



## **ESP Courses and Material Selection for Students in Their Second Year of Studies at South East European University**

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Received: 20 June 2022 / Accepted: 5 July 2022 / Published: 24 November 2022  
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**Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.8154843**

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### ***Abstract***

*This study discusses the various activities, formats, and teaching strategies that have been applied in recent years in teaching English for Specific Purposes, or in this case, English for Social Sciences to students in their second year of studies at South East European University. The classes of ESP have constantly had changes whether in the material content or the way which they are implemented. This paper will analyze the needs analysis and the materials and activities which are used in this course which are including Blended Learning, Flipped Classroom and at the end the Project Based Learning. It is comprehensive that the issues and topics are changing and that brings to a result that syllabuses change also annually. The paper will show that all the selected activities have shown results, but as well the effective approaches which are contemporary based on methods and technological advancements have been really showing a high fulfillment marker and a connection with a proper material and the level of students' achievement*

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*and satisfaction on each of the ESP courses. Students completed an online survey that evaluated three aspects: advisor perceived quality, skill development, and infrastructure and support. A number of satisfiers were also evaluated: satisfaction with the program, peer recommendation of the lecturer, and fulfilment of student expectations. The article also considers the application of innovative approaches and their implementation by using the materials, topics, journals, lesson plans which are more trending and sophisticated as the interest and the student's needs have been changing drastically in the last decade. The materials are of topics which are globally known and of course have resulted in student satisfaction at the end of each semester.*

**Keywords:** *English for specific purposes, innovative approaches, lesson plans, materials, student satisfaction*

## **Introduction**

Needs analysis is a crucial component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, as they ensure the excellence and efficiency of specialized language instruction (Kaur and Alla Baksh 2010, 3; Strevens 1978). They enable the lecturer to have a better understanding of the learning setting, learner requirements, and other collaborative requests. Student needs examine has direct pedagogical implications, allowing language teachers to create lectures based on real-world tasks, raising learner motivation and enhancing learning outcomes (Chostelidou 2011, 407; Mohseni-Far, 2008, 4-7). Traditionally, learner needs were mostly determined by the language teacher's perception (Flowerdew, 2013). However, such a form of perception has proven troublesome, as teachers and students may not share the same understanding of student requirements. A needs analysis must look outside the academics to be completely representative. The syllabus created for English for Specific Purposes is meant for the students at their second-year of studies at the South East European University. English course for the third semester are classified as English for Specific Purposes – English for the Social Sciences (ESS). A sub-category that has received little attention "probably because it is not thought to differ significantly from more traditional humanities-based General English" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 16-18).

As a result, there are some, but not in a considerable number of textbooks on the ELT market that respond to the queries of students in various fields, especially when they are registered in the same ESP course, as it is the case at the Faculties studying the Social Sciences, which had a need for the creation of in-house materials/textbooks and syllabus.

Students enrolling in the first-year and need to take the English courses must have studied the language for at least eight years in their former education, and their expertise is expected to be at least B1 level; by the end of the second year, students' receptive and productive skills should be at around B2+ until the C1 level. In fact, their competency level at university ranges from A2 to C1, with the occasional exceptions of C2.

These large differences in language ability, combined with the fact that the class is made up of students from two separate social sciences, creates some obstacles and has an impact on the syllabus and materials design. It's essential to think about students' knowledge or the needs before design and producing resources. In the first two years of study at the university, all department curricula include ESP courses with the objectives of acquired structures of general language with some essentials of university language within the diverse disciplines taught and attaining knowledge of more complex syntactic and semantic aspects of general academic language used in communication and writing while being fluent in the basic language features of a particular discipline.

The key ESP demand of students has been identified through needs analysis as acquiring the essential competencies for autonomous use of university material in English in their study programs. This is an immediate requirement for undergrads, as they are required to use English-language for research and resources for their study assignments.

Other potential aim is the need of equally important categories of students include following lectures by foreign and visiting professors, participating in research with different students, and attending international seminars and conferences in their future education and career building. When asked about their personal requirements or needs, however, the biggest number of students claim that they need to increase their speaking skills and grammar knowledge, followed by vocabulary expansion, reading and writing skills also.

As can be evident, there is an inconsistency between students' purpose and individual demands, which, if not addressed effectively by the teacher or the source materials, may have a negative consequence on student incentive. As a result, the textbook tends to focus on reading skills and vocabulary exercises which are suitable with their direct objective needs, while giving more additional material and opportunities for the growth of communication skills and grammar practice; and on the other hand less importance is given to writing skills.

In terms of balancing students' queries, the adopted form to course design falls somewhere between, between the narrow-angled and wide- angled course design options, i.e. geared toward the needs of a fairly specific group of students (Basturkmen, 2010: 55-59). This has been a predisposition for the topics addressed in the course as well. Because students from many fields are enrolled in the course, it was essential to expand the scope of the themes.

Dudley-Evans and St English for Students of Psychology and Education 441 have borne out the piloting of several resources. "Students who are studying English because it is on the test," (John, 1998: 10) notes. Their institution's timetable [...] may show less results and by more particular work and might be disrupted. ESP material that is closer to the center of the ELT field motivates me more than other types of courses As a result, the textbook's selection of themes and readings indicates an attempt to be diverse and provide fresh ideas and knowledge while balancing students' demands and interests "being grounded in the learners' experience and knowledge" (ibid., 172); or, meaning, "to be grounded in the learners' experience and knowledge" supply students access relevant real-world material via relatable carrier content regardless of their area of expertise. The material selected for a term for ESP is in that sense that topics are graded from more general to rather more specific topics, where a progression is evident.

Students who are at the beginning of their studies will find universal interest and relatability to connect with the material in a significant way, even if their subject knowledge is still inadequate in a meaningful sense, making the transition from the generic English they found as being easier to more academic English. Several supplementary texts can be used as reading material between-class assignments can have longer learning load than books used in class, where time restrictions and students' attention spans limit the amount of reading content that can be covered.

### **Literature review**

From the beginning of the century, distance or online education has grown in popularity as a realistic alternative to traditional classroom instruction. Despite the fact that digital education is now a common thing and it can be a great way to get an education, on the other hand it isn't for everyone. While this method may be a great way to get an education, it is not appropriate for every student. Teachers, according to Richardson, necessity "integrate technology as seamlessly as possible". The technological equipment is merely a means to an end, not the presentations content. It shouldn't be the case. Taking notes sometimes can be more effective than computer equipment

in some situations - plus paper doesn't crash! p. 14 (Khampusaen, 2004). Many academic experts have been wondering if foreign languages can and if they should be taught online, according to Khampusaen (2014, p. 90). Teachers, on the other hand, remain the most important part of online education. He also claims that a social learning environment can boost teacher-student engagement by a significant amount (p. 91).

As an eventual effect, a growing number of institutions have started to offer online studies and online courses in recent years, founded on the idea that students born in the digital age In-person learning may be obsolete and demotivating to some however, true? The arguments used to sustain these opinions, according to Kennedy (2008), should be evaluated more carefully before university educators begin to change the syllabus and different approaches to teaching and learning. These arguments are based on the assumption that all of the students attending the Universities are with similar digital backgrounds and educational experiences. This denotes that university students are all digital natives with some level of computer literacy technical experiences that are consistent Furthermore, this generation of students are thought to have superior technological knowledge and understanding.

Taking into account the findings of researchers in the area of ESP teaching and online instruction, we have tried as ESP lecturers to create and a syllabus which meets the demands and the needs of the students with academic readings, vocabulary and activities which are engaging, inspiring syllabus but also motivating syllabuses for many years now.

### **Syllabus adaptation**

While it comes to learn a second language, and mostly when learning that certain language in school, inspiration is one of the most critical components. "A lack of motivation will result in a lack of driving strength to complete a task; motivation is the driving force behind the energy required to complete a task" (Nugent, 2013). Unfortunately, there is no uniform method for pushing kids to fully acquire a language because approaches that work in one situation with one set of pupils may not work in another. Internal or external sources of inspiration might be found. It is vital to devote equal attention to both incentive factors in order to learn a second language effectively. The ultimate objective for self-directed and autonomous learning is strongly tied to motivation. On the other aspect, digital learning can result in autonomy. The noun "learner" refers to someone who is learning something I instead than emphasizing the role of the teacher,

autonomy highlights the role of the student. According to Jacobs & Farell, learner autonomy focuses on the course relatively than the result (2001), it supports students in advancing their own learning goals and objectives considering learning to be a lifetime process. Learner autonomy according to Hafner and Miller (2011) is frequently misunderstood to meaning only autonomous out- of-class learning which learners have complete control over their learning process, the learner, on the other.

Students from all faculties at South East European University (SEEU) in Macedonia (apart from those of the Department of English Language and Literature) are compulsory to finish English language courses specialized to their field. Students begin these courses during the third semester, on their second year. The Language Center (LC) provides the syllabus, materials, and the instructors for these courses. The English for Specific Purposes for Political Sciences and Communication 1 and 2 courses are two semester courses which include four class hours per week. The full length of the course is 15 weeks per semester and they are designed according to students' needs and interests. The courses focus on the four main language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. In the semester they will learn job hunting vocabulary and processes, soft skills, how to write a letter of motivation or resume/ CV, mock job application of or job interviews, how to deliver a speech or presentation in front on an audience, think critically and evaluate situations.

ESP 1 Overview of Google Classroom

ESP 2 Overview of Google Classroom

The ESP 1 course, as shown in the image, covered a wide range of intriguing topics for students to learn about. Independent learning was facilitated by various assessment tasks, followed by peer and self- evaluations. When assistance was required, without having to wait for a class or office hours, it was provided. Students saw that they preferred the quick reaction they got online to the potentially delayed input they may get in a classroom. Additionally, students may have more time to consider a criticism and make adjustments if they receive the feedback online instead of in class.

## **Discussion**

Needs analysis are essential in ensuring that a course is capable and creating a connection between what students already know and what they require (Eslami, 2010, p. 7). Many research findings on the other hand, demonstrate that a NA does not always yield clear responses that can be used to make broad generalizations. Nonetheless, these preliminary findings reveal at least three patterns that can be used to guide course design.

The significance of these activities is very well known in language instruction research. Because the students usually have basic work experience, their main demands are related to the classroom. ESP assignments provide the authenticity that is so important in language training, given the immediate applicability of academic abilities (Guariento and Morley 2001, 352).

Furthermore, according to the second language use Present Self notion outlined by Schug (2019, 284), strengthening academic skills could stimulate learner motivation; students are more Instead of generic goals they have for their futures, people are more likely to be driven by tasks that relate to their current circumstances.

Teachers have to, however, use caution when focusing on EAP activities. Taking notes and paying close attention to lectures may be realistic tasks based on necessary requirements, but they may not be powerful motivators (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Although additional examination is needed to determine the influence of EAP exercises on student contribution and satisfaction, teachers have to weighing scales them with group activities that capitalize on the social aspect of language learning (Dörnyei, 1997).

It should be also emphasized the need of teaching students how to learn effectively. Even graduate students have a wide range of interests, extending from general to more corer and specific courses using independent learning practices. Future research will need to look into other tracking systems for guided, self-directed learning.

Moreover, it's worth noting that many former and current students are confused about their future professional routes. As a result, it can be difficult to know exactly what assignments students will need to complete in English. This research wires with Long's statement (2005, 20) that students are not inevitably the most realistic source of information about their needs. Furthermore,

it is evident that liberal arts students have a higher dropout rate. While these figures may originally cause difficulties on ESP course proposals, they also allow the English instructors to assist students in developing future English-related projects. The research on learner motivation and possible selves (Markus 2006, cited in Dörnyei 2009, p. 17) informs such activities. Further research could look into techniques for assisting students in visualizing their future selves.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this research is to give some more importance and clarification on the English requirements of students who are majoring in other disciplines rather than those who study languages. Creating a set of online or activities which include the use of technology for students to use in class or as assignments was part of this research. New digital devices and applications are produced all the time, and new ways to use those gadgets emerge. The digital tasks created for this study were well acknowledged by students, and they were deemed to be beneficial to their learning. Instructors can provide a considerably more engaging course of study to their students by implementing the study's recommendations, one that takes into account the students' digital world. As this article has demonstrated, improved student performance is a result of a mix of technology, student control over their learning, and their learning objectives, rather than the style of education. The teaching and learning process is strongly connected to technology. Technology aids educators while also transferring some learning obligation to students thus, larger number of studies could follow Long's (2005, p. 33). To better understand how English is used in those contexts, offer recommendations and conduct in observations of various professional settings. Many students which studied in the past or are currently studying have not very clear study objectives, but later on can be inspired and do more research to analyze strategies for developing the learner's self-concept or their own concept, a topic not often seen in research (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 34).

By engaging in an online learning program, students can set their own pace for learning, direct their development, and reach to that point when they can access to course content. Technology can give you the tools to organize your learning experience on your own. Students that use technology in this atmosphere become active users rather than passive recipients of information (EDC, 2011). Students must employ several technology tools in the classroom to accomplish this goal.



According to Hamilton (2007), the most significant part of integration is destroyed by limiting the classroom to one technology instrument.

Only by mixing today's technology with living skills that students will require in the future does learning become valid and genuine. We also learned from the pandemic crisis that students need to have specific skills. The most important are problems where they have to address a problem, critical thinking, flexibility, and information and technology literacy. These must be systematically ingrained in educational institutions. Students are more competitive and equipped for the outside world as a result of the skills they learn in their classes.

Several key considerations had to be made when designing the syllabus and the course book selection. Because the course syllabus was written to address the requirements of students in two related but different disciplines, it required a method that was, either generalized nor overly broad with carrier substance which was valuable and engaging to both sets of students. Another issue it is to meet the demands of students with varied levels of lingual competency by giving a variety of language content of varying complexity. And as an end result the textbook has attempted to achieve a balance between the interests and needs of students, both objective and subjective.

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