

Content integration in Teaching Business English in Algerian Higher Education: Students' Perceptions and Teachers' Experiences at Setif 1 University

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines how subject-specific content is integrated into Business English classes in Algerian higher education, focusing on Master One marketing students and teachers at Ferhat Abbas University, Setif 1. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from seventy-seven Marketing students through an online questionnaire and from five BE teachers from the Commercial Sciences Department via semi-structured interviews. The results reveal that, although some integration of disciplinary content with language learning occurs, it is often limited in both scope and depth. Consequently, students report only moderate satisfaction with the course and frequently encounter difficulties in applying their English language skills to authentic marketing tasks. Instructors further highlighted challenges in selecting authentic and relevant materials, addressing varying proficiency levels, and maintaining student engagement. Based on these findings, the study recommends enhancing BE courses through carefully tailored content aligned with students' professional needs, incorporating interactive and practical activities, utilizing authentic materials, and providing continuous feedback. Such strategies can strengthen the connection between language learning and disciplinary knowledge, better equipping students to apply their skills effectively in real-world business contexts.

KEYWORDS: Content-based Instruction; Teaching Business English; Teachers' Experiences; Students' Perceptions; Algerian Higher Education

التدريس القائم على المحتوى في تعليم الإنجليزية للأعمال في التعليم العالي الجزائري: آراء الطلبة وتجارب الأساتذة جامعة سطيف 1

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ملخص البحث

تتناول هذه الدراسة كيفية دمج المحتوى التخصصي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية للأعمال في التعليم العالي الجزائري، مع التركيز على طلبة السنة الأولى ماستر تخصص تسويق وأساتذتهم بجامعة فرحات عباس - سطيف 1. واعتمدت الدراسة منهجية البحث المختلط، حيث تم جمع البيانات من سبعة وسبعين (77) طالبًا في التسويق من خلال استبيان إلكتروني، ومن خمسة أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية للأعمال بقسم العلوم التجارية عبر مقابلات شبه منظمة. أظهرت النتائج أنه رغم وجود نوع من دمج المحتوى التخصصي مع تعلم اللغة، إلا أنه يظل محدودًا من حيث النطاق والعمق، وهو ما انعكس في مستوى رضا متوسط لدى الطلبة، بالإضافة إلى صعوبات متكررة في توظيف مهاراتهم في اللغة الإنجليزية في مهام تسويقية واقعية. كما أشار الأساتذة إلى تحديات تتعلق باختيار مواد تعليمية أصيلة وملائمة، والتعامل مع تفاوت مستويات الطلبة، والحفاظ على تفاعلهم داخل الصف. وبناءً على هذه النتائج، توصي الدراسة بتطوير مقررات اللغة الإنجليزية للأعمال من خلال تصميم محتوى تعليمي يتلاءم مع الاحتياجات المهنية للطلبة، وإدماج أنشطة تفاعلية وتطبيقية، واستخدام مواد تعليمية أصيلة، وتوفير تغذية راجعة مستمرة، بما يعزز الربط بين تعلم اللغة والمعرفة التخصصية ويمكن الطلبة من توظيف مهاراتهم بشكل أكثر فعالية في السياقات المهنية الحقيقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قر التدريس القائم على المحتوى؛ تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية للأعمال؛ تجارب الأساتذة؛ تصورات الطلبة؛ التعليم العالي في الجزائر.

1. INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic, political, technological, and cultural shifts inevitably compel education to evolve. Advances in technology, greater mobility, the need for improved disciplinary understanding, and increased competitiveness in the job market all drive the focus on internationalization within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The latter are required to prepare students with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet these new demands. To boost internationalization, higher education institutions in countries where English is not the primary language have increasingly adopted English as the language of instruction (Arnó & Guzman, 2015). This adoption demonstrates in various forms, including English Medium Instruction (EMI), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and their respective variations.

Within ESP, content integration is considered a defining principle. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that ESP courses should be grounded in learners' specific disciplinary needs to ensure relevance and authenticity. Similarly, Basturkmen (2010) highlights that effective ESP instruction requires close alignment between language objectives and subject-matter content, particularly in fields such as business, economics, and marketing. In Business English contexts, integrating discipline-specific content allows learners to acquire the linguistic resources needed for real-world professional tasks, such as negotiations, presentations, and report writing (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Dalton-Puffer, 2011). In the same vein, Paltridge and Starfield (2013) assert that a key feature of an ESP course is that its content and goals are tailored to learners' specific needs.

In the Algerian context, recent studies highlight both the potential and challenges of implementing content-integrated instruction in ESP. Experimental research on content integration in Algerian universities has shown significant improvements in language and subject content proficiency among ESP learners, including better communication skills and higher-order cognitive development (Ladjel & Hanifi, 2025). However, studies also point to ongoing obstacles, including inconsistent scaffolding, limited teacher training, and difficulties in matching language complexity to content demands (Makhouf, 2023). These insights align with broader research on ESP in Algeria, which emphasizes the need for systematic professional development and context-specific instructional strategies to enhance ESP teaching (Khalili, 2025).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Understanding Business English: Concepts, Scope, and Application

Business English (BE) is a principal branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), designed to meet the communicative needs of individuals operating in professional and commercial domains (Nickerson & Planken, 2016). Its scope ranges from English for General Business Purposes to more specialized variants tailored for specific industries or functions. A key evolution in its conceptualization is its recognition as a lingua franca in international business, where the focus shifts from native-speaker norms to effective, pragmatic communication among diverse speakers (Nickerson, 2005). This functional application underscores its role in enabling tasks such as negotiations, presentations, and correspondence, which are central to professional success (Ellis & Johnson, 1994).

Mastering Business English is essential for conveying professionalism and competence, fostering collaboration, and building strong business relationships. It also plays a crucial role in cross-cultural communication, allowing individuals to adapt their communication style to diverse business environments. In today's globalized world, proficiency in Business English is a key asset for success in a range of professional endeavors. In BE, content integration is particularly crucial due to the field's reliance on specialized terminology, professional communication conventions, and real-world business practices (Nickerson, 2005).

2.2. Teaching Business English with Integrated Content

Business English is taught in various educational settings, with a focus on practical applications such as negotiations, presentations, and correspondence (Esmerova & Iseni, 2018). The curriculum often overlaps with English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes, emphasizing the need for effective communication in professional environments (Nickerson & Planken, 2016). Recent Business English pedagogy reflects a shift from grammar-focused instruction toward task-based and content-driven approaches (Ellis, 2017). Integrated BE courses rely heavily on authentic materials such as financial reports, marketing plans, emails, and corporate case studies, exposing learners to genuine business discourse (Du-Babcock, 2013). Such exposure enhances learners' ability to comprehend and produce professional texts that reflect real workplace practices (Zhang, 2005).

Pedagogically, integrated BE instruction emphasizes professional genres and communicative tasks that mirror workplace realities, including meetings, presentations, and negotiations. Research shows that these practices improve learners' pragmatic competence, engagement, and communicative confidence (Esmerova & Iseni, 2018). Teacher scaffolding plays a crucial role, as ESP instructors must mediate complex content, provide linguistic support, and manage cognitive load (Basturkmen, 2010).

Additionally, integrated Business English instruction contributes to intercultural business communication competence by exposing learners to global business norms and cross-cultural scenarios (Nickerson & Planken, 2016). Technology-enhanced learning further supports content integration by providing access to up-to-date materials and interactive learning environments. Nevertheless, scholars stress that successful integration requires coherent course design, aligned assessment practices, and institutional support (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

2.3. Strategic Importance of Content Integration in Language Learning

Content integration plays a strategically significant role in language learning, particularly within ESP and BE contexts, where language is closely tied to academic and professional practices. Integrating subject-matter content into language instruction enables learners to acquire linguistic competence through meaningful engagement with disciplinary knowledge, thereby increasing relevance, motivation, and transferability of learning outcomes (Basturkmen, 2010; Belcher, 2006).

From a pedagogical perspective, content integration supports purpose-driven language learning, as learners use English as a tool to access, process, and communicate specialized knowledge rather than as an abstract system of rules. This aligns with ESP principles that emphasize needs analysis and learner-centered course design (Basturkmen, 2005; Harding, 2007). In Business English, for example, integrating marketing, management, or finance content allows students to develop professional genres and discourse practices essential for workplace communication

(Nickerson & Planken, 2016; Zhang, 2005).

Strategically, content integration enhances cognitive engagement and higher-order thinking skills. Related research demonstrates that learning through content promotes deeper processing, problem-solving, and conceptual understanding when language and cognition are developed simultaneously (Coyle, 2007; Dalton-Puffer, 2011). The 4Cs framework further highlights that effective integration requires balancing content learning with communication, cognition, and cultural awareness, thus preparing learners for complex professional environments (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010).

Moreover, content integration contributes to the development of disciplinary literacies, enabling learners to understand and produce specialized texts, genres, and multimodal discourse typical of higher education and professional settings (Dalton-Puffer, Hüttner, & Nikula, 2024; Ruiz-Garrido & Fortanet-Gómez, 2024). This strategic focus is particularly important in Business English, where learners must navigate authentic documents, meetings, and negotiations in English as a business lingua franca (Du-Babcock, 2013).

Despite its advantages, the strategic effectiveness of content integration depends on careful task design, appropriate scaffolding, and teacher expertise. Without these conditions, learners may experience cognitive overload or superficial learning (Basturkmen, 2014; Robinson, 2001). Therefore, content integration should be viewed not merely as a methodological option but as a strategic pedagogical approach that bridges language learning with academic and professional competence, especially in higher education ESP contexts.

2.4. Critical Challenges of Content Integration in the BE Course

The existed literature highlights the most common issues: developing course materials, using authentic resources, inadequate teacher training and professional development, ensuring materials remain relevant and current, assessing language and content, managing large mixed-ability classes, the decline in ESP courses, and the lack of interdepartmental cooperation and institutional support (Flowerdew, 2005; Belcher, 2006; Hyland, 2006; Basturkmen, 2014).

Despite its pedagogical advantages, integrating content into ESP classrooms comes with several well-known challenges, especially in Business English and higher education settings. One significant issue is the limited subject-matter knowledge of ESP instructors, who are usually trained as language experts rather than specialists in disciplines like business or economics. This gap hampers teachers' ability to engage deeply with disciplinary concepts and often limits instruction to superficial language features (Du-Babcock, 2013).

Closely related to this issue is what has been called content vulnerability, where instructors' lack of disciplinary confidence limits pedagogical depth and weakens their professional authority in the classroom (Hyland, 2006). Effective content integration, therefore, depends on ongoing collaboration between language teachers and subject specialists; however, institutional structures in higher education often prevent such cooperation, leaving ESP courses administratively isolated and pedagogically disconnected from disciplinary programs (Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015).

Curricular and temporal constraints further limit the feasibility of content-integrated instruction. Rigid syllabi and limited contact hours often compel ESP instructors to prioritize linguistic accuracy and examinable skills over meaningful engagement with disciplinary content

(Smit & Dafouz, 2012). In addition, assessment practices commonly remain misaligned with the goals of content-integrated ESP, as traditional evaluation frameworks tend to focus on discrete grammar and vocabulary knowledge rather than integrated language-and-content competence (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010).

From learners' viewpoints, content integration can lead to cognitive overload, especially for students with lower English skills who need to understand complex disciplinary ideas in a foreign language. Without enough support, this mental load can harm understanding and learning results (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

Recent research by Bezircilioğlu (2025) confirms that a lack of specialized content knowledge remains the most significant barrier for teachers transitioning from general English to ESP, potentially undermining both their credibility and pedagogical depth. While successful integration of language and disciplinary content depends on interdisciplinary cooperation, institutional constraints often limit collaboration between language instructors and subject specialists. This indicates a clear gap in current practice and research: despite recognizing the importance of content-language integration, there is limited evidence on effective strategies to support teachers in bridging this gap, particularly in contexts where institutional structures do not facilitate sustained collaboration.

In the present study, the preliminary findings from focus group discussions show that students are often dissatisfied with the Business English course they attend. They report that the content does not adequately meet their language needs, is poorly aligned with their academic and professional goals, and fails to engage them effectively. Building on this context, the current study aims to examine how content integration functions in Business English classes for Marketing Master students at Setif 1 University. The study adopts a mixed method to explore students' perceptions of this integration, the challenges teachers face, and the strategies used to address them. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of content integration in BE classes and suggest potential improvements.

In order to achieve the previously mentioned objectives, this study is an attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

- How do Marketing Master's students in the Department of Commercial Sciences at Setif 1 University perceive the integration of content from their field of study into their language learning experience?
- How do BE teachers in the Department of Commercial Sciences at Setif 1 University perceive the integration of marketing-specific content into their English language instruction?

3. Methodology

This section outlines the methodological framework adopted for the present study, detailing the research design, participant selection, data collection instruments, and analysis procedures. Employing a mixed-methods descriptive design, the study aims to collect both quantitative data on students' perceptions and qualitative insights into teachers' experiences regarding the integration of subject-specific content into Business English instruction.

3.1. Research Context

The study was conducted at Ferhat Abbas University, Setif 1, Algeria, within the Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, specifically in the Department of Commercial Sciences, during the 2023–2024 academic year. This context was selected because it includes Business English courses taught to Master-level students specializing in marketing-related fields.

3.2. Research Participants

The participants in this study comprised Master One Marketing students enrolled in the Department of Commercial Sciences at Ferhat Abbas University, Setif 1. The sample included seventy-seven students, distributed across two specializations: Digital Marketing and Tourism and Hotel Marketing. These students were selected using convenience sampling, as they were readily accessible and actively enrolled in the relevant BE courses during the data collection period.

In addition to the students, five BE instructors who teach these courses participated in the qualitative phase of the study through semi-structured interviews. The instructors were selected via purposive sampling, based on their experience teaching BE courses in the marketing program and their familiarity with integrating disciplinary content into English instruction.

Together, these student and instructor participants provided a comprehensive perspective on both learner experiences and teaching practices, enabling a mixed-methods analysis of content integration and instructional challenges in BE courses.

3.3. Data Collection Tool

To address the research objectives, the study used two main data collection tools: a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, aligned with the mixed-methods approach. First, the questionnaire was given to Master One Marketing students to collect quantitative data on their perceptions of content integration in Business English classes. The tool included closed-ended questions organized into thematic sections, such as students' exposure to integrated content, perceived effectiveness of content-based instruction, challenges faced, and overall attitudes toward Business English courses. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four Business English teachers to gain deeper insights into their teaching practices, content-integration strategies, and the challenges they face in BE classrooms. An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to provide flexibility, encourage detailed responses, and ensure consistency across interviews. This approach allowed the researcher to thoroughly explore teachers' perspectives and to complement the quantitative data.

3.3.1. Student Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to provide both quantitative metrics (Likert-scale items), enabling a comprehensive assessment of students' experiences, challenges, and preferences. The tool captures the multidimensional aspects of BE instruction, including course satisfaction, content relevance, skill application, and practical suggestions for improvement. The student questionnaire was developed specifically for this study and organized into seven key sections to systematically capture participants' demographic profile, perceptions, and suggestions:

- **Participants' Profile**
 - Collected demographic information such as age, gender, and English language proficiency.
 - Allowed for an understanding of the sample composition and potential influences of language ability and demographic variables on perceptions.
 - English proficiency was self-assessed using standard descriptors (beginner, intermediate, advanced).
- **Satisfaction with BE Courses**
 - Measured overall student satisfaction with course content, teaching methods, and engagement.
 - Employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very dissatisfied” to “very satisfied,” providing quantitative insight into the perceived effectiveness of BE instruction.
- **Suitability and Relevance of BE Course Content**
 - Evaluated how well the course content aligned with students' academic interests and career goals in marketing.
 - Assessed perceptions of the content's relevance to current marketing trends and industry practices.
- **Addressing Students' Needs and Real-World Preparation**
 - Investigated how well BE courses prepared students for real-world marketing tasks.
 - Focused on skill transfer, application of marketing knowledge, and alignment with professional competencies.
- **Challenges in Learning Marketing Content**
 - Explored obstacles students encountered when learning marketing concepts through English.
 - Included items on practical application, comprehension of complex concepts, language barriers, and access to resources.
- **Preferred Methods and Underexplored Topics**
 - Investigated which methods of content integration were considered most effective, e.g., branding strategies, case studies, market research reports, and advertising campaign analysis.
 - Collected suggestions for underexplored marketing topics to inform curriculum development.
- **Suggestions for Improving BE Courses**
 - Allowed students to provide recommendations for enhancing course quality, including practical skill development, real-world case studies, and industry engagement.

3.3.2. Instructor Interviews

To complement the student questionnaire and deepen understanding of teaching practices, perceptions, and challenges in integrating marketing content into BE courses, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five BE instructors to capture their contextual and pedagogical insights. This qualitative tool was selected because it allows for in-depth exploration of instructors'

experiences, strategies, and reflections while maintaining sufficient structure to ensure comparability across participants.

The interview protocol consisted of 6 thematic sections with a total of 12 open-ended questions, designed to capture comprehensive qualitative data:

- **Background and Teaching Experience** (2 questions)
 - o Explored years of teaching experience, training, and prior ESP exposure.
 - o Example: “Can you describe your experience teaching Business English or ESP courses?”
- **Integration of Content in BE Instruction** (2 questions)
 - o Investigated how instructors integrate marketing content into language lessons, approaches used, and emphasis on real-world tasks.
 - o Example: “How do you incorporate marketing or business content into your BE lessons?”
- **Selection of Authentic Materials** (2 questions)
 - o Focused on criteria and strategies for choosing materials relevant to students’ professional needs and industry trends.
 - o Example: “What types of authentic materials do you use, and how do you ensure their relevance?”
- **Engagement Strategies** (2 questions)
 - o Examined methods to motivate students, foster participation, and enhance interaction.
 - o Example: “Which activities or strategies do you find most effective in engaging students?”
- **Challenges in Content Integration** (2 questions)
 - o Explored obstacles in combining language instruction with marketing content, including resource limitations and language proficiency issues.
 - o Example: “What challenges do you face when integrating content into BE courses?”
- **Perspectives on Effective Integration** (2 questions)
 - o Gathered recommendations for best practices, curriculum improvements, and strategies for successful content-language integration.
 - o Example: “In your view, what factors contribute to effective integration of marketing content in BE instruction?”
 - o

3.4.Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, the research instruments were designed based on relevant literature in ESP and content-language integration. The student questionnaire and interview guide were reviewed by experts to ensure clarity and relevance.

A pilot test was conducted with a small group of students and one instructor to check the comprehensibility of the items and the effectiveness of the interview questions. Minor revisions were made accordingly to improve the quality of the instruments.

Quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 77 Master One Marketing students across two specializations: Digital Marketing and Tourism and Hotel Marketing. The questionnaire was shared via the university platform and email, allowing students to complete it at their convenience. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was ensured to encourage honest responses. The data collection process lasted approximately two weeks, during which reminders were sent to maximize participation.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five Business English instructors. The interviews were conducted individually, either face-to-face or online, depending on participants' availability. Each session lasted between 30 and 40 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. The interviewer followed a structured set of 12 open-ended questions while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions to obtain deeper insights into teaching practices, challenges, and perspectives on content integration.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the data collection process. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained prior to participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed, and all collected data were securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data collected from the student questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 28). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the data, including frequencies and percentages for categorical variables. This analysis enabled the identification of general trends related to content integration in Business English classes and provided measurable insights into students' perceptions and experiences. No inferential statistical tests were conducted, as the study aimed to provide a descriptive account rather than test hypotheses.

Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and read multiple times to ensure familiarization with the data. Second, initial codes were generated inductively, capturing meaningful segments related to teaching practices, content integration strategies, and challenges. Third, these codes were systematically organized into broader categories, which were then refined into overarching themes. The themes were reviewed and revised to ensure coherence, consistency, and clear distinctions between them.

To enhance the credibility and reliability of the qualitative analysis, the coding process was reviewed by a second researcher, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion and agreement. The resulting themes were then used to interpret and contextualize the quantitative findings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the integration of marketing content in

Business English instruction.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study, drawing on both quantitative data obtained from the students' questionnaire and qualitative insights derived from teachers' semi-structured interviews. The findings are interpreted in light of existing literature on ESP, Business English, and content-based instruction to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current practices and areas for improvement.

4.1. Students' Questionnaire Analysis

This section presents the analysis of the data collected through the student questionnaire. It aims to examine students' perceptions of content integration in Business English courses, including their levels of satisfaction, perceived relevance of course content, challenges encountered, and suggestions for improvement. The analysis is structured into several subsections, each addressing a specific aspect of students' responses.

4.1.1 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Before analyzing the questionnaire results, it is essential to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the collected data. This subsection presents the statistical measures used to evaluate the internal consistency and construct validity of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire's internal validity was evaluated using correlation analysis. The results showed a statistically significant correlation coefficient of 0.790 at the 0.01 level, indicating strong internal consistency among the questionnaire items. This confirms that the instrument effectively measures the intended constructs related to students' perceptions of ESP marketing courses.

Regarding reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to evaluate the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The coefficient reached 0.969, which is considered very high and well above the acceptable threshold for educational research. This result shows that the questionnaire is highly reliable and appropriate for data collection in this study.

4.1.2 Participants' Profile

All participants were aged between 22 and 26, indicating a uniform sample in terms of age and education level. Regarding gender distribution, females accounted for 62.3% of the sample, while males comprised 37.7%, illustrating a clear gender imbalance. Regarding English language proficiency, most participants self-identified as intermediate (63.6%), followed by beginners (28.6%), with only a small percentage recognized as advanced learners (7.8%). This distribution indicates that while the majority of students have a functional grasp of English, a significant number might still encounter language challenges when working with specialized marketing material.

4.1.3. Students' Perceptions of Marketing Courses

- Satisfaction with BE Courses

Participants' responses showed mixed levels of satisfaction with the BE courses they attended. Almost half of the participants (49.4%) expressed a neutral stance, indicating uncertainty or limited engagement. Meanwhile, 37.7% reported being satisfied, reflecting a generally positive attitude toward the course. However, a small proportion of participants expressed dissatisfaction: 9.1% were dissatisfied, and 3.9% were very dissatisfied. These results suggest that while the course meets some students' expectations, improvements are needed to boost overall satisfaction.

- Suitability and Relevance of BE Course Content

Regarding alignment with students' interests and career goals in marketing, most participants viewed the BE content as somewhat aligned (49.4%) or moderately aligned (41.6%). Only a small

percentage felt it was fully aligned (6.5%), while very few thought it was not aligned at all (2.6%). This suggests that although the content is somewhat relevant, it does not completely fulfil students' professional expectations.

Similarly, participants' perceptions of the relevance of the BE course topics to current marketing trends were moderately satisfied. Equal numbers of students rated the content as somewhat relevant and moderately relevant (37.7% each), while 18.2% found it extremely relevant. A small group (6.5%) considered the content not relevant. These results highlight the need to update ESP materials to better reflect contemporary marketing practices.

- Addressing Students' Needs and Real-World Preparation

Most participants believed that ESP classes addressed their specific needs as marketing students to a moderate extent (41.6%) or to some extent (36.4%). Fewer students felt their needs were addressed extremely well (18.2%), and only a small percentage reported poor alignment (3.9%). Regarding preparation for real-world marketing challenges, most participants viewed the ESP courses as moderately effective (57.1%) or very effective (29.9%). These results indicate that ESP courses help students' professional readiness, but more focus on practical application is needed.

4.1.4 Challenges in Understanding and Using Marketing Content

- Challenges in Learning Marketing-Related Content

Participants identified several challenges in learning marketing content through Business English courses. The most common challenge was the lack of practical application or hands-on experience (28.6%), followed by difficulty understanding complex marketing concepts (26%). Language barriers were reported by 18.2% of participants, while 10.4% cited insufficient support or guidance from instructors. 9.1% mentioned limited access to relevant resources, and 6.5% reported time constraints due to workload. A very small proportion (1.3%) reported other challenges, mainly related to the limited number of BE lessons. These challenges indicate that BE instruction remains overly theoretical and that students require more practical, scaffolded, and language-supported learning experiences.

- Challenges in Applying Marketing Knowledge in Practical Situations

When applying marketing knowledge in real-world situations, 40.3% of participants reported difficulty in translating theoretical concepts into practice. Additionally, 32.5% reported limited opportunities for hands-on experience. Other challenges included a lack of support in applying concepts to actual marketing projects (15.6%) and insufficient feedback on practical assignments (10.4%). Only 1.3% reported other issues, such as limited societal recognition of marketing as a profession. These findings emphasize the importance of experiential learning opportunities that connect theoretical knowledge with real-world marketing practice.

4.1.5. Effectiveness of Marketing Content Integration

Most participants regarded the incorporation of marketing content in BE courses as somewhat effective (40.3%) or moderately effective (37.7%). A smaller portion (14.3%) considered it very effective, while 7.8% thought it was not effective. Although content integration is generally viewed positively, the relatively low percentage of highly positive responses indicates that integration

strategies need improvement and more robust pedagogical planning.

4.1.6. Preferred Methods for Integrating Marketing Content

Participants identified several effective methods for integrating marketing content. 28.6% preferred branding strategies, 24.7% favored market research reports, and 22.1% chose advertising campaign analysis. Marketing case studies were preferred by 15.6%, while product launch presentations were chosen by 9.1%. Students clearly favor applied, analytical, and industry-oriented activities, highlighting the importance of authentic materials in BE instruction.

4.1.7. Underexplored Marketing Topics in ESP Courses

Most participants (89.6%) believed that certain marketing topics should be explored further in BE courses, with only 10.4% disagreeing. The most commonly suggested topics were branding strategies (22.1%), market segmentation (14.3%), product development processes (13%), and marketing communication strategies (11.7%). Other proposed areas included marketing analytics (10.4%), digital marketing channels (10.4%), marketing research methods (10.4%), and consumer behavior models (7.8%). This high demand indicates students' desire for more in-depth, specialized marketing knowledge within BE courses.

4.1.8. Students' Suggestions for Improving ESP Marketing Courses

More than half of the participants (53.2%) reported having suggestions for improving BE courses, while 46.8% had no suggestions. The most common recommendations included incorporating more real-world case studies (24.7%), increasing focus on practical skills development (20.8%), and integrating guest lectures from industry professionals (18.2%). Other suggestions involved providing hands-on projects (14.3%), enhancing multimedia resources (10.4%), offering specialized modules (7.8%), and incorporating current marketing trends (3.9%). Students' suggestions emphasize experiential learning, professional exposure, and skill-based instruction as essential elements for effective BE courses.

4.2. Analysis of the Teachers' Interviews

This section presents a qualitative analysis of data from semi-structured interviews with Business English teachers. It aims to explore teachers' perspectives on content integration, instructional practices, challenges encountered, and strategies used to enhance learning outcomes. The findings are organized into thematic subsections for clarity and coherence.

4.2.1. Participant Profile

The interview participants included five Business English teachers with different levels of teaching experience. Most reported having between 1 and 4 years of teaching Business English, while one teacher had about 40 years of experience. Although the participants did not specify their academic degrees, their responses showed considerable pedagogical awareness and familiarity with ESP teaching principles. This variation in teaching experience offers a broad view of the challenges and practices involved in content integration in Business English instruction.

4.2.2. The Integration of Content in Teaching Business English

All interviewees strongly emphasized the importance of incorporating content into Business English instruction. Content integration primarily occurred through needs analysis, learner feedback, development of the four language skills, and use of technology and presentations. Teacher 5 explained that "BE teaching requires ongoing evaluation of learners, content, and teaching methods. Feedback from students is regularly collected to assess the relevance and usefulness of the integrated content." This teacher also highlighted a predefined framework that guides content coverage while allowing flexibility in teaching approaches. Teachers 1 and 2 stressed the importance of needs analysis and placement tests to identify students' interests and proficiency levels before integrating business-related content. This initial stage was considered crucial to ensure that the business component aligns with learners' linguistic abilities. Teacher 3 highlighted the practical side of BE instruction, focusing on "real-world business communication tasks, such as presentations, negotiations, and email writing." These tasks were found to be effective in enhancing learners' professional communication skills. Similarly, Teacher 4 emphasized "the importance of understanding students' professional needs as a foundation for effective BE teaching. Authentic materials, technology use, and regular feedback" were identified as key factors in improving learning outcomes and helping students achieve their career goals.

4.2.3. Strategies in Selecting Authentic Materials for Integrating Relevant Content

The teachers reported using a variety of strategies to select instructional materials for Business English classes. Teacher 4 adopted an alternative approach by focusing on academic skills such as research design, reading academic articles, and referencing, highlighting a shift from traditional business content to academic business literacy. Teachers 5 and 3 emphasized the importance of selecting authentic materials such as business articles, reports, and multimedia resources that are relevant to students' future professions and current industry trends. They also stressed the importance of updating materials regularly to maintain relevance and engagement. In contrast, Teacher 1 acknowledged challenges in "using authentic materials for reading skills, relying mainly on textbooks and research articles", which were not always considered fully authentic.

4.2.4. Enhancing Engagement in the BE Course

Teachers identified several strategies to boost student engagement in BE classes. Teacher 2 reported using "interactive discussions, role-plays, simulations, group work, and multimedia presentations to promote active participation." Clear learning objectives, authentic materials, and ongoing feedback were also highlighted as key engagement tools. Teachers 1 and 5 emphasized the importance of clearly presenting lesson goals and explaining the content's real-world relevance to motivate students. Teachers 3 and 4 similarly emphasized the value of personalization, arguing that customizing content to students' interests increases participation and interaction. The use of case studies, debates, group projects, videos, and podcasts was particularly effective in creating an engaging learning environment.

4.2.5. Addressing Challenges in Integrating Content into BE Course

The teachers reported several challenges in integrating content into BE classes. Teacher 1 highlighted the lack of adequate resources and students' frequent reliance on Arabic, both of which limit the development of English-speaking skills. Teacher 2 identified difficulties in sourcing

relevant materials across diverse industries and in matching content complexity to students' language proficiency levels. Teacher 3 emphasized that “challenges related to content relevance, authenticity, learner engagement, and assessment design”, while Teacher 4 criticized the “one-size-fits-all” approach imposed by standardized curricula, which fails to account for mixed proficiency levels within the same classroom. Despite these challenges, teachers suggested several solutions, including careful selection of materials, content adaptation, needs analysis, the use of authentic materials, and interactive activities.

4.2.6. Perspectives on Effective Content Integration in the BE Course

Teachers offered diverse perspectives on effective content integration. Teacher 1 promoted a unified and efficient curriculum across universities to address disparities in language proficiency and content delivery. Teacher 2 stressed “collaboration among stakeholders, policymakers, and BE teachers to ensure curriculum alignment” and proper resource allocation. Teacher 3 suggested, “a structured, collaborative approach that includes needs analysis, teacher training, ongoing feedback, and stakeholder involvement.” Teacher 4 pointed out the challenges of mixed-ability classrooms and top-down curriculum decisions, which require teachers to continually adapt materials and tasks.

4.3. Discussion of the Overall Results

The findings of this study confirm that incorporating subject-specific content into Business English (BE) instruction is widely recognized as pedagogically valuable; however, its implementation remains limited in both depth and effectiveness. While students acknowledge the importance of content-based instruction for developing professional communication skills, their moderate satisfaction levels point to a gap between pedagogical intentions and actual classroom practices. This finding is consistent with Basturkmen (2010), who argues that effective ESP instruction requires a systematic alignment between language objectives and disciplinary content, a condition that appears only partially fulfilled in the present context.

A key issue emerging from the findings is the limited opportunity for practical application and the difficulty students experience in transferring theoretical knowledge to real marketing contexts. This supports Robinson's (2001) cognitive perspective, which suggests that without adequate scaffolding, learners may struggle to process complex content and apply it meaningfully. Similarly, Dalton-Puffer (2011) emphasizes that content and language integration must be supported by carefully designed tasks to ensure both conceptual understanding and language development. In contrast to studies such as Ladjel and Hanifi (2025), which report significant improvements in both language and content mastery through integrated approaches, the present findings suggest that such benefits are not fully realized in this context, likely due to limitations in implementation.

Students' strong preference for case studies, real-world projects, and up-to-date marketing content aligns closely with Du-Babcock (2013), who highlights the importance of authentic business discourse in developing pragmatic competence. It also supports Zhang (2005), who argues that exposure to real-world business materials enhances learners' ability to engage with professional genres. However, the gap between students' preferences and current classroom practices indicates that, unlike the contexts described in these studies, authentic materials and tasks are not being systematically or effectively integrated.

From the teachers' perspective, the findings demonstrate a strong awareness of the principles underlying effective BE instruction, particularly the importance of needs analysis, authentic materials, and interactive tasks. This aligns with Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who identify needs analysis as the foundation of ESP course design, and with Nickerson and Planken (2016), who stress the importance of aligning Business English instruction with professional communication practices. However, while teachers report relying on needs analysis, the persistence of learner dissatisfaction suggests a gap between theoretical understanding and pedagogical execution.

The emphasis on interactive and task-based approaches is also consistent with Ellis (2017), who advocates for task-based language teaching as a means of promoting meaningful communication, and with Coyle (2007), whose CLIL framework highlights the importance of integrating content, communication, cognition, and culture. Nevertheless, the present findings indicate that these approaches are not consistently implemented, which may limit their potential impact on learning outcomes.

The challenges identified by teachers, such as mixed-ability classrooms, limited resources, time constraints, and insufficient subject-matter knowledge, are widely documented in the literature. For instance, Hyland (2006) and Belcher (2006) note that ESP instructors often face difficulties due to their limited disciplinary expertise, while Arnó-Macià and Mancho-Barés (2015) emphasize the lack of collaboration between language and subject specialists as a major barrier to effective integration. Similarly, Makhlouf (2023) and Khalili (2025) highlight structural and pedagogical constraints in the Algerian context, confirming that the challenges identified in this study are not isolated but reflect broader systemic issues.

Importantly, while previous studies emphasize the effectiveness of content integration when properly implemented, the present study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how contextual constraints can limit its impact. Teachers' suggestions for adaptive strategies, flexible task design, and interdisciplinary collaboration strongly support Dalton-Puffer (2011) and Coyle et al. (2010), who argue that successful integration requires both pedagogical innovation and institutional support.

Overall, the findings reinforce the view that content integration in BE instruction is both pedagogically valuable and contextually challenging. However, unlike studies that highlight its success under optimal conditions, this research reveals the gap between theory and practice in real educational settings. It thus extends existing literature by emphasizing that effective integration depends not only on methodological awareness but also on systemic support, teacher training, and curriculum alignment. Consequently, improving BE instruction requires a shift toward a more holistic, learner-centered, and practice-oriented approach, supported by sustained collaboration among educators, subject specialists, and institutional stakeholders.

Ultimately, the study emphasizes the need to improve both the content and the pedagogy of Business English courses. Successfully integrating marketing content requires a learner-centered, practice-focused approach supported by collaboration among teachers, policymakers, and stakeholders. These findings provide valuable insights for enhancing BE course design and delivery at Setif 1 University and similar educational settings.

4.4. Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for teaching and learning Business English within ESP programs, especially in Algerian higher education. First, the results emphasize the importance of conducting regular and thorough needs analyses to ensure that course content aligns with students' academic backgrounds, career goals, and language proficiency levels. ESP teachers should go beyond generic Business English syllabi and design courses tailored to the local context, reflecting market realities while preparing students for international communication.

Second, the study highlights the importance of incorporating authentic, discipline-specific materials like marketing reports, business emails, case studies, and presentations. Using real-world tasks boosts learners' engagement and helps transfer language skills to professional settings. Teachers are encouraged to implement task-based and project-based learning methods that blend content knowledge with language practice.

Third, the findings indicate that addressing mixed-ability classrooms requires adaptable teaching strategies, including scaffolding, differentiated tasks, and ongoing formative assessment. Professional development opportunities that focus on BE methodology, content integration principles, and interdisciplinary collaboration should be prioritized to help teachers manage content integration effectively.

Finally, at the institutional level, collaboration among language teachers, subject specialists, and policymakers is crucial for creating effective BE curricula. Providing sufficient resources, updated syllabi, and institutional backing can greatly improve the quality and efficiency of content-integrated Business English instruction.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the integration of marketing content into Business English (BE) instruction in Algerian higher education, focusing on both students' perceptions and teachers' practices at Setif 1 University. The findings highlight that while content integration is widely recognized as pedagogically valuable, its implementation remains limited in scope and depth. Students expressed moderate satisfaction and reported challenges in applying theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts, while teachers emphasized the importance of needs analysis, authentic materials, and interactive, task-based approaches, despite significant contextual constraints.

These results reinforce the importance of adopting a learner-centered, practice-oriented approach to BE instruction, in which language learning is closely aligned with disciplinary content and professional communication needs. Effective integration requires not only appropriate pedagogical strategies but also institutional support, interdisciplinary collaboration, and continuous teacher development.

However, this study is not without limitations. First, the relatively small sample size, particularly in the qualitative phase, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the research was conducted within a single institutional context, which may not fully represent the diversity of BE practices across Algerian universities.

In light of these limitations, future research could adopt a broader and more comparative perspective by including multiple universities and larger, more diverse samples. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable in examining how content integration evolves over time and its impact on learners' professional competencies. Additionally, classroom-based research, such as observations or experimental designs, could provide deeper insights into how integrated approaches are implemented in practice and how they influence learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that effective integration of content in BE courses requires a balanced approach that combines relevance, practicality, and learner-centered instruction. Significantly, this study contributes to the growing body of research on ESP and Business English by highlighting both the potential and the challenges of content integration in real educational contexts. Strengthening this integration requires a holistic approach that combines pedagogical innovation, institutional support, and ongoing research to better align language education with the demands of academic and professional environments.

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