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Adapting the English language program Content to Align with Subject Specialists' Needs: The Case of Business and Economics Teachers Enrolled in English at Blida 2 University

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, ESP has started to gain increasing momentum within Algerian academic institutions. In business and economics, English provides an opportunity for professional development, particularly in facilitating access to the global industry. With the recent integration of English instruction across all academic specialties at the tertiary level, there is a growing demand for ESP courses that cater to the specific linguistic and professional needs of learners and professionals. This study addresses the language needs of business and economics teachers enrolled in the English major to identify key areas of linguistic support required for a successful academic and professional performance. It focuses mainly on the present situation analysis, and target situation analysis. Data were collected using a Google Forms questionnaire that was distributed to teachers to gather insights on their experiences with learning English. A total of 17 teachers responded. Findings indicate that many participants face challenges in writing research papers and delivering subject content in English. The respondents emphasized the crucial role of English proficiency in advancing their teaching and research careers and expressed a need for further language development. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Business and economics teachers be provided with training in academic writing, including research guidelines, and that research on corpora be promoted to enhance their disciplinary knowledge in English.

Keywords: ESP, English for Business and Economics, Needs Analysis, professional development

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Introduction

English language instruction has always been the concern of research in language education research worldwide. It has become increasingly significant within Algerian higher education institutions, reflecting global teaching trends in specialized language teaching. The rapid evolution and advancements in technology and economic globalization have urged a drastic need for the adaptation and creation of English curricula tailored specifically to the needs of business and economics students and professionals.

As English continues to maintain its position as lingua franca, its mastery has become essential not only for learners but also for subject specialists. In Business and economics, English proficiency enables teachers to access to up-to-date information, facilitates engagement with global knowledge, and improves their academic writing competencies necessary for effective participation in international communities.

To keep pace with the international growth of science and technology, the Algerian higher education system has recently mandated English instruction across all fields of study, highlighting the need of ESP and English as a medium of instruction EMI courses that are tailored to the learners' linguistic and professional needs in various domains, at the academic and professional level. Moreover, content teachers are expected to improve their proficiency to teach discipline-related modules and contribute to the academic development of their field in English. This study examines the English language needs of Business and economics teachers enrolled in the English major at Blida 2 University. It aims to provide practical recommendations for enhancing their language competencies through targeted language instruction that support academic and professional performance.

1. English for Business and Economics

English for specific purposes emerged as a new trend of language learning where the learners acquire English “not for its own sake or for the sake of gaining general education, but to smooth the path to entry or greater linguistic efficiency in academic, professional or workplace environments” (Basturkmen, 2016). ESP courses seek to help learners build up specific competencies required in their academic and professional contexts. Considering the development of the economic sector and the increasing influence of globalization – under the dominance of the English speaking world- , Proficiency in English has become important for individuals involved in business and economics, serving as a tool for global communication.

Within the broader scope of ESP, English for business and economics (EBE) has gained significant attention in the Algerian higher education context. many studies have explored the learners' needs in this field (Tobbi and Blemerdasi, 2019; Maouche, 2021; Sartorio and Hamitoche, 2012). However, less attention has been given to the linguistic needs of business and economics teachers who are considered as subject specialists. While some research has examined EBE teachers and their challenges in teaching specialized language knowledge to economics students (Benabdelmoumene and Bensafaa, 2023), the focus has been on language instructors rather than subject specialists. Consequently, there remains a remarkable gap in the literature regarding the language needs of subject specialists in business and economics who are required to teach and perform field-related tasks in English.

1.1 Business English Vs. Economic English

Despite their interconnectedness, business and economics have different aspects related to content areas and communication demands. Moreno (2010) states that “Business is the real-life equivalent of theoretical economics.” Likewise, Wells (2011) highlights that economics serves as the foundational knowledge underpinning academic business studies.

Pickett (1989) argues that Business English is a technical language defined by the activity, occupation, subject, and situation. It has two different components: Professional content and language communication abilities, as Ellis and Johnson (1994: 3) affirm that: Business English differs from other varieties of ESP in that it is often a mix of specific content (relating to a particular job area or industry), and general content (relating to general ability to communicate more effectively, especially in the business situations). These situations do not only require specific vocabulary but they also stress the need of business communication skills (Frendo, 2016)

From a pedagogical perspective, EBE course content must be balanced, containing field-related science together with necessary business communication skills. pertaining to a different corpus, EBE discourse is characterized of specific language patterns relevant to specific contexts; for instance, the economics academic genre is different from other types of writing. For quality research articles, students and subject specialists enrolled in economics

studies are required to follow a specific structure and use appropriate language patterns (Ghivirig, 2012) for an efficient language use.

2. Research Design and Methodology

Designing or adapting a course in ESP is a very important step that relies heavily on the needs analysis process (Hutchinson and waters, 1987). The latter consists of gathering information about the following: 1- learners' actual learning abilities, which is considered as present situation analysis (John, udley Evans and St. John , 1998: 125); 2- their linguistic needs and the language requirements in the occupational or academic setting which is known as target situation analysis (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

This study aims to identify business and economics teachers' language needs who are enrolled in the English language license program at Blida 2 university. It also aims to determine the language functions required in the academic and professional contexts in which these teachers use the language. Assessment of language needs is a vital step in the design and adaptation of ESP courses, as it ensures the alignment between instructional content and learners' specific needs. for course design and adaptation

Participants and Context

A total of 17 Business and Economics teachers contributed to this study during the first term of the academic year 2024- 2025. They were enrolled in their third year of English majors in the department of English at Blida 2 University. Most of the participants are professors and associate professors, and have a teaching experience that varies from 5 to 20 years. These teachers attended the English course alongside their colleagues from other academic disciplines and studied different modules, including English for Specific Purposes, as demonstrated in the table below. The ESP course content focused on the theoretical foundations of the field in addition to a range of texts related to different discourse types. Since the ESP module was delivered to teachers based on their academic disciplines in groups, the module content is more likely to be adjusted according to their needs.

Table 1: Academic specialties, modules, and the number and teachers

Specialty	Business and Economics	Law and Political Sciences	Human and Social Sciences	Language Studies (Arabic, French, Italian)
Number of Subject specialists	50	25	45	27
Modules of Third Year	ESP, translation, Academic Writing, Listening and Speaking, Didactics, Linguistics, German, Literature, Civilization, Communication skills, Research Skills and Digital Literacy			

Data collection tools

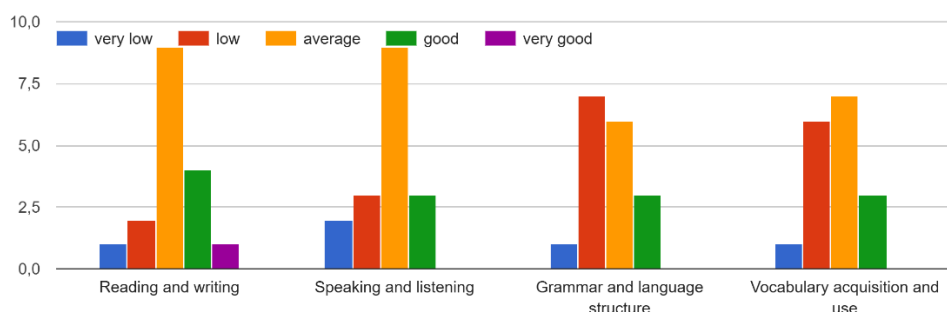
Data were collected through a Google Form survey questionnaire sent to business and economics teachers. It was chosen to collect the necessary data as it is considered a needs analysis tool (Hutchinson and waters, 1987 and Basturkmen, 2010). It consisted of three sections: information profile, present English language abilities (present situation analysis), and target competencies (target situation analysis).

3. Findings and discussion

3.1 Present Situation Analysis

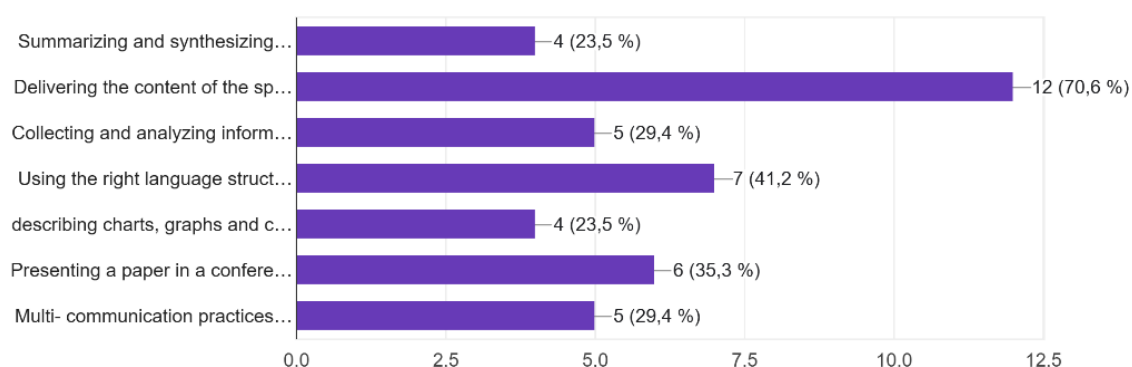
The data gathered from the questionnaire reflects the common beliefs and language learning interests of business and economics teachers, especially that they are specialized in different areas ; namely, Business administration, finance and accounting, monetary and banking, public management and marketing.

Figure 1 Self-evaluation of language competencies



Most English major participants (53%) described their level as average in the four skills (reading and writing, speaking and listening); however, 29% consider their level as low or very low in speaking, which indicates their low competence and confidence in oral skills. for vocabulary acquisition and correct use of language, most responses fall under the 'average and low' categories, which indicates other areas requiring reinforcement. The lack of vocabulary refers to the learners' limited exposure to general and field-related lexis or their inability to use terminology in the appropriate context. On the other hand, producing grammatically correct sentences can be challenging when language patterns are not well mastered.

Figure 2 Business and Economics teachers' language difficulties



Regarding the difficulties, 70% of the respondents reported that delivering the content of the specialty is the most challenging task. This can be related to their limited capacity to express themselves fluently and accurately in English. Language accuracy was selected in second

place (41.2%), which indicates the participants do not have a good command of language structures. These difficulties align with the previously mentioned self-evaluations. Moreover, 35% of the subject specialists struggle to present a paper at a conference. In addition to language accuracy, this can also be linked to stress and anxiety in formal academic English-speaking contexts. The other problems related to the research process and higher-order academic skills were referred to by the minority (29%, 23%), pointing to the issues with academic literacy

Figure 3 The importance of English with regards to teaching content modules

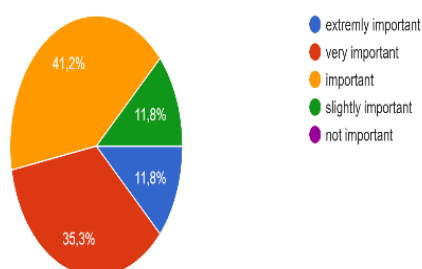
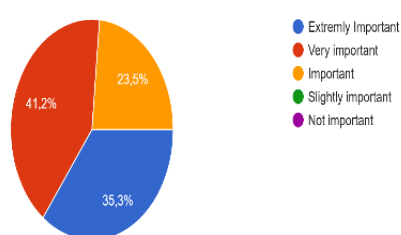


Figure 4: the importance of English in relation to professional development

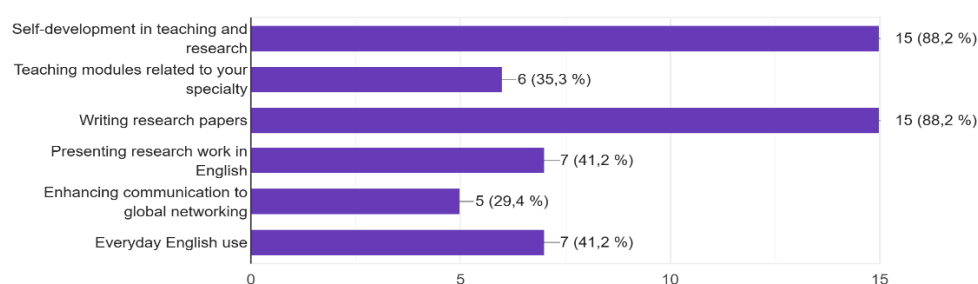


Regarding the status of English in teaching Business and economics modules, most of the respondents acknowledged its importance to varying extents (from important 11.% to extremely important 35%); in contrast, 11,8% of participants mentioned that it is slightly important. Likewise, respondents emphasized the role of English in in sustaining academic

research activities. This highlights the teachers' need to access up-to-date literature in economics and business provided predominantly in English. Furthermore, it reflects their awareness of the ministry's directive mandating ESP across all departments. Besides, it is viewed as essential for conducting research and publishing scholarly work.

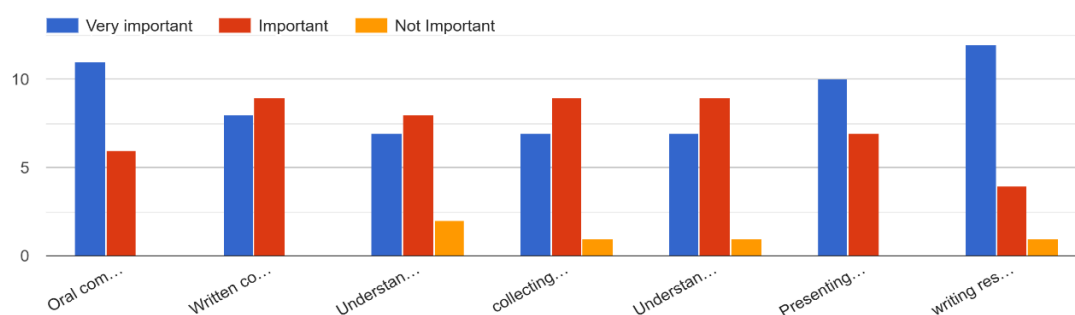
3.2 Target Situation Analysis

Figure 5 Learning Objectives



Concerning the major reasons behind learning the language and the communicative functions the participants want to reach, most of them (80%) selected self-development in teaching and research, then academic literacy. These responses are consistent with the findings from the previous question. This indicates that the participants require not only general English, but they also need discipline-specific content and advanced language skills ; such as higher order skills (paraphrasing, taking notes..) that can enhance their ability to conduct research and perform well in academic situations.

Figure 6. Classification of Learning Situations based on their Importance



Concerning learning situations in which English is required, Most participants (70%) emphasized the necessity of writing discipline-related research papers. Oral communication was also characterized as a crucial skill for career development in English. Half of the respondents (50%) selected “Presenting papers in a conference” as a highly important context in which English proficiency is essential.

Pedagogical implications

Based on the needs analysis results, business and economics teachers should have an ESP course that gathers EBE linguistic forms and disciplinary practices. Also, they should be provided with research guidelines that would help them craft research papers according to the requirements of economics journals

It is also worth mentioning that research in corpora is highly recommended as EBE instruction relies not only on functional language use, but also on the linguistic features of disciplinary communication, including discipline-specific vocabulary and grammatical structures. This will help in responding to the needs of subject specialists and promote genre-based pedagogy that integrates linguistic form with discourse practices.

There is a remarkable need to rebuild and make the appropriate modifications to the current English language program addressed to Business and Economics teachers as it is prominently recommended to train BE teachers in English academic literacy by providing them more time granted to develop their academic competencies in English.

Conclusion

This paper presented a study on BE teachers' needs who are enrolled in the English major in the department of English at Blida 2 university. It highlights the importance of adapting the English language instruction to the specific needs of English major business and economics teachers at Blida 2 University. The data gathered show that they require additional support to perform well, mainly in academic communicative tasks; such as writing economics research papers. Effective ESP course must integrate present and target situation competencies, pointing to the communicative functions that will help the learner perform effectively in both situations at the academic and professional

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