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Towards an ESP Project-Based Entrepreneurial Learning Model: A Case Study of the Microenterprise HEALTHISH at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria

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ABSTRACT: *Algerian higher education system is marked during the last five years by an increase investment on promoting entrepreneurship in the academic sphere for the aim of creating entrepreneurial universities. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) can serve as a bridge between academic English language learning and entrepreneurial innovation. This study examines how two ESP courses that adopted a project-based entrepreneurial learning (PBEL) model set the stage for the creation of a multilingual medical communication microenterprise named HEALTHISH by two English language master's students at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria. For an in-depth understanding of the case study, data were collected from the project dissertation, training documentation produced by the Entrepreneurship Development Centre (CDE) of Tiaret, field observation notes, and a semi-structured interview conducted with the project's founders. The study shows that the integration of project-based learning in the ESP courses through a PBEL model enabled the HEALTHISH founders to move from in-class and out-of-class project-based tasks to a CDE validated microenterprise. The study suggests that the integration of entrepreneurship project work into ESP syllabi through a PBEL model will help achieve both short-term and long-term objectives of the ministerial entrepreneurial framework. The HEALTHISH case illustrates how ESP classes can contribute directly to the entrepreneurial ecosystem.*

KEYWORDS: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Entrepreneurship, Project-Based Entrepreneurial Learning (PBEL), Entrepreneurship Development Centre, HEALTHISH, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

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1. Introduction

In the maze of studies examining the promotion of entrepreneurship in Algerian academia, the possibility of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses acting as a seedbed for students' entrepreneurial projects is far less explored. Most ESP studies in Algerian higher education remain focused on needs analysis, syllabus design, or linguistic competence. Little attention has been given to how ESP might contribute directly to entrepreneurship education in the Algerian academic settings.

Therefore, this paper addresses this gap by tracing how two ESP courses, designed on the basis of a contextual socioeconomic needs analysis, grew into an entrepreneurial project named HEALTHISH. The two ESP courses adopted a project-based entrepreneurial learning (PBEL) model in developing the entrepreneurial competencies of the students by engaging them in tasks simulating entrepreneurial projects. The microenterprise HEALTHISH was founded by two English language master's students in partial fulfill of the requirements of Master's degree in didactics at the department of English, Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria. The project founders took two ESP courses during their third-year Licence level (2023-2024) and first-year master's level (2024-2025). Both courses were developed and taught by an ESP teacher[1] who also participated in the creation of the microenterprise as the project supervisor during the 2025-2026 academic year.

The examination of the three-year academic and entrepreneurial experience in creating HEALTHISH sheds light on the role of ESP teaching with entrepreneurial objectives in improving the students' entrepreneurial competencies. This updated ESP teacher's role signals an important shift on how ESP teaching has moved from a discipline-dependant teaching approach to an interdisciplinary teaching approach adopting a PBEL model to create an entrepreneurial value.

This study explores how the ESP-PBEL model functions in practice by examining the case of the microenterprise HEALTHISH to understand (a) the model's contribution to project development, (b) the entrepreneurial competencies it fosters, and (c) the implications it offers for ESP syllabus design. To achieve the purpose of the study, three research questions are addressed in this paper:

1. How does the ESP-PBEL model contribute to entrepreneurial project development in the HEALTHISH case?
2. What entrepreneurial competencies emerge from the ESP-PBEL model?
3. What implications does the case of HEALTHISH offer for ESP syllabus design?

2. Literature Review

2.1 ESP Needs Analysis and Professional Development

ESP has traditionally been understood as a learner-centred approach shaped by identifiable academic and professional needs. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 19) define it as "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning." They explain that needs awareness remains a durable principle in ESP pedagogy (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 53). Hyland argues that ESP is about developing learners' literacy for participation "in particular academic and professional cultural contexts," and that identifying "the specific language, skills, and genres" of a group is central to setting "learning priorities," even if that process is "expensive, time-consuming and skill-intensive" (2007, p. 117). In this view, the goal is not simply to equip students with linguistic forms but to enable them to navigate, negotiate, and contribute to the professional world they will enter.

[1] It should be noted that the author of this paper is himself the ESP teacher and the project supervisor of HEALTHISH founders.

In the Algerian academic context, ESP has historically been grounded in a needs‑analysis approach that largely reduces itself to pinpointing vocabulary and grammar deficits among science and technology students. However, an expanding corpus of Algerian research now calls for a more transformative ESP model that embeds employability competencies, project‑based learning, and capacity for innovation (Rakai & Kaouli, 2020; Haouchi & Idri, 2025). These arguments fit with the wider push of the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education to make university education more professional. The HEALTHISH initiative is a good example of this bigger vision. It turns the language classroom into a place where subject-specific English, professional communication, and entrepreneurial skills all come together.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education has increasingly moved beyond a narrow concern with business creation towards a broader understanding of entrepreneurial competence. Bacigalupo et al. describe entrepreneurship "as a transversal key competence applicable by individuals and groups, including existing organisations, across all spheres of life," and involves acting upon opportunities and ideas to transform them into value for others (2016, p. 10). This broader framing positions entrepreneurship not simply as a business-starting activity, but as a general capacity for value creation in social, civic, and occupational contexts (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p. 10). They further emphasize that this competence is made up of three tightly intertwined areas: "Ideas and opportunities," "Resources," and "Into action" with 15 interrelated competences that are intended to function as parts of a whole rather than as a hierarchy (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p. 13).

Entrepreneurship education should not be reduced to teaching students how to start companies. The would-be entrepreneur is not, according to Bruyat and Julien, "simply a blind machine responding automatically to environmental stimuli (interest rates, subsidies, information networks, etc.), but a human being capable of creating, learning and influencing the environment" (2001, p. 165). In the same respect, Bakri and Mehrez (2017, p. 4) emphasize that "universities can play an immense role in providing the requisite entrepreneurship education and skills to students." In this sense, a shift from entrepreneurship education as preparation for enterprise creation to entrepreneurship education as preparation for value creation across contexts has become a prerequisite for the success of such education.

According to Lackéus et al. (2013, p. 4) entrepreneurship education aims "to give people the knowledge and skills needed to become self-employed and develop a new business." Lackéus describes entrepreneurial education as "individualized, active, process-based, project centric, collaborative, experiential and multidisciplinary approach" as opposed to "standardized, content focused, passive and single-subject based curriculum in traditional education" (2015, p. 14). Moberg et al. (2013, p. 14) define entrepreneurial education as "Content, methods and activities supporting the creation of knowledge, competencies and experiences that make it possible for students to initiate and participate in entrepreneurial value creating processes". Mitchelmore and Rowley add that entrepreneurial competencies "are learnable, therefore recognising the importance of competencies and identifying these is crucial for educators and the development of learning opportunities" (2010, p. 96). Therefore, entrepreneurship education is most effective when it is grounded in experiential, value-creating, and action-oriented learning to better support the development of students' entrepreneurial competencies.

2.3 Institutional Entrepreneurship Framework

Between 2022 and 2025, Algeria has implemented a series of regulatory measures to embed entrepreneurship directly in the university education. The first of these was the ministerial Order No. 1275 of 27 September 2022 establishing the procedures for a graduation dissertation leading to a tart up diploma.

For the first time, a student's dissertation could serve as the basis of a real project turning what had always been a purely academic exercise into a real opportunity for business creation.

Additionally, an entrepreneurship module was introduced in the third year syllabus of the letters and foreign languages domain starting from 2022-2023 academic year. The module objectives are (a) to render students more attentive to the societal, economic, political and environmental issues that they will encounter in their professional lives; (b) to introduce them to the vocabulary and tools of entrepreneurship and project management; (c) to give them hands-on experience of project management methods; (d) to explore the social, technical economic and organisational dimensions of an enterprise; and (e) to build professional and interpersonal skills (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2022, pp. 69-72). The integration of this teaching module confirmed that entrepreneurship is no longer the preserve of business education but had begun to find a place in English language teaching.

The real institutional change arrived with the interministerial Order of 9 September 2024 that established shared research services called Entrepreneurship Development Centres (CDEs) in 102 public higher education institutions across the country. The Order states in its third article that each CDE is organised into three sections. The awareness and orientation section is open to students and graduates who have project ideas, it works to disseminate an entrepreneurial culture throughout the university, and encourages an entrepreneurial mindset so that students and graduates can create micro enterprises after the economic approach. The training section centres on the development of project organisation skills by providing courses on topics such as the basics of entrepreneurship, strategic planning, operational management, legal issues and growth strategies, as well as creating a network of experienced entrepreneurs and experts. The accompaniment and monitoring section identifies promising projects, helps students and graduates to transform their ideas into functioning microenterprises, and monitors the further development of these enterprises (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2024, p. 12).

The ministerial Order No. 1275 of 27 September 2022 was amended by the ministerial Order n° 008 of 23 February 2025. The updated Order clarified the academic and business standards a student's micro-enterprise project must meet to be considered a credible business plan. It also empowered the CDEs with the responsibility of monitoring and validating these dissertations giving student entrepreneurs more institutional backing than ever.

2.4 ESP and PBL

PBL "is a model that organizes learning around projects" (Thomas, 2000, p. 1). Lee explains that a PBL curriculum "engages learners in meaningful problems" to advance "their creativity and problem-solving abilities" (2021, p. 1). She adds that such model "is based on the assumption that most academic content is learned best in the context of projects" (Lee, 2021, p. 1). Thomas makes a careful distinction between projects that are simply classroom tasks and those that genuinely qualify as project‑based learning. He argues that if the central activities can be done with already‑learned information or pose no real challenge, the work is an exercise, not PBL. Authentic PBL, in his view, is "not, in the main, teacher‑led, scripted, or packaged," and it does not follow predetermined outcomes or paths. Compared to "school-like" projects, he emphasizes on the realistic nature of the PBL projects that "incorporate a good deal more student autonomy, choice, unsupervised work time, and responsibility than traditional instruction and traditional projects" (2002, pp. 3-4).

ESP and PBL share a very similar logic as both start from real needs. ESP builds its syllabus around what learners will actually do with language in their professional lives (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998), while PBL organises learning around authentic tasks tied to a particular field (Thomas, 2000). Zečević et al. note that the two approaches are learner-centered that go well beyond language proficiency, aiming together to "cultivate various other skills, mental capacities, and forms of social responsiveness." When they are brought together, the needs analysis typical of ESP can supply the

very topics and genres for a project, and the project itself gives students a pressing reason to stretch their language and professional skills at the same time (2025, p. 67). Such an ESP learning context that integrates PBL and entrepreneurship is described by Santoso et.al (2023, p. 5) as "project-based entrepreneurial learning (PBEL) model" which aims at equipping students with the entrepreneurial competence to launch and manage startups or microenterprises.

2.5 PBEL Model's Role in HEALTHISH Creation

Reviewed literature in this paper confirms that ESP classes adopting PBL help developing entrepreneurial competence among students with the institutional support. The HEALTHISH project operationalised this learning model, which matches the underlying principles of PBEL, in a way that is both pedagogically achievable and institutionally recognisable within the Algerian university system through four stages.

The first stage involved ESP teaching with an entrepreneurial focus. During this two-year stage, students engaged with specialized languages through entrepreneurial genres such as business proposals, market analysis reports, and branding materials. The emphasis was put on professional communication practices that match the demands of entrepreneurial activity both in Algeria and worldwide. The second stage was marked by a shift towards project design and institutional validation. Students developed a concrete entrepreneurial initiative and submit it for validation by the CDE committee in accordance with the ministerial Order No. 008 of 23 February 2025. The CDE validation turned the project from a classroom initiative into an entrepreneurial project named HEALTHISH in the field of specialized medical communication. The third stage included the institutional incubation of HEALTHISH via the CDE and NESDA[2] framework. The project's founders engaged in the CDE-NESDA training and accompaniment. Students took part in entrepreneurship workshops, received mentoring from the CDE and NESDA trainers, and refined their project idea through the BMC and SWOT analysis. By the fourth stage, students' entrepreneurial competencies matured which was reflected through the well-elaborated BMC[3] and SWOT[4] analysis of the HEALLTHISH project. Both project analytical tools highlight the value creation of their entrepreneurial project as a promising microenterprise.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Context

Adopting a qualitative case study approach, the study was done at the Department of English, Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria. The author of this paper had taught ESP to the two HEALTHISH project founders during their third-year Licence level (2023–2024) and first-year Master level in Didactics (2024-2025). During these two years, PBEL tasks were designed and supervised leading to the HEALTHISH initiative during 2025-2026 academic year. HEALTHISH initiators, therefore, launched their project with a solid foundation in ESP skills worked on over two consecutive years.

3.2 Data Collection and Tools

The study data includes the HEALTHISH project dissertation, CDE training documentation, field observation notes, and a semi-structured interview with the two HEALTHISH founders. To better

[2] The National Agency for the Support and Development of Entrepreneurship.
[3] Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
[4] Business Model Canvas.

understand the case study of this paper, a comprehensive description of the microenterprise is detailed including the founders' profiles, project idea and CDE validation, created value, operational workflow, economic and social prospects, market study and competitive positioning, SWOT analysis and BMC, financial plan, in addition to the project founders' responses to the semi-structured interview questions.

3.2.1 What is HEALTHISH?

Before examining the study findings, it is necessary to provide a comprehensive description for the microenterprise HEALTHISH.

3.2.1.1 Founders' Profiles

HEATHISH is the creation of two English language students under the supervision of an ESP teacher. Both founders hold a Licence degree in English language and were registered, during the project creation, in their second-year Master in Didactics at the Department of English, Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria. One of the initiators holds a diploma in nursing studies from the National Institute of Paramedical Training of Tiaret, Algeria. She has been working as a public health nurse for five years at the Mother and Child Care Center of Tiaret, Algeria (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026). The professional healthcare experience of one the founders helped the project team understand the project target situation needs.

3.2.1.2 Project Idea and CDE Validation

HEALTHISH founders sought to move beyond traditional academic research by developing a project capable of generating both social and economic value. Their motivation led to the creation of HEALTHISH which is an entrepreneurial initiative that aims at enhancing medical communication and awareness through specialized educational and communication materials for the Algerian healthcare contexts. The initiators first presented their project proposal before a selection committee at the CDE. During this evaluation session, they introduced and defended their project idea emphasizing the identified problem, the proposed solutions, the project's created value, and its potential contribution to the market. They received positive feedback from the CDE committee members. One month later, they obtained official confirmation of acceptance into the CDE-NESDA 21-day entrepreneurial training programme designed to provide essential knowledge in entrepreneurship, business management, marketing, finance, communication, and project planning. The training programme contributed to the refinement of the project by developing the project initiators technical and professional skills including teamwork, leadership, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, and decision-making. CDE and NESDA trainers helped the trainees understand their project funding mechanisms, legal procedures, and business creation requirements within the Algerian entrepreneurial ecosystem.

HEATHISH entered its implementation phase as a microenterprise project after the completion of the training programme. The project BMC and SWOT Analysis were developed and validated by the CDE trainers. A comprehensive market study was conducted through field visits and competitor analysis to better understand market needs and competitive practices. Pro forma invoices were collected from a Chinese supplier for workshop equipment, and an Algerian supplier for office equipment. In parallel, prototypes of HEALTHISH communication and awareness materials were designed to demonstrate the microenterprise products and services (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

3.2.1.3 Products, Services, and Target Market

HEALTHISH provides a wide range of products and services targeted to Algerian healthcare institutions such as medical documentation (prescriptions, technical sheets, medical reports, etc.), campaigns and events (flyers, brochures, catalogues, etc.), branding and signage solutions (reception displays, medical signs, etc.), professional uniforms and equipment (scrubs, safety vests, medical coats, etc), and gift items (planners, calendars, stickers, etc). Additionally, HEALTHISH provides public and private healthcare institutions, training centres, and academic institutions with multilingual communication services designed to reach audiences, regardless of their language background, for the aim of helping the potential clients communicate clearly and professionally (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

3.2.1.4 Operational Workflow

The project adopts a structured workflow that integrates both internal activities and external contributions. First, a target situation analysis is conducted within the client settings to identify communication needs, linguistic gaps, existing practices, and areas requiring improvement. Next, based on the results, adapted communication materials are developed started with an assessment of institutional needs to provide appropriate solutions, and followed by the creation of a visual identity and professional signage system. Medical content is then carefully reviewed or developed in the required language for its accuracy and clarity. After that, graphic designs are created as prototypes for client evaluation and feedback. Following client approval, final materials are produced and delivered (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

To maintain its workflow, HEALTHISH will recruit a graphic designer, who will be responsible for visual communication, and a printing technician managing production processes, in addition to the project initiators working on language review and medical content. A photographer may also be involved when needed for professional visual content creation. Moreover, HEALTHISH will work on creating a network of external collaborations with raw material suppliers, delivery and logistics companies, and marketing and communication partners who will contribute to the promotion and visibility of its products and services (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

3.2.1.5 Economic and Social Prospects

HEALTHISH project is created for several sociopolitical, professional, and personal factors. The ongoing shift in Algeria towards the Englishization of all sectors, including the medical field, confirms the need for such projects that help achieving the shift objectives. As medical education is increasingly delivered in English, Algerian future healthcare practitioners will operate in an English-speaking environment which creates a need for adapted communication tools and materials within their workplaces. Furthermore, one of the two project founders has a five-year experience in a hospital working with foreign doctors, mainly Chinese and Cuban, for whom English serves as the main language of communication. This reflects the reality of a multilingual healthcare environment where English has become a tool for effective interaction and coordination. Finally, being English language students, the project is motivated by its initiators' personal and academic interest in medical English for the aim of the promotion of its usage in the Algerian healthcare institutions (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

3.2.1.6 Market Study and Competitive Positioning

The province of Tiaret, Algeria, is a prominent healthcare market with its 255 public healthcare institutions including hospitals, polyclinics, and centers, in addition to 344 private healthcare institutions ranging from clinics to pharmacies. The market study includes an analysis of the competitive environment within

multilingual healthcare communication services and the printing domain in the city of Tiaret. The analysis resulted in the identification of six direct and indirect competitors namely: AZ com, First Print, Ability Creations PUB, Masterpiece Agency, ADAM PUB, and Naro Print. These competitors focus on general printing solutions, rather than specialized healthcare communication, offering traditional printing and basic services. Therefore, HEALTHISH differentiation strategy is to (a) exclusively focus on healthcare institutions; (b) provide multilingual services in Arabic, French, and English adapted to Algeria's diverse patient populations; (c) create products and services that generic printers cannot duplicate; (d) build a strong professional network through adherence to healthcare ethical and professional standards; and (e) establish a digital presence on LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok platforms (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

3.2.1.7 SWOT Analysis

The microenterprise SWOT analysis shows strengths that include the project's focus on public and private healthcare institutions, a range of products and services, a qualified management team with healthcare experience and proficiency in medical English, development of visual identity, enhancing healthcare communication, and the design of print and electronic medical educational content. The project weaknesses include a limited technical expertise that will be worked on for improvement by the founders, slow expansion requiring time to build trust, and lack of a market reputation as a new founded project. Project opportunities include building a partnership network with the Algerian Ministry of Health and healthcare institutions, academic and training healthcare institutions, in addition to a potential expansion into new markets in the surrounding provinces namely Tissemssilet, Relizane, K'sar Chellala, Laghouat, and Mascara. Project threats are mainly the competition from low-cost printing agencies, lack of awareness of the HEALTHISH services among the target audiences at the initial stage of its creation, fluctuation of the raw material prices, creation of new competitors imitating the HEALTHISH products and services, and potential client reluctance for the changes to bring in their institutions due to administrative and legal restrictions (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

3.2.1.8 BMC

The project BMC is composed of nine components: key partnerships, key activities, value propositions, customer relationships, potential customers, key resources, channels, costs, and revenue streams. Following is a detailed description for each HEALTHISH component:

(1) Key partnerships include suppliers of printing materials and equipment, shipping and delivery companies, a professional photographer, installation and maintenance partners, and marketing partners.
(2) Key activities involve the identification and analysis of institutional needs, design of visual identity and signage, implementation of production and printing processes, installation of signage, and post-sale follow-up and maintenance services.
(3) Value propositions focus on professional medical visual identity for healthcare institutions, directional signage designed for patients and visitors, use of high-quality materials appropriate for medical settings, clear and simple medical visual content, specialized multilingual communication, and professional visual solutions that enhance patient trust and improve institutional visibility.
(4) Customer relationships are built through on-site direct interaction, continuous follow-up, high-quality service, and partnership contracts.
(5) Potential customers of the microenterprise include public and private healthcare institutions, training centres, universities, paramedical institutes, to name but a few.

(6) Key resources comprise material resources (workplace equipment, digital printing equipment, computing equipment, professional software for design and data management, high-quality production materials), human resources (graphic designer, printing technician, project managers, professional photographer), and financial resources (bank loan and NESDA funding).
(7) Channels include direct communication with institutions, marketing through social media platforms, on-site visits and professional proposals, and online communication via phone and email.
(8) Costs cover investment costs for equipment acquisition and infrastructure, direct operational costs for raw materials and employees, and indirect costs for rent, utilities, marketing, legal and accounting fees, telecommunication, training, insurance, and other diverse supplies.
(9) Revenue streams comprise sale of ready-made products, print-on-demand services, support during awareness days and training programmes, seasonal products, and ready-made campaign packages for events such as Pink October, World Diabetes Day, and Vaccination Week (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

3.2.1.9 Financial Plan

The microenterprise financial plan estimates a total investment of 3,242,358.06 DZD distributed as the following:

- production machinery and equipment (1,334,108.06 DZD),
- site preparation (600,000 DZD),
- office equipment (449,450 DZD),
- IT equipment (231,350 DZD),
- telecommunication equipment (45,000 DZD),
- equipment installation (50,000 DZD),
- general establishment expenses (70,000 DZD), and
- working capital for raw materials (462,450 DZD).

Furthermore, HEALTHISH annual raw material purchases are projected at 4,342,350 DZD in the first year with an estimate of a 10% annual rise. Additionally, labour costs cover four positions in the first year with a total annual payroll of 2,880,000 DZD, with the aim to expand the team to five positions in the second year (3,150,000 DZD) and seven positions in the third year (4,014,000 DZD). Moreover, external costs are expected to be 720,000 DZD in the first year. In addition, annual depreciation is estimated to be 245,193.31 DZD, which was calculated using the straight-line method according to the Algerian Ministry of Finance Order of April 2025. Besides, revenue projections cover 26 products and services with total sales rising from 13,876,610 DZD in the first year to 16,790,698.10 DZD in the third year. Finally, net income is projected at 5,689,066.69 DZD in the first year, increasing to 6,437,453.29 DZD in the third year with the project benefiting from tax incentives under the NESDA support programme (Mahieddine & Meslem 2026).

HEALTHISH financial plan confirms how the CDE-NESDA training helped the project initiators transforming HEALTHISH from an idea into a structured entrepreneurial project with clear objectives, defined products and services, and a targeted socioeconomic impact. Simple ideas, when appropriately invested, can be effectively translated into entrepreneurial projects addressing Algerian socioeconomic needs.

4. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was adopted to identify recurring patterns related to ESP, PBEL, HEALTHISH, and entrepreneurial competence development among the microenterprise founders. The results are organised

around the study central question of how ESP courses that adopted a PBEL model contributed to the birth, development, and institutional validation of HEALTHISH. The analysed data include the BMC and SWO analysis of the microenterprise, CDE documentation, classroom observation, and the semi-structured interview with the HEALTHISH initiators.

4.1 HEALTHIS Analysis

The analysis of the HEALTHISH project aims at understating the role that ESP classes played in the creation and development of the microenterprise. It also provides an analytical overview of the ESP competences manifested in the project.

4.1.1 ESP as the Starting Point

HEALTHISH did not come from a business department or an entrepreneurship club; instead, it started inside an ESP classroom. The ESP courses, took by the initiators during their 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 academic years, helped them develop the entrepreneurial competencies they later applied in the HEALTHISH project. During these two academic years, the founders' teacher enriched the ESP syllabi to include project-based assignments. For example, students had to identify a real communication gap in a local professional setting, design a language based service to address it, and produce a business proposal in English that reflected the format required by the CDE. Such syllabus enrichment emanates from the ESP teacher's awareness of the Ministry's push towards an entrepreneurial university and the accompanying institutions already in place, mainly the CDEs. The ESP classes were conceived as a nursery for entrepreneurial ideas with the use of a PBEL approach as the nurturing medium.

HEALTHISH initial idea was a modest translation services for hospital documents. However, the initiators' entrepreneurial vision expanded as they started working on the ESP materials that included analysing model business proposals, acquiring professional vocabulary, discussing the conventions of commercial genres, etc. They started unveiling the real needs of the Algerian healthcare settings which was not just translation but a specialized multilingual communication system that includes signage, visual identity, medical documents, health awareness campaign materials, to name but a few. This shift from simple project-based assignments to a full entrepreneurial project was a direct result of the ESP classes which trained and motivated them to go beyond the classroom tasks.

4.1.2 ESP Competences in HEALTHISH

The HEALTHISH project provides valid and reliable evidence of specific ESP competences that were used and developed through the processes of project creation and development including genre competence, specialized vocabulary, rhetorical awareness, and intercultural competence. The collected data also shed light on the ESP teacher's role on going beyond language teaching into nurturing entrepreneurship culture among the students.

4.1.2.1 Genre competence

The project initiators produced a range of professional genres such as problem-statement analysis, market study, SWOT analysis, BMC, financial plan, etc. The ESP courses had taught similar genres over four semesters providing the students with similar templates to work on depending on the audience and purpose. The project development is marked by the founders' competence to switch between the analytical register of the market study and the persuasive register confirming the effectiveness of the courses they took on genre types and usage.

4.1.2.2 Specialized Vocabulary

A mastery of three overlapping specialized lexical fields were required in the HEALTHISH project namely: medical terminology (e.g. consultation cards, scrubs, safety vests), business terminology (e.g. proposition, customer), financial terminology (e.g. value, depreciation, working capital), and technical vocabulary (e.g. eco-solvent ink, DTF film, lamination film). The ESP courses taken by the project founders did not preteach every term; instead, it equipped the students with specific reading and writing strategies for understanding, learning, and using specialized vocabulary in context. The project founders applied such strategies during the project development and project dissertation writing.

4.1.2.3 Rhetorical Awareness

Another ESP competence showed by the project initiators is their ability to adapt their message to different audiences including the project supervisor, the CDE committee, and healthcare practitioners. For example, the BMC of the project is written in a concise and persuasive style for a business audience compared to the analysis of hospital needs that shows a more clinical and evidence-based style. This rhetorical awareness of the different professional discursive practices was worked on and practised during the ESP courses took by the microenterprise founders.

4.1.2.4 Intercultural competence

HEALTHISH aims at producing products and services in Arabic, French, and English which ultimately requires from the project founders to develop awareness on terminology, register, and cultural appropriateness across these languages. Therefore, the founders worked carefully on translating medical names and concepts into English without losing their meaning in the Algerian healthcare context. Additionally, they consulted medical practitioners to validate their work to avoid misunderstanding or confusion among the target customers and audiences. Such multilingual and intercultural competence was developed among the founders during their ESP courses by engaging them in different in-class and out-of-class tasks that explore the intercultural differences among speakers of English of different cultures to equip the students with intercultural communicative skills.

4.2 Interview Analysis

A semi-structured interview was conducted with the two project founders after the validation of HEALTHISH by both the project supervisor and CDE. The questions were designed to elicit their reflections on the role of ESP in their entrepreneurial experience. The founders are referred to in the analysis as interviewee ‘A’ and interviewee ‘B’. A thorough analysis of the interviewees’ responses revealed four main themes.

4.2.1 Student’s Professional Identity Shift

Neither initiator was viewing herself as a potential entrepreneur in their third year Licence level. Interview ‘A’ believed that business creation was for people with finance or management degrees; while Interview ‘B’ thought her degree would lead to either a teaching or translation position. The ESP courses they took changed these fixed identities set by the founders. Interviewee ‘A’ added that when the ESP teacher asked them to find a real communication problem and solve it, she started thinking like someone who can offer a service, not just like a student. Interviewee ‘B’ described a similar response stating that the ESP course

made her see that language is a service you can sell. The ESP courses, in their revised and enriched versions, repositioned the founders as active agents for change rather than passive learners.

4.2.2 ESP Competences as Practical Tools

Both interviewees did not point to language grammar or fluency when asked about the specific skills that mattered most in their entrepreneurial journey. They referred to genre mastery, business document writing, and discursive practices. Interviewee 'A' put the emphasis on the blending of her background medical knowledge, being a practitioner nurse for five years, and the acquired medical English from ESP courses. Interviewee 'B' responded that the skills of editing, proofreading, and the acquisition of new business vocabulary were of paramount importance in the development of the project. Thus, the mediating function of ESP classes created a training space that brought together separate disciplines such as healthcare, language, and business creating interdisciplinary professional practices.

4.2.3 The Effectiveness of the Project-Based Work in ESP Classes

The two interviewees stated that HEALTHISH would never have happened if they had taken ESP as traditional courses that involve ready-made lectures. Interviewee 'A' stated that she would have "forgotten everything." Interviewee 'B' confirmed that "the project-based approach was the main reason for their project idea." It should be noted that during ESP classes, students were engaged in problem-solving tasks and technical report writing for the suggested solutions such as White Paper writing. Such tasks helped the project founders addressing the CDE committee selection with confidence for the aim of convincing them of their project idea.

4.2.4 The role of Specialized Professional English is Establishing Credibility with the CDE Evaluators

Interviewee 'A' recalled a CDE evaluator asserting, "You have a professional proposal." She attributed this positive feedback to their correct specialized professional English that helped them discuss their project, both in oral and written forms, and convince the CDE evaluators of "the feasibility of their microenterprise." Interviewee 'B' noted that some CDE members were impressed that "two English students had produced a full business plan in English with financial details." Hence, the specialized professional English language of the project founders enhanced their credibility as future entrepreneurs who can communicate their ideas professionally to their potential clients for the aim of establishing a professional business network.

5. Discussion

HEALTHISH illustrates how well-designed entrepreneurial ESP syllabi help achieve much more than just linguistic objectives. The adopted PBEL model in the ESP courses provided for the project founders aimed at nurturing the entrepreneurial motivation among English language students. The results of such learning model match the requirements of the current Algerian university environment which prioritizes entrepreneurial education in all academic disciplines.

The first study aspect to be examined is how the HEALTHISH project integrated the ESP classrooms into the national entrepreneurship ecosystem. The HEALTHISH proposal written and presented to the CDE committee by two English students, following the linguistic and organizational conventions of the business genres, was the result of two years of ESP classes during which students were introduced to the different professional genres including the business ones. Thus, such genres (business proposal, business email, SWOT, etc.) must be integrated in the ESP syllabi to equip learners with the specialized linguistic tools they need to work on their potential entrepreneurial projects.

At the level of entrepreneurial competences, HEALTHISH illustrates how the founders learned from their ESP in-class and out-of-class project-based tasks (gap identification, problem-solving, etc.) in developing their linguistic and professional skills. This was reflected through the initiators' analysis of communication gaps in an Algerian hospital setting. Moreover, they did a professional fieldwork collecting reliable and valid data in support of their project idea. Additionally, they succeeded in convincing the CDE committee of the originality of their idea that would lead to a pioneering microenterprise in the province of Tiaret. Furthermore, they engaged in business thinking to elaborate detailed and concise BMC and SWOT analysis. All of these competences were not achievable without the mastery of specialized languages manifested through writing proposals, professional presentations, etc. The interrelation between specialized languages use and entrepreneurial practices confirms that ESP classes can functions as entrepreneurial workshops for students.

The project initiators' responses to the interview questions on their self-perception as future entrepreneurs confirm a professional identity shift from English language students with a specific future teaching or translating career to business managers. This shift did not take place through a persuasive debate; instead, it grew out of the ESP learning experiences of using specialized languages to explore real-life needs and problems. The learning experience of analysing and writing a business proposal generated a feeling of achievement, as confirmed by both founders, motivating them to broaden their career prospects.

Another important study finding is the role that the project-based nature of the ESP classes played in triggering the entrepreneurial idea which would not be possible, according to both interviewees, if such classes took a traditional learning model they had experienced in other classes. This finding should be carefully examined by the Algerian ESP syllabus designers leading to rethinking the teaching objectives, which implies, if done, the integration of the PBEL model in which students are required to practice, investigate, perform, and engage.

The ESP teacher's role in the process of creation and development of HEALTHISH deserves to be explored as well. The collected data shed light on the teacher's role going beyond language teaching into nurturing entrepreneurship culture among the students. The teacher-supervisor adapted the official ESP syllabi adopting a PBEL approach for the aim of engaging the students in in-class tasks and out-of-class tasks that simulate real entrepreneurial projects. Moreover, such practitioner's role helps connect the ESP classroom to the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Therefore, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research should invest in the professional development of ESP teachers to equip them with knowledge of business genres as done for students in the CDEs. It should also bridge the CDEs training programmes with the ESP syllabi to target the same objectives regarding the development of the students' entrepreneurial competencies entailing field cooperation among the CDEs trainers and the ESP teachers across Algerian universities.

6. Conclusion

This paper contributes to the ESP literature by repositioning ESP as a pedagogical bridge that can link English language teaching with entrepreneurship in Algeria. Furthermore, it provides a contextual case of how ESP can go beyond the classroom contributing to both the short-term and long-term objectives of creating Algerian entrepreneurial universities. The study has explored the academic and professional benefits of the adoption of a PBEL model for the development of students' entrepreneurial competence.

HEALTHISH was born in an ESP classroom at the department of English, Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria, during the 2025-2026 academic year and built upon two years of prior ESP teaching. This microenterprise project illustrates how ESP teaching can produce innovative projects when it adopts an effective approach that aims at enhancing entrepreneurship among students. The project founder's journey, from working on specific and time-limited project-based tasks to a microenterprise, offers a replicable model for ESP teachers across the Algerian universities.

The ESP practitioner's role highlights one of the paper's main arguments. ESP teachers in Algerian universities should review their role from teachers working on developing the linguistic competencies of their students to a more decisive role acting as bridges between ESP and entrepreneurship development. The ESP teachers' dual knowledge of both specialized languages and their professional and vocational contexts, in addition to their pedagogical contact with students that spans over two years of ESP courses, must be invested appropriately to prepare and engage students in launching their entrepreneurial projects. Such a role can be achieved by adopting the PBEL model which has been proved to be effective and efficient in the Algerian academic context.

To conclude, this study questions the place of ESP teaching in the entrepreneurial university with the aim of examining the usefulness of the PBEL approach in enhancing the entrepreneurial competence among the students. English language departments are widely seen as training spaces for future English language teachers with a very limited innovative role to play. The microenterprise HEALTHISH challenges this perception and provides an evidence-based model. The students' linguistic competence did not only help them finalizing their entrepreneurial project, but represents the core part of their project created value which is the multilingual and intercultural medical communication. This twofold competence, linguistic and entrepreneurial, of the HEALTHISH founders represents their differentiator in the Algerian marketplace. ESP skills are a form of entrepreneurial capital that can open new prospects for the English language students and reposition them as job creators rather than just job seekers.

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