriented approach tries to avoid this problem by removing the distinction between the ESP course and the target situation.

The ESP course is not seen as a self-sufficient unit from which learners emerge as proficient target situation performers, because, as Holmes points out, a number of students are unlikely to achieve this proficiency. Instead, the ESP course and target situation are seen as a continuum of constantly developing degrees of proficiency with no cut-off point of success or failure.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The main results obtained revealed that the difficulties lie in terms of format and content. This is why; it is strongly believed that rethinking about the ESP course is more than needed. Besides, training language teachers to cope with those difficulties should alert the whole staff to ensure that training. Despite the fact of being: a language, learning, or skills-centered approach; making the ESP course as dynamic and flexible as much as possible is the most important thing. Hence, a clear understanding of students' needs and the demands of the target situation will serve in developing the appropriate materials and methodologies needed to function effectively in a given domain.

CONCLUSION

The method of designing courses is to view the raw data on a learning requirement to create an integrated number of learning experiences. All the criteria of the course are incorporated in ESP. The incorporation of three elements: PSA (present situation analysis), TSA (target situation analysis), and LSA, as well as integrated sources of data holdings, students, teachers and experts. The three components of need analysis are integrated in the analysis. ESP, course, assume to have several different approaches: language-centered, skill-centered and learning-centered. For example, if we are trying to design an ESP course using a Learning Based approach, this will mean that what is accomplished is fully decided by the learner, even though professors will influence the teaching, but what is learned. When we

²⁸ Widdowson, H. G., *English for Specific Purposes: Criteria for course design for English for academic and technical purposes*, Newbury House, 1981.

want to do an ESP course, we need to understand which approach you want to apply to this course and how this course is planned.

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