

**TEACHING ESP IN ALGERIA:
REQUIREMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

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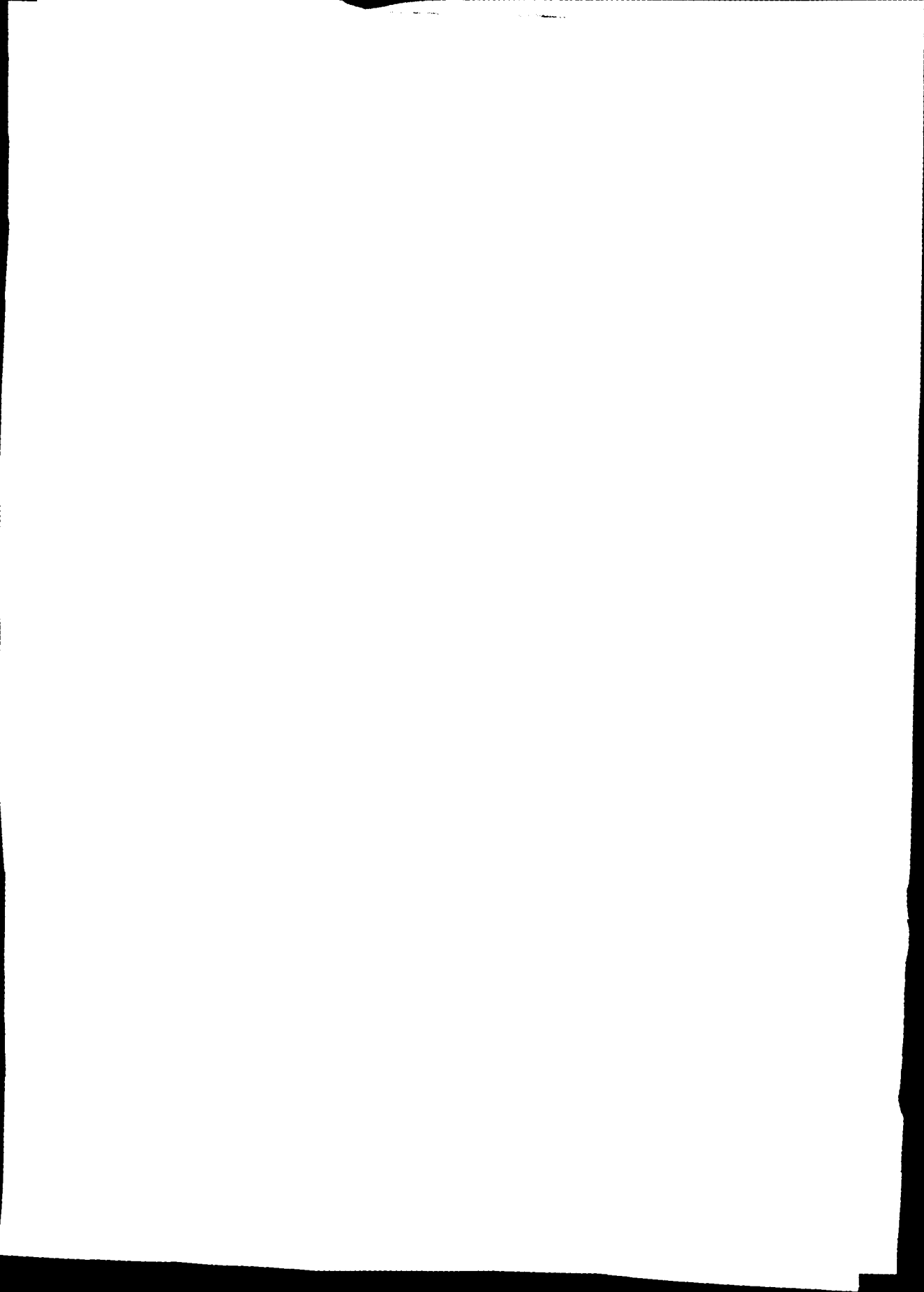
Abstract

This paper seeks to shed light on the main issues our language teachers encounter in an ESP teaching situation when exploring the land of ESP, particularly at the level of Abou Bekr Belkaid University and the strategies they adopt or adapt to overcome their difficulties while at practice. The fact that those general English teachers are appointed to teach ESP within a 'learners' centerdness', reveals considerable obstacles and problems to adequately achieve an ESP teaching/learning objective. The situation, here in Algeria, seems to give so much focus to the learner and almost neglect the teachers' professional needs to cope with the actual requirements.

Key-words: ESP, ESP methodology, difficulties, strategies, teachers, training.

ملخص باللغة العربية:

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على القضايا الرئيسية التي تواجه مدرسين اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة ، لا سيما على مستوى جامعة جامعة أبي بكر



بلقايد. الاستراتيجيات التي تعتمد عليها أو تكييف للتغلب على الصعوبات التي يواجهونها في حين الممارسة. الحقيقة التي أشار هؤلاء المدرسين لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية ، يكشف عن عقبات كبيرة ومشاكل لتحقيق كافية لهدف التدريس / التعلم. الوضع هنا في الجزائر ، يبدو أن يعطي الكثير من التركيز على المتعلم والإهمال تقريرا احتياجات المهنية للمعلمين للتعامل مع الاحتياجات الفعلية. مفتاح الكلمات : : اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة ، المنهجية، والصعوبات، والاستراتيجيات، والمعلمين، والتدريب.

Introduction

Being aware of the fact that English has become the dominant world language, the Algerian government has decided years ago like many other countries to adopt English mainly at all tertiary-level institutions, all over the country.

Consequently, studying English is not only restricted to the Human Sciences but it is now taught in the Business and Economics as well as in the Sciences and Engineering. These language courses which are offered at those departments will be of specific nature to fulfil specific learners' needs, i.e., ESP courses.

ESP is defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987:21) as: "...an approach to language teaching which aims to meet the needs of particular learners." Hence, to learn and to teach English become a crucial necessity for everyone everywhere in the world. As a result, demand for English teachers exceeded supply, where the vast majority of teachers who have been prepared to teach General English are asked to teach ESP in order to fill the gap in the growing number of universities all around the country.

Stevens (1988 quoted in Hutchinson et al, 1987) describes this experience as a shock for those teachers. Therefore, tutors who have been trained as General English lecturers often find it difficult to cope with the requirements of their new situations and this may result in their failure when involved in ESP situation.

Context Challenge

The need to learn English is also associated with the need to form language teachers who are able to teach English either for General Purposes or for Specific Purposes.

At Abou Bekr Belkaid University, Tlemcen, English is taught in a separate department within the Letters and Languages Faculty as a main subject; at this department and after accomplishing four years (in the traditional system) and three years (in the LMD system) students are rewarded a BA degree (Bachelor) in English and by which they are able to work as English teachers.

Hence, once they get a position as English teachers they hold the statue of EFL teachers; this is due to the fact that during their training, they had no ESP teaching methodology. Therefore, one may say that, an ESP teacher is a general English teacher who is employed to teach ESP courses and by this way he can apply for positions in different departments including the English department.

In the light of what have been said before, being unprepared for teaching ESP, our language teachers often find themselves obliged to rely on their own experience to teach those classes as well as to create their own teaching materials with respect to their students' discipline and needs, too.

In this respect what might be debatable is in fact
Whether the General English teacher prepared to cope with an ESP situation? Or not?
What difficulties General English teacher of ESP is faced to?
What do our General English teachers need to have to better perform an ESP course?

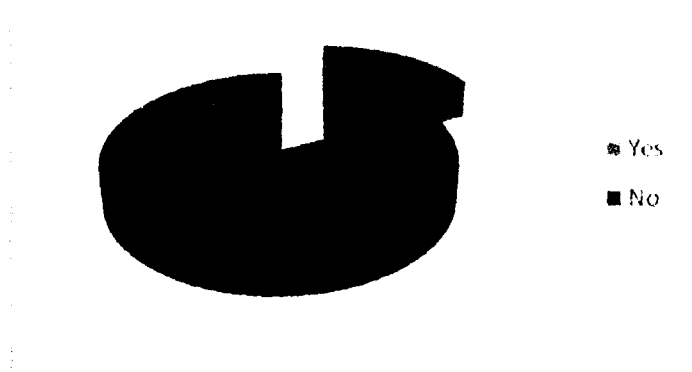
The Study

Participants and Instruments

As a matter of fact, this study has taken place out of the English department. Its sample population consists of a number of English teachers who work in different departments at the three (03) following faculties: faculty of Exact Sciences, faculty of Law and Political sciences, faculty of Economics and Commercial Sciences, in an attempt to shed light on the main issues faced the language teachers in the ESP teaching situations. For the sake of gathering reliable data, the researcher has recourse to the use of the three (03) following research instruments, i.e., classroom observation, teachers' questionnaire and structured interview.

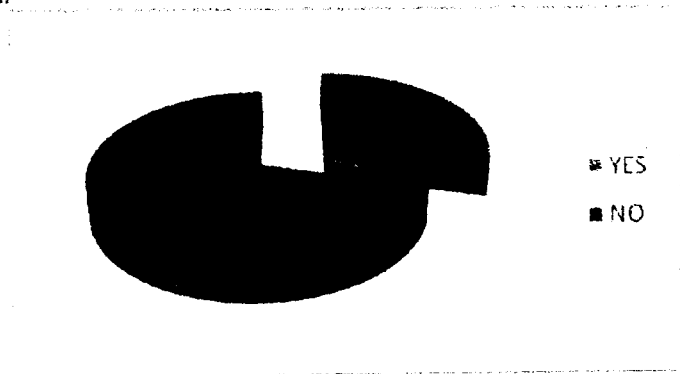
Evaluation, Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

After analyzing data, results has shown that 82% of teachers have not received any specialized training whereas 18% of teachers stated that they have undertaken a theoretical training in areas such as needs analysis, materials production and so forth, but it still remains theoretical since nothing in practice has been done.



Pie-chart 1.1: Undertaking Specialised Training

As for the following pie-chart, it illustrates teachers' perception about their preparation; it is almost observed that 71% agree on the fact that, they are not prepared to teach ESP. However, 29% state that they are prepared for such a task.



Pie-chart 1.2: Teachers' Perception about their Preparation

Being unprepared for the teaching of ESP, besides lacking a specialized training and having a limited repertoire of the specialized terminology of

specific fields they are teaching, constitute other barriers for the language teachers.

It should be mentioned at this level, as a reaction to this situation, the teacher who is already stressed, who has received no special training as an ESP teacher, who has no orientation and who receives no help from his colleagues, he often leaves his work for the reasons cited before, in addition to the nature of the job which is of a part-time nature and which is not motivating financially at all.

The difficulties as stated by the teachers themselves have been summarized as follow:

- Lack of suitable published materials.
- The absence of syllabus as well as programmes to follow.
- Lack of collaboration and cooperation with ESP teachers, learners, and subject specialists.

As far as the central issues are concerned, they are as follow:

- Lack of specialized knowledge of the related area they are teaching.
- No prior training to ESP teaching methodology.

Based on these results, the following parameters should be addressed seriously in an attempt at helping the ESP teachers either, to overcome, or at least reduce the set of obstacles identified previously.

Teachers' Qualifications :

- Language Competence
- Pedagogic Competence
- Language Awareness
- Specialised Knowledge

Teacher Training:

- Pre-Service Teacher Training
- In-Service Teacher Training

Team Teaching

- Collaboration Vs Cooperation with Subject Specialist
- Collaboration Vs Cooperation with Learners

Conclusion

For the sake of improving the teaching/ learning process, to bring about change in any situation an ESP teacher is involved in, is a necessity. As a matter of fact, teachers need first to accept change as an essential component in the progress of any process and most precisely that of the ESP teaching; accepting this idea, besides the ability to learn new ways of teaching may constitute a great help for both teachers and learners. Hence, ESP teachers should be seen as affective learners who seek a daily development for a continuous improvement which should join knowledge, theory and practice.

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