ALTRALANG Journal
e-ISSN: 2710-8619 p-ISSN: 2710-7922
Volume 8 Issue 2 / October 2026 pp. 137-151

English for Specific Purposes in Entrepreneurship Training: A Case Study of Student-Entrepreneurs' Language Needs under Algeria's "One Diploma, One Startup" Scheme

Salim Menaceur*
University of Tlemcen Abu Bekr Belkaid, Algeria
salim.menaceur@univ-tlemcen.dz

Received: 30/06/2026, **Accepted:** 19/10/2026, **Published:** 31/10/2026

ABSTRACT: *This study examines the English-language needs of student-entrepreneurs at the University of Tlemcen, Algeria, who are developing startups under the "one diploma, one startup" scheme (Ministerial Order No. 1275 of 27 September 2022), and the extent to which their current English training meets those needs. These students have no dedicated English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course and receive English only through general modules and occasional workshops. An exploratory mixed-methods case study with a convergent (parallel) design combined a needs-analysis questionnaire administered to twenty-eight student-entrepreneurs, selected through purposive sampling, all Master's (M2) students from four fields of study (Sciences, Engineering, Economics/Management, Computer Science/ICT), with semi-structured interviews with six ESP teachers, also purposively selected to span the main disciplinary areas. The two strands were collected independently and integrated at the interpretation stage. Students' ratings of the importance of ten entrepreneurial communicative tasks were compared with their ratings of current provision using Wilcoxon signed-rank tests (with Holm–Bonferroni correction) and effect sizes; interview data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Importance significantly exceeded provision for all ten tasks ($p < .05$; $r = 0.48–0.80$), with the largest gaps indicatively in professional e-mail, pitching and business-model communication, and students rated the overall usefulness of their current training below the scale midpoint ($M = 2.75/5$). Both students and teachers called for a dedicated, task-based ESP course linked to the incubator and assessed through authentic outputs. The study proposes an importance-provision approach to analysing English-language training needs in entrepreneurship and offers practical recommendations for ESP practitioners, curriculum designers and policymakers.*

KEYWORDS: business English; English for Specific Purposes (ESP); entrepreneurship training; needs analysis; student-entrepreneurs.

* Corresponding author
ALTRALANG Journal / © 2026 The Author(s). Published by the University of Oran 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed, Algeria.
This is an open access article under the CC BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Introduction

The global economy is undergoing rapid transformation, and innovation, digitalisation and the creation of startups have moved to the centre of national development agendas. Within this context, language is far from a neutral medium: it is a constitutive resource through which entrepreneurs identify opportunities, mobilise people and capital, persuade stakeholders and bring ventures into being (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial activity is, to a large degree, communicative activity, pitching, negotiating, networking, marketing and reporting, and much of it, increasingly, unfolds in English, the de facto lingua franca of startups, innovation and international trade (Nickerson, 2005).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has long addressed the teaching of language for professional and disciplinary purposes, resting on the premise that course content should be derived from a systematic analysis of learners' target communicative needs rather than from a predetermined, general syllabus (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Long, 2005; West, 1994). As entrepreneurship education expands worldwide, ESP is increasingly mobilised, through dedicated courses, but also through shorter trainings and workshops, to prepare students, professionals and aspiring founders for the specialised communication of business and innovation.

Algeria offers a compelling setting in which to examine this intersection. In September 2022, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research introduced the "one diploma, one startup" through Ministerial Order (arrêté) No. 1275 of 27 September 2022, which allows Licence, Master and Doctoral students, as well as engineering, architecture and veterinary students, to validate their end-of-studies project as a startup rather than a conventional dissertation (MESRS, 2022); a parallel track allows validation as a patent. Implemented across Algerian universities from the 2022–2023 academic year, the scheme repositions the university as an incubator of ventures and requires students to perform a range of high-stakes communicative tasks, drafting business plans, pitching to evaluation juries and incubators, and engaging with national support agencies and potential partners, much of it in English.

These developments raise an urgent yet under-examined question: which English-language competences do student-entrepreneurs actually need, and how well does the training they receive meet those needs? In Algerian higher education, English modules attached to non-language disciplines have traditionally emphasised general or academic reading and translation; crucially, student-entrepreneurs typically have no dedicated ESP course tied to their ventures, receiving at most general English modules and occasional trainings or workshops linked to the incubator (Nedjari, 2025; Tihal & Djouima, 2025). Whether such training equips them for the communicative realities of venture creation has rarely been documented empirically.

The present study addresses this gap through a mixed-methods case study of student-entrepreneurs and ESP teachers at the University of Tlemcen operating under the "one diploma, one startup" scheme By documenting perceived needs and relating them to current provision, the study contributes an evidence-based account of an under-researched context and a practical, transferable approach to analysing English-language training needs in entrepreneurship.

Literature Review

ESP, Needs Analysis and the Genre of Entrepreneurial Communication

English for Specific Purposes is best understood not as a product but as an approach to language teaching in which decisions about content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) refined this view through a set of absolute and variable characteristics:

ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of the learner, draws on the methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves, and is centred on the language, skills and genres appropriate to those activities. ESP is therefore inherently learner-centred and purpose-driven, whether delivered as a full course or as targeted training.

Needs analysis is the cornerstone of this tradition. West (1994) distinguished target-situation analysis (what learners must do in the target context), present-situation analysis (what they can already do) and learning needs (how they can best bridge the two), while Long (2005) made the case for triangulated, task-based needs analysis as the empirical basis of course design. Basturkmen (2010) situated needs analysis within a wider development cycle that proceeds from needs to objectives, syllabus, materials and evaluation, and comprehensive overviews continue to treat it as the foundation of principled ESP design (Anthony, 2018; Flowerdew, 2013; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). Comparing the perceived importance of tasks with the support currently provided for them is a direct way of locating the "lacks" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) that training should close; the logic parallels importance–performance analysis, long used to set improvement priorities (Martilla & James, 1977). Because such ratings capture learners' perceived needs, they are best interpreted alongside other sources (Long, 2005; Serafini et al., 2015).

Entrepreneurial communication can be characterised in genre terms, as a configuration of recurrent communicative events with distinctive moves, purposes and audiences (Bhatia, 1993). Founders produce and perform business plans, executive summaries, value propositions, investor e-mails, pitch decks, marketing copy and social-media content (Belcher, 2006; Li, 2014), frequently in English used as a business lingua franca among non-native interlocutors (Nickerson, 2005). These persuasion-oriented genres differ markedly from the academic, reading-and-translation registers privileged in conventional university English courses, and their teaching has been little studied in North Africa (Messahel & Idri, 2025). Regional ESP scholarship in Algeria has more often addressed established professional domains, such as English for Medical Purposes and the use of popular media to teach medical terminology (Menaceur & Bouabdallah-Haddam, 2023), than the communicative demands of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial communication also draws on the wider field of business and professional communication. Research on business discourse has shown that workplace communication is shaped by organisational goals, relationships between interlocutors and the use of English as a shared business language (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2013). Studies of specific genres point in the same direction: e-mail is the most frequent written genre in many professional settings and requires attention to purpose, tone and audience (Evans, 2012), while the entrepreneurial pitch follows recognisable structural and rhetorical patterns aimed at persuading investors within a short time (Daly & Davy, 2016). These studies suggest that English for entrepreneurship draws on business communication but places particular weight on persuasive, high-stakes genres.

Entrepreneurship as a Competence and Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurship education has shifted from teaching students about entrepreneurship towards developing the capacity to act entrepreneurially (Gibb, 2002). Neck and Greene (2011) argued that entrepreneurship is best taught as a method or practice, something learners do, rather than as content to be transmitted, foregrounding experiential, project-based pedagogies that align closely with the task-based ethos of ESP.

The European EntreComp framework defines entrepreneurship as a transversal competence organised into three areas, "ideas and opportunities," "resources" and "into action", comprising fifteen competences (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). Several of these competences are inherently communicative: spotting and communicating opportunities, mobilising others, working with others and taking the initiative all depend on situated language use. The ten communicative tasks examined in this study were chosen to instantiate these competence areas in

concrete, observable activities (e.g., pitching and networking as "mobilising others"; business-model and funding-call work as "resources"), so that English-language ability could be analysed as an enabling condition of entrepreneurial competence rather than as a peripheral skill.

The Algerian Context: The "One Diploma, One Startup" Scheme

Algeria's linguistic ecology is complex: Arabic is the official language, Tamazight is constitutionally recognised, and French retains a strong presence in higher education and business, while English is expanding rapidly, including through early moves towards English-medium instruction (Bellal, 2025). Ministerial Decree No. 1275 of 27 September 2022 established the "one diploma, one startup / patent" scheme, jointly promoted by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of the Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-enterprises (MESRS, 2022); it enables students to substitute a startup project for the traditional dissertation, individually or in teams of two to six students from different specialties (Art. 7), and students now defend their projects before mixed academic–professional juries and engage with university incubators ("houses of entrepreneurship") and national support structures. Notably, the Order prescribes training and field visits on the business model, e-marketing, management, finance and accounting (Art. 5). Yet no dedicated ESP training accompanies this pathway, which motivates the present needs analysis.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a mixed-methods, single case-study design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). A case study is appropriate because the phenomenon of interest, the English-language needs and training experiences of student-entrepreneurs, is a bounded, contemporary system embedded in a specific institutional and policy context (Merriam, 2009). The case is bounded by the population of student-entrepreneurs and ESP teachers associated with the "one diploma, one startup" scheme at the University of Tlemcen. Two complementary data sources were used, a learner questionnaire and teacher interviews, so that learners' and teachers' perspectives could be read against one another; no classroom observation or document analysis was undertaken, a limitation revisited below.

Research Questions
RQ1. What are the target English-language (ESP) needs of student-entrepreneurs under the "one diploma, one startup" scheme at the University of Tlemcen?
RQ2. How well does the English training currently available to student-entrepreneurs meet their needs?
RQ3. What gaps and pedagogical implications emerge for ESP course design in entrepreneurship training?

Participants

Two groups participated. The questionnaire was completed by 28 student-entrepreneurs (16 men, 12 women) involved in the "one diploma, one startup" scheme, all of them were developing startups. They came from the Sciences (n = 10), Engineering (n = 7), Economics/Management (n = 6) and Computer Science/ICT (n = 5); all 28 were Master's (M2) students. Projects ranged across stages from idea (n = 13) and prototype/MVP (n = 10) to early market (n = 4) and growth (n = 1). In addition, six ESP teachers (T01–T06) were purposively selected to span the principal disciplinary areas (economics/management, engineering, ICT), large first-year cohorts, close incubator collaboration, and early English-medium instruction. Table 1 summarises the student profile. Incubator participation is reported to describe the sample only. With subgroups of 11 and 17, it was not used for comparative analysis.

Characteristic	Categories (n)
Gender	Female 12; Male 16
Field of study	Sciences 10; Engineering 7; Economics/Management 6; Computer Science/ICT 5
Level	M2 28 (all participants)
Project type	Startup 28 (all participants)
Project stage	Idea 13; Prototype/MVP 10; Early market 4; Growth 1
Incubator participation	Yes 11; No 17

Table 1. Profile of the student-entrepreneur participants (N = 28)

Instruments

Two instruments were used. The first was a structured needs-analysis questionnaire in five sections: (A) profile; (B) present English profile, self-rated proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing on a five-point scale and frequency of English use; (C) target needs, the perceived importance of ten entrepreneurial communicative tasks on a five-point scale; (D) present provision, the extent to which the English training currently available helps with each of the same ten tasks, plus the frequency of entrepreneurship topics and the overall usefulness of that training; and (E) gaps and priorities, closed, select-from-list questions on what is missing and which activities students would prefer; these and the other situational items offered predefined response options rather than free text. The ten task items were derived from a target-situation analysis of venture-creation activities and the ESP needs-analysis literature (Long, 2005; West, 1994), and were treated as distinct indicators of separate communicative activities, a needs checklist, rather than as a unidimensional scale. No formal expert-panel review or pilot study was conducted before administration; the instrument should therefore be regarded as exploratory. Accordingly, content validity rather than internal-consistency reliability was the relevant quality criterion, and future use of the instrument would benefit from expert-panel review and piloting. The second instrument was a nine-question semi-structured interview guide exploring teachers' views of student-entrepreneurs' needs, current coverage, gaps, institutional constraints and recommendations.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to the 28 student-entrepreneurs, and the six teacher interviews were conducted and transcribed verbatim. Because the importance and provision ratings are ordinal, the two distributions for each task were compared using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test with tie and continuity corrections (Wilcoxon, 1945), and effect sizes were computed as $r = Z/\sqrt{N}$, with $N = 28$ pairs. Because ten tasks were tested, the Holm–Bonferroni procedure was applied to control the familywise error rate (Holm, 1979). Medians are reported alongside means and standard deviations. The interview transcripts were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006): the data were read repeatedly and coded inductively; codes were collated into candidate themes; and themes were reviewed against the full data set and against the questionnaire findings, with the researcher maintaining a reflexive stance towards his own ESP-teaching background. Convergence between the two data sources was used to interpret, rather than to verify, the findings, and is summarised in a joint display (Table 5).

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent: the purpose of the study was explained, participants were told that they could withdraw at any point without consequence, and no personally identifying information was collected. Questionnaire responses were anonymous, teachers are identified only by code (T01–T06), and

all data were stored securely and used solely for research. The study was conducted in accordance with the research-ethics norms of the researcher's institution.

Results

Present Situation: Students' English Profile and Current Training (RQ2)

Students rated their English proficiency as moderate overall, with reading highest and writing lowest (Table 2), but reported using English in their projects only infrequently (M = 2.46, between "rarely" and "sometimes"). Importantly, the students have no dedicated ESP course for their ventures; the English available to them comes through general modules and occasional incubator workshops. They judged the overall usefulness of this current English training for their venture to be low (M = 2.75; 50.0% rated it 2 or below, and only 39.3% rated it 4 or above), and reported that entrepreneurship topics were seldom addressed (M = 2.57).

Skill / indicator	Mean	SD
Reading	3.54	1.05
Listening	3.50	1.21
Speaking	3.36	1.20
Writing	3.21	1.01
Frequency of English use	2.46	1.15

Table 2. Self-rated English proficiency and use (1 = very low, 5 = very high; N = 28)

Target Needs and the Needs–Provision Gap (RQ1)

All ten communicative tasks were rated at least moderately important (importance means 3.46–4.18). The highest-rated were writing professional e-mails (M = 4.18), presenting the business model (M = 4.00), pitching to a jury or investor (M = 3.96) and negotiating (M = 3.93). For every task, however, the importance rating exceeded the rating of current provision, indicating a pervasive shortfall in the training available; the largest gaps were for professional e-mail (2.00), pitching (1.67) and business-model communication (1.54), and the smallest for social-media communication (0.82), with provision means clustered between 2.18 and 2.64 across all tasks (Table 3).

Communicative task (in English)	Importance	Provision	Gap
Writing professional e-mails	4.18	2.18	2.00
Pitching to a jury / investor	3.96	2.29	1.67
Presenting the business model	4.00	2.46	1.54
Participating in online meetings	3.75	2.36	1.39
Negotiating with partners / clients	3.93	2.54	1.39
Preparing pitch decks / one-pagers	3.61	2.36	1.25
Networking at events	3.57	2.32	1.25
Reading calls for projects / funding	3.68	2.54	1.14
Reading technical / market information	3.68	2.57	1.11
Using English on websites / social media	3.46	2.64	0.82

Table 3. Importance of English tasks, current provision, and the gap (means, 1–5; N = 28; sorted by gap)

Wilcoxon signed-rank tests indicated that importance significantly exceeded current provision for every one of the ten tasks (all Holm-adjusted $p < .05$; four at $p < .001$), with medium-to-large effect sizes ($r = 0.48–0.80$; Table 4). The pattern held in aggregate: all 28 respondents rated their total importance above their total provision, and the difference between summed importance (Mdn = 38) and summed provision (Mdn = 24.5) was large and highly significant ($z = 4.63$, $p < .001$, $r = 0.87$). Median importance was 4.0 for most tasks against a median provision of 2.0–3.0. Two cautions temper interpretation: the importance ratings occupy a relatively narrow band (means 3.46–4.18), so the fine-grained rank-ordering among tasks is indicative rather than definitive; and because the same respondents rated both importance and provision, a degree of common-method influence cannot be excluded.

Communicative task	**z**	**p (Holm)**	**r**	**% I > P**
Writing professional e-mails	4.23	< .001	0.80	82%
Pitching to a jury / investor	4.02	< .001	0.76	79%
Presenting the business model	4.03	< .001	0.76	75%
Participating in online meetings	3.97	< .001	0.75	79%
Negotiating with partners / clients	3.22	.006	0.61	71%
Preparing pitch decks / one-pagers	3.13	.006	0.59	71%
Networking at events	3.47	.003	0.66	61%
Reading calls for projects / funding	3.18	.006	0.60	64%
Reading technical / market information	2.83	.009	0.53	64%
Using English on websites / social media	2.56	.010	0.48	57%

Table 4. Wilcoxon signed-rank comparisons of importance vs current provision (N = 28; sorted by gap; p values Holm–Bonferroni adjusted)

Tentatively, the largest gaps fall on productive and interactive, persuasion-oriented genres (e-mail, pitching, business-model presentation, meetings, negotiation), whereas the narrowest fall on receptive reading tasks, which general English instruction already addresses to some degree.

Students' Own Accounts: Situations, Gaps and Preferences

Asked to select the situations in which they had most needed English (from a predefined list), respondents most often chose: pitching to a mixed jury at an incubator event, joining an online meeting with a potential partner, e-mailing a foreign supplier about prices, reading a call for projects on a European funding platform, and presenting the business model to international mentors. These choices locate English squarely in international, funding-related and digital encounters.

Asked what was missing from their current training, students most frequently selected specialised vocabulary for business models and funding, activities based on real incubator documents and calls, and more pitch practice with feedback. Their most-selected activities were working on authentic incubator documents in groups, writing real e-mails and project summaries, and pitch competitions and role-plays. Among the predefined closing options, students endorsed a dedicated ESP course for student-entrepreneurs, called for assessment based on real projects rather than examinations, and asked that English be more closely connected to the entrepreneurship pathway.

ESP Teachers' Perspectives (RQ2–RQ3)

Thematic analysis of the six teacher interviews generated four themes that both corroborate and explain the survey findings. Because the strands are represented by one teacher each, the themes are offered as illustrative rather than representative.

Theme 1: Pitching comes first (oral, persuasive communication as the priority)

Teachers across disciplines placed oral, persuasive communication at the centre of students' needs. As T01 put it, "the first need is clearly oral communication: they must pitch their ideas, explain their business models, and answer questions from juries or mentors." T05, who works closely with the incubator, noted that students must "move from describing ideas in general terms to delivering clear, persuasive pitches in English."

Theme 2: From general and technical English to entrepreneurial and digital genres

Teachers described a shift in the genres students must master. For engineering, T02 observed that students must "move from purely technical language to a mix of technical and business English," learning to explain technical solutions to non-experts. For ICT, T03 argued that "for ICT startups, English is part of the user experience," encompassing landing pages, app descriptions and customer-support messages rather than traditional business letters alone.

Theme 3: The relevance gap (generic materials and misaligned assessment)

Teachers repeatedly contrasted authentic entrepreneurial tasks with the generic materials and assessments currently in use. T01 explained that "we rely on textbook materials that are easier to manage but less relevant," and that examinations "test grammar or reading comprehension rather than performance in tasks like pitching." This directly echoes students' requests for authentic documents and project-based assessment.

Theme 4: Structural and institutional constraints

Teachers situated these gaps in structural constraints: syllabi designed before Decree 1275, large classes, limited contact hours, and informal links with the incubator that leave entrepreneurship English to occasional, ad hoc training. T04 remarked that "large-group teaching and entrepreneurship do not go well together," while T05 warned that incubator collaboration "depends on personal relationships and goodwill rather than formal agreements." Reflecting on policy, T06 cautioned that, without coordination and recognition, there is a risk "that English becomes a symbolic requirement rather than a genuinely enabling resource."

Discussion

The findings provide consistent, statistically supported evidence of a substantial gap between the target communicative needs of student-entrepreneurs and the English training currently available, precisely the "lacks" that needs analysis is designed to surface (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Basturkmen, 2010; West, 1994). This gap, together with students' rating of their training below the scale midpoint ($M = 2.75$), suggests that the present training is not derived from a systematic analysis of what these learners actually have to do in English. This echoes a recurrent finding in Algerian ESP research: Tihal and Djouima (2025) report that the mandatory doctoral English programme they studied was designed without any needs analysis, and Nedjari (2025) documents a comparable distance between classroom tasks, and the language-based tasks graduates must perform at work.

The shape of the gap is theoretically meaningful. The widest, strongest shortfalls cluster on productive and interactive, persuasion-oriented genres, professional e-mail, pitching and business-model communication, whereas the narrowest fall on receptive reading tasks, which lie closest to the reading-and-translation tradition; even there, however, perceived provision remained below the scale midpoint. Students are thus least well served precisely where venture creation makes its heaviest communicative demands: in the moments when they must persuade, transact and represent their projects to others. This is consistent with the genre orientation of contemporary ESP, which holds that learners need targeted practice in the specific spoken and written genres of their target community rather than general language exposure (Bhatia, 1993; Belcher, 2006; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

One divergence deserves comment. Communication on websites and social media showed the smallest gap (0.82) and the lowest importance rating (3.46), yet the ICT teacher described English as "part of the user experience" of ICT startups (T03). Because only five respondents came from Computer Science/ICT, the aggregate may understate a need that is acute for digital ventures and modest for others. Future provision may therefore need discipline-specific strands rather than a single common syllabus.

These findings also help to specify what "English for entrepreneurship" involves as an ESP variety. It overlaps with Business English and English for Occupational Purposes but is not reducible to either: it foregrounds the persuasive, promotional and relational genres of venture creation, the pitch, the business-model narrative, the investor e-mail, the funding application, often performed in English as a business lingua franca among non-native interlocutors (Nickerson, 2005), and it spans academic, professional and digital registers at once. Read against EntreComp, these high-need genres map onto the "resources" and "into action" competence areas, mobilising others, working with others and taking the initiative, so that English ability emerges as an enabling condition of entrepreneurial competence rather than a peripheral skill (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). Treating English for entrepreneurship as a distinct target domain clarifies why provision oriented to reading and translation leaves the most salient needs unmet.

Beyond target and present situations, the data point to learning needs that any future provision must accommodate (Long, 2005; West, 1994). Students favoured collaborative, performance-oriented activities, working on authentic incubator documents in groups, writing real e-mails and project summaries, and rehearsing pitches, while teachers underscored constraints that shape how such learning can be delivered: very large first-year cohorts, limited contact hours, and assessment regulations geared to written examinations. A workable course must therefore reconcile a task-based, feedback-rich design with these institutional realities, for instance through smaller pathway-specific groups, structured peer feedback, and staged authentic tasks.

A notable strength of the study is the convergence of its two data sources. Students asked for authentic incubator documents, real e-mail and pitch practice, a dedicated course and project-based assessment; teachers, interviewed independently, described the same priorities and explained why they are difficult to deliver (Table 5). This convergence strengthens the case for replacing ad hoc trainings and workshops with a dedicated, task-based and genre-sensitive ESP course built around authentic entrepreneurial tasks and assessed through real outputs such as a pitch and a project dossier, a design consistent with task-based language teaching (Long, 2015), the practice orientation of entrepreneurship education (Neck & Greene, 2011), and the established ESP course-design cycle (Basturkmen, 2010).

Questionnaire finding	Interview theme	Integrated reading
Largest gaps: professional e-mail (2.00), pitching (1.67), business model (1.54)	Theme 1: Pitching comes first	Convergent: persuasive oral and written genres are the top priority and the least served
Perceived provision 2.18–2.64 on all tasks; usefulness M = 2.75	Theme 3: The relevance gap	Explanatory: generic materials and exam-based assessment account for low perceived provision
Smallest gap: websites / social media (0.82)	Theme 2: From technical to entrepreneurial and digital genres	Divergent: teachers see digital genres as central for ICT ventures; the aggregate rating is lower
Requests for authentic incubator documents, pitch practice and a dedicated course	Theme 4: Structural and institutional constraints	Complementary: large classes, limited hours and informal incubator links explain why the requested provision is absent

Table 5. Joint display of quantitative and qualitative findings

Finally, the teachers' accounts locate the problem above the level of the individual classroom. At present there is no dedicated ESP provision attached to the entrepreneurial pathway; what exists is general English plus occasional, informal training. Syllabi predate the scheme, incubator links rest on personal goodwill, and the broader move towards English-medium instruction adds further demands without coordinated support (Bellal, 2025). Without formal ESP–incubator partnerships, teacher development and explicit institutional recognition, English risks becoming, in one teacher's words, "a symbolic requirement rather than a genuinely enabling resource" (T06). Addressing the needs identified here is therefore not only a matter of materials but of curriculum policy.

Recommendations

The findings translate into concrete recommendations for the principal stakeholders in the "one diploma, one startup" scheme. Each is anchored in the evidence above and, where relevant, in the constraints the teachers themselves identified.

• Establish a dedicated, needs-based ESP course for student-entrepreneurs: Because the current training was rated only marginally useful (M = 2.75) and importance significantly exceeded provision on all ten tasks, a course separate from general modules and organised around authentic entrepreneurial tasks, pitching, e-mails, business-model presentation, funding calls and online content, is the priority intervention.
• Use authentic materials from the incubator: Real calls for projects, pitch-deck templates, evaluation criteria and sample e-mails should replace generic textbook content, as both students and teachers requested.
• Reform assessment: Replace grammar-and-reading examinations with output-based assessment, a live pitch and a short project dossier, ideally co-assessed with incubator mentors.
• Create smaller, pathway-specific groups and tutorials: Because teachers reported that large cohorts and limited hours make feedback-rich practice impractical, dedicated groups (and, realistically, additional teaching hours or assistants) are a precondition for the task-based design above.
• Formalise ESP–incubator partnerships: A designated incubator contact for each ESP teacher and a shared bank of authentic English materials would reduce the present reliance on personal goodwill.

• Invest in teacher development: ESP teachers need training in entrepreneurial and digital genres to move confidently beyond general or technical English.
• Recognise ESP for entrepreneurship in policy: Integrating a specialised-English component explicitly into the framework of Order No. 1275, alongside the business-model, marketing, management and finance training listed in its Article 5, and aligning it with English-medium instruction initiatives, would signal that English is a strategic enabler of the scheme rather than an optional add-on.

Conclusions

This study set out to document the English-language needs of student-entrepreneurs under Algeria's "one diploma, one startup" scheme and to assess how far their current training meets them. Drawing on a survey of 28 student-entrepreneurs and interviews with six ESP teachers at the University of Tlemcen, it found that these students have no dedicated ESP course; that perceived importance significantly exceeded current provision for every one of the ten communicative tasks examined, with medium-to-large effects; that the largest shortfalls lay in productive, persuasion-oriented genres, professional e-mail, pitching and business-model communication; that the training currently available was rated only marginally useful; and that students and teachers converged in calling for authentic, task-based ESP linked to the incubator and assessed through real outputs.

The study makes a twofold contribution. Conceptually, it specifies "English for entrepreneurship" as a distinct ESP target domain and offers an importance–provision approach for analysing training needs that can be applied in comparable settings. Practically, as detailed in the recommendations, it points towards a dedicated, needs-based ESP course built around authentic entrepreneurial tasks, output-based assessment, formal ESP–incubator partnerships, teacher development and explicit policy recognition.

Several limitations should be borne in mind, and they frame the study as exploratory rather than definitive. It is based on a single institution and a modest, purposive sample (28 students and six teachers), so the findings are not statistically generalisable. The evidence is entirely self-report (no observation of actual pitch or writing performance, and no analysis of syllabus or training documents, was undertaken) and because the same respondents rated both importance and provision, common-method bias cannot be excluded. Moreover, importance ratings capture learners' perceived needs: domain experts such as incubator mentors and jury members, whom needs-analysis methodology recommends consulting (Long, 2005; Serafini et al., 2015), were not surveyed. The teacher strand, with one informant per disciplinary area, is illustrative rather than representative, and the situational and preference items used closed, predefined response options rather than free text, capturing broad categories rather than rich detail, which constrains the depth of the qualitative findings. The ten task items, finally, were analysed as distinct indicators rather than a validated multi-item scale.

Future research could extend the design to several institutions, add learner interviews or focus groups, consult incubator mentors and jury members as domain experts, add document/observational data, triangulate self-report with performance measures, and design and evaluate a needs-based ESP course for student-entrepreneurs. Ultimately, if Algeria's ambition to turn diplomas into startups is to be realised, the language in which those startups are pitched, funded and scaled cannot be left to chance: it deserves to be planned, taught and assessed as a core component of entrepreneurship training rather than supplied through occasional workshops.

References

Anthony, L. (2018). *Introducing English for specific purposes*. Routledge.

Bacigalupo, M., Kampylis, P., Punie, Y., & Van den Brande, G. (2016). *EntreComp: The entrepreneurship competence framework* (EUR 27939 EN). Publications Office of the European Union.

Bargiela-Chiappini, F., Nickerson, C., & Planken, B. (2013). *Business discourse* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing courses in English for specific purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Belcher, D. D. (2006). English for specific purposes: Teaching to perceived needs and imagined futures in worlds of work, study, and everyday life. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1), 133–156.

Bellal, H. (2025). Instructors' readiness to englishization at higher education: The case of EMI at ENSA Algeria 2022/2023. Effective or defective? *ALTRALANG Journal, 7*(2), 216–238.

Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*. Longman.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Daly, P., & Davy, D. (2016). Structural, linguistic and rhetorical features of the entrepreneurial pitch: Lessons from Dragons' Den. *Journal of Management Development, 35*(1), 120–132.

Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Evans, S. (2012). Designing email tasks for the Business English classroom: Implications from a study of Hong Kong's key industries. *English for Specific Purposes, 31*(3), 202–212.

Flowerdew, L. (2013). Needs analysis and curriculum development in ESP. In B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. 325–346). Wiley-Blackwell.

Gibb, A. (2002). In pursuit of a new 'enterprise' and 'entrepreneurship' paradigm for learning: Creative destruction, new values, new ways of doing things and new combinations of knowledge. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 4*(3), 233–269.

Holm, S. (1979). A simple sequentially rejective multiple test procedure. *Scandinavian Journal of Statistics, 6*(2), 65–70.

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Li, J. (2014). Needs analysis: An effective way in business English curriculum design. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 4*(9), 1869–1874.

Long, M. H. (2005). *Second language needs analysis*. Cambridge University Press.

Long, M. H. (2015). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Martilla, J. A., & James, J. C. (1977). Importance-performance analysis. *Journal of Marketing, 41*(1), 77–79.

Menaceur, S., & Bouabdallah-Haddam, F. (2023). Popular media to spot English medical terminology in *House* the American series. *Dirassat Faniya*, 9(1), 110–121.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Messahel, M. A., & Idri, N. (2025). A systematic review of needs analysis research in English for medical purposes (2010–2024). *ALTRALANG Journal, 7*(2), 283–301.

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique [MESRS]. (2022). *Arrêté ministériel n° 1275 du 27 septembre 2022 relatif au dispositif « un diplôme – une startup / un diplôme – un brevet »* [Ministerial Decree No. 1275 of 27 September 2022 on the "one diploma–one startup / one diploma–one patent" scheme]. Algiers, Algeria.

Neck, H. M., & Greene, P. G. (2011). Entrepreneurship education: Known worlds and new frontiers. *Journal of Small Business Management, 49*(1), 55–70.

Nedjari, M. (2025). From classroom to workplace: An investigation of the ESP students' readiness for language-based professional tasks in Algeria. *ALTRALANG Journal, 7*(2), 270–282.

Nickerson, C. (2005). English as a lingua franca in international business contexts. *English for Specific Purposes, 24*(4), 367–380.

Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (Eds.). (2013). *The handbook of English for specific purposes*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Serafini, E. J., Lake, J. B., & Long, M. H. (2015). Needs analysis for specialized learner populations: Essential methodological improvements. *English for Specific Purposes, 40*, 11–26.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE.

Tihal, W., & Djouima, L. (2025). Investigating causes of language learning failure among Algerian ESP doctoral students: A case study of Arabic department learners at ENSB. *ALTRALANG Journal, 7*(2), 256–269.

West, R. (1994). Needs analysis in language teaching. *Language Teaching, 27*(1), 1–19.

Wilcoxon, F. (1945). Individual comparisons by ranking methods. *Biometrics Bulletin, 1*(6), 80–83. https://doi.org/10.2307/3001968

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE.

Appendix 01. Ministerial Decree No. 1275 of 27 September 2022

The text of Ministerial Decree No. 1275 of 27 September 2022, establishing the "one diploma, one startup" scheme along with an English summary

The Order sets out how students prepare a graduation project leading to a "university diploma – startup" (Art. 1). It aims to build a generation of student entrepreneurs able to create innovative startups (Art. 2). The project includes training programmes on preparing business plans (Art. 3). It is open to Licence, Master and Doctoral students, and to engineering, architecture and veterinary students, from all specialties and faculties (Art. 4). Registered students receive training and field visits on the business model, e-marketing, management, finance and accounting (Art. 5). A final-year student with a viable idea may be supported by the university incubator (Art. 6), and teams of two to six students from different specialties may be formed (Art. 7). Projects take the form of a "startup idea" (Art. 8). Students defend their project before a jury of the supervisor, a member of the incubator or house of entrepreneurship, scientific and specialist experts and a representative of economic and social partners; they obtain the university diploma and a startup diploma, aiming at least for the "innovative project" label (Art. 9). Outstanding projects enter a national competition with financial support (Art. 10).

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

قرار رقم 1225 مؤرّخ في 27 سبتمبر 2022 يحدد كيفيات إعداد مشروع مذكرة تخرج للحصول

على شهادة جامعية -مؤسسة ناشئة- من قبل طلبة مؤسسات التعليم العالي

إنّ وزير التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي،

- وبمقتضى المرسوم الرئاسي رقم 22-305 المؤرخ في 11 صفر عام 1444 الموافق 8 سبتمبر سنة 2022 والمتضمن تعيين أعضاء الحكومة،

- وبمقتضى المرسوم التنفيذي رقم 13-77 المؤرخ في 18 ربيع الأول عام 1434 الموافق 30 يناير سنة 2013 الذي يحدد صلاحيات وزير التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي،

- وبمقتضى المرسوم التنفيذي رقم 22-208 المؤرخ في 5 ذي القعدة عام 1443 الموافق 5 جوان سنة 2022 الذي يحدّد نظام الدراسات والتكوين للحصول على شهادات التعليم العالي،

يُقرّر ما يأتي:

المادة الأولى: يهدف هذا القرار إلى تحديد كيفيات إعداد مشروع مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة من قبل طلبة مؤسسات التعليم العالي.

المادة 2: يهدف مشروع مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية -مؤسسة ناشئة في الأساس، إلى خلق جيل من الطلبة رواد الأعمال لهم القدرة والرغبة في التوجه نحو ريادة الأعمال الابتكارية وخلق المؤسسات الناشئة الخلاقة للثروة ومناصب شغل، والتي تعد عملا مربحا يقوم على أسس ودعائم الابتكار والتكنولوجيا، يهدف إلى إيجاد حلا تقنيا، أو تكنولوجيا، أو رقميا لمؤسسات قائمة أو مؤسسات مستقلة بذاتها.

المادة 3 : تشتمل مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة على مجموعة من البرامج التدريبية في مجال إعداد مخططات الأعمال موجهة لمرافقة الطلبة المسجلين لإعدادها، والتي تسمح لهم بإعداد مذكرة تخرج قابلة للتحويل إلى مشروع مؤسسة ناشئة.

المادة 4: يسمح لطلبة الليسانس والماستر والدكتوراه وطلبة الهندسة والهندسة المعمارية طلبة علوم البيطرة من مختلف التخصصات والكليات إعداد مشروع مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة.

المادة 5: يتلقى الطلبة المسجلين في هذا المسلك دورات تدريبية وورشات ميدانية حول نموذج الأعمال والتسويق الالكتروني والمناجمنت والتمويل والمحاسبة.

المادة 6: يمكن لكل طالب في السنة الأخيرة من مساره التعليمي صاحب فكرة قابلة أن تتطور إلى مؤسسة ناشئة أن يرافق من حاضنة أعمال مؤسسته الجامعية ويناقش مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة.

المادة 7: يمكن للطلبة الذين يعدون مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة تكوين فرق عمل تتكون من مجموعات صغيرة من الطلبة (من طالبين (02) إلى ستة (06) طلبة) من تخصصات وكليات مختلفة من أجل مشروع مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة.

المادة 8: يقوم الطلبة المسجلين بإعداد مشاريع مذكرات تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة في شكل "فكرة مؤسسة ناشئة Start-up.

المادة 9: يحصل الطلبة الذين يقومون بإعداد مشروع مذكرة تخرج للحصول على شهادة جامعية - مؤسسة ناشئة، بعد القيام بعرض ومناقشة مشاريعهم أمام لجنة علمية وخبراء متخصصين في مجال إختصاصهم، تضم: المؤطر، عضو من حاضنة الأعمال أو دار المقاولاتية وممثل عن الشركاء الاقتصاديين والاجتماعيين، على شهادة نهاية الدراسة الجامعية وعلى دبلوم مؤسسة ناشئة، يهدف على الأقل للحصول على وسم "لابل" مشروع مبتكر.

تسهر إدارة حاضنات الأعمال الجامعية على مرافقة المشاريع الحاصلة على وسم " لابل" مشروع مبتكر للتحول الفوري إلى مؤسسات ناشئة حاصلة على وسم " لابل" من قبل اللجنة الوطنية لمنح علامة "لابل".

المادة 10: يتم تسجيل المشاريع المتميزة في مسابقة وطنية لأفضل المؤسسات الناشئة و تُثمّن المشاريع الفائزة بدعم مالي مناسب من طرف وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي والشركاء الاقتصاديين والاجتماعيين المهتمين بالمجال.

المادة 11: ينشر هذا القرار في النشرة الرسمية للتعليم العالي والبحث العلمي.

حرر بالجزائر في 27 سبتمبر 2022

وزير التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

وزير التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

كمال بداري