The Status and Application of English As a University Requirement in Sudan

Dr. Ahmed Gasm Alseed Ahmed[*]

Abstract

This paper investigates the issue of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It defines ESP with attentive attempts to highlight the line of demarcation between ESP and EAP. Moreover, it will endeavor the objectives of the core course of ESP at the tertiary level. Furthermore, how we should mobilize all the efforts to overcome the difficulties to promote the students communicative competency in English language in their very field of the specialization.

This paper has been guided by the following questions:

a. What are the ESP needs of the students studying at Sudanese universities?

b. What is the proficiency level of English of the students studying at Sudanese universities?

c. What are the preferred learning styles (LS) and assessment techniques of the students studying at Sudanese universities?

d. What course material will best fulfill their present ESP needs?

The paper followed the descriptive method and used the primary and secondary sources for collecting data. The study found that: materials designed for ESP should be based on needs analysis, modifications for the courses should be made according to the development of the students' needs and effective implementation of these courses.

[*] University of Gezira - Faculty of Education-Hassahiesa

المستخلص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة موضوع اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة (ESP) . وهي تعرفها مع محاولات دقيقة لتسليط الضوء على الخط الفاصل بين اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة (ESP) واللغة الانجليزية للأغراض الأكاديمية (EAP) . علاوة على ذلك، تحاول الدراسة توضيح أهداف المقرر الأساس للانجليزية للأغراض الخاصة على مستوى التعليم العالي . إضافة لذلك، كيف ينبغي علينا أن نحشد كل الجهود للتغلب على الصعوبات لتعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية للطلاب في اللغة الإنجليزية في مجال مهم جدا من التخصص.

وقد استرشدت هذه الدراسة بالأسئلة التالية:

أ. ما هي حاجات اللغة الانجليزية للأغراض الخاصة للطلاب الذين يدرسون في الجامعات السودانية؟ .

ب . ما هو مستوى إجادة اللغة الإنجليزية للطلاب الذين يدرسون في الجامعات السودانية؟.

ج . ما هي أنماط التعلم المفضلة وتقنيات تقييم الطلاب الذين يدرسون في الجامعات السودانية؟..

د . ما هي الأدوات الدراسية الأفضل التي تفي بالحاجات الحالية للانجليزية للأغراض الخاصة؟.

اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي، واستخدمت المصادر الأولية والثانوية لجمع البيانات. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن المواد المصممة للانجليزية للأغراض الخاصة (ESP) يجب أن تستند إلى تحليل الاحتياجات، كما ينبغي إجراء تعديلات في المقررات التعليمية وفقاً لتطور احتياجات الطلاب مع التطبيق الفعال لهذه المقررات.

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1.1 Introduction

Modern age can rightly be declared an age of specialization and there has been a need to produce practical results in a limited time to meet the specific challenges of this age. This global trend has influenced all walks of life and the realm of English language teaching is no exception and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an example in this regard. Research has offered valuable insights into the development of ESP to address the specific needs of the specific learners. As for a broader definition of ESP, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:19) have theorized that "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning". This definition offers practical insights into the fact that unless the learners, reason for learning is not determined, no material can fulfill the specific needs of the learners. A significantly huge number of research projects have been undertaken to determine the ESP needs of the learners of different disciplines. ESP teaching material has been developed according to the identified ESP needs and the findings have provided sufficient proof of their success and effectiveness.

One of the challenges that newly-admitted Sudanese students go through is their English language deficiencies: they seem to lack both the communicative competence and the specific English competence necessary to carry out their studies. Though their accumulative GPA: grade point average, is exceptionally high, they still have serious problems coping up with this new medium.

There is a gap between ESP books available in the market and the ESP needs and the preferred learning styles (LS) of the students studying at different universities in Sudan.

Research has reported that no ready-made English Language Teaching (ELT) material can fulfill the real ESP needs of the learners, Hutchinson &Waters(1987).   Furthermore, the students seem to lack required level of proficiency in English to carry out their studies effectively and that they have the above-mentioned deficiency. Discussions with other instructors in the same field also confirmed this observation. It seems an urgent ELT requirement to develop course content for Sudanese students based on their ESP needs and preferred LS.

English for Specific Purposes, so far, is probing its way in our Sudanese universities. It is taught as a university requirement. Unfortunately, our students are disappointed when they graduate confronting the real situation in the workplace to use their ESP background. Most of the students feel they discontent with the syllabus which had been taught, because it doesn't meet their needs. Furthermore, the EFL teachers concentrate on teaching general English rather than ESP. This situation evokes the question whether we teach English for Academic purposes or English for Specific Purposes at the tertiary level. Whatsoever the case ESP or EAP is an obligatory subject for the first two levels at the Sudanese Universities. Accordingly, we should investigate the topic to characterize the term first, and then discuss the relevant issues. We have to find out what kind of language acquisition is actually required by the learner.

 As matter of fact, the students' obsession is how to pass the examination rather than to achieve any development in the language field; on the other hand, the teachers themselves concentrate on the content rather than the language skills, which the students have to gain. Optimistically, this situation is gradually changing and the teachers are getting aware of

needs analysis in designing their material to meet the goals of the learners.

There is an obvious confusion between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and (EAP) English for Academic Purposes. For this reason we should attempt to distinguish the line of demarcation between the terms.

1.2 What is EAP?

Let us first attempt to define English for Academic Purposes to be acquainted with the topic. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a kind of courses designed to help the overseas students to cope with their intended college courses; accordingly, such students of EAP must have some background in English language, David Carter(1983). The classes which are given for EAP students focus on the four skills as well as grammar using everyday English, so as to be more effective in their everyday lives. Orr (1998) sates that: "English for General Purposes (EGP) is essentially the English language education in junior and senior high schools.

Students are introduced to the sounds and symbols of English, as well as to the lexical/grammatical/rhetorical elements that compose spoken and written discourse University instruction that introduces students to common features of academic discourse in the sciences or humanities, frequently called English for Academic Purposes (EAP), is equally ESP." Consequently, it can be said that English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for General Purposes (EGP) are
one. In fact, what is taught in the general education or private institutions is typically English for general purposes and to some extent what is taught now in our universities under the term ESP is typical general English.

1.3 What is (ESP)?

From the early 1960s English for Specific Purposes ESP has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of ELT. This development has been "reflected in an increasing number of publications, conferences and journals dedicated to ESP discussions" (Tratnik, 2008: 5). Cristine (1993: 17) has proved the validity of ESP in the modern world from an unusual angle of competitive business world norms and has concluded that "in ESP design and implementation are basic concepts and practices that fit in with ISO 9000 QA requirements" because central requirements of an ESP program are "tailor-made courses", specific objectives, "needs analysis of target learning situation", continuous feedback and "formative and summative – evaluations" (ibid.: 17). Talking about the reasons of its growing acceptability, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 19) have mentioned that ESP has developed a balance between research and practice and called it "essentially materials and teaching-led movement".

1.4 Definition of ESP

ESP seems quite flexible discipline and different people have defined it differently. All these definitions appear to cover various characteristics of this approach (Sifakis, 2003 cf. Rogers, 1989; Rogers, 1996). Anthony (1997: 1) mentioned the "clear differences in how people interpreted the meaning of ESP" at "The Japan Conference on ESP" held on November 8th, 1997 at Aizu University . They pointed out that the participants were divided into two groups. One group held the view that ESP was teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified whereas the other group of participants ascribed to it as "the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes" (ibid.: 1). This particular example of

differing views regarding its definition offers clear insights about the general truth in relation to this controversy. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have defined ESP as an *"approach"* rather than a *"product"* – meaning that ESP does not necessarily involve any particular kind of language, teaching material or methodology. The fundamental function of ESP is: "Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language?"

Robinson (1980) has defined it as the teaching of English to the learners who have specific goals and purposes. These specific purposes are academic, professional or scientific ones that clearly depend on the learners' needs. Both these definitions do not confine ESP to any specific field, discipline or profession and recognize its broader area of action. A rather comprehensive approach to define ESP has been tried by identifying its absolute and variable characteristics.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 4-5) have presented a modified definition of ESP which is also comprised of absolute and variable characteristics of ESP that are as follows:

"I. Absolute Characteristics
- *ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;*
- *ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;*
- *ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills and discourse .*

II. Variable Characteristics
- *ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;*
- *ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;*

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- *ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation.*
- *ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;*
- *Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners".*

It comes out from the above discussion that "S" for specific is central to this approach as was stated by Hadley (2006: 3) that "the key to teaching ESP is to focus on the "S" for specific. ESP can be differentiated from general ELT by its concern with specialized language and practice". But this word "special" might apply to special language or special needs / aim. This confusion over these two notions was reported during 1980's (Gatehouse, 2001 cf. Perren, 1974). Mackay and Mountford (1978: 4) defined the idea of special language as follows:

> *"The only practical way in which we can understand the notion of special language is as a restricted repertoire of words and expressions selected from the whole language because that restricted repertoire covers every requirement within a well-defined context, task or vocation".*
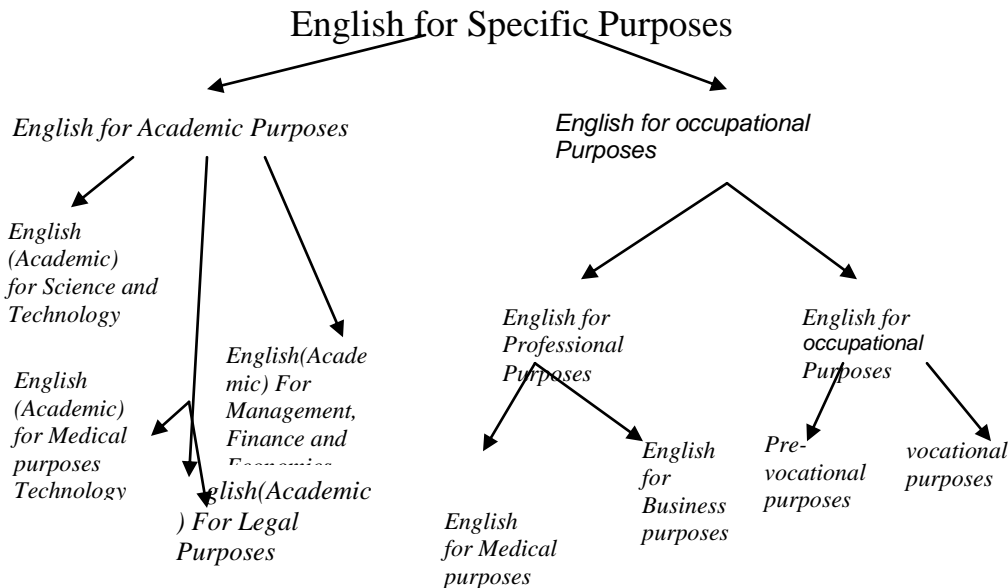
The second notion, "special aim", was interpreted as the learners' special purpose of learning of English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) instead of the nature of the language they intended to learn (ibid.). Barron (1994: 3) supported the first notion and confined ESP to specific disciplines and insisted "to place ESP firmly within the multidimensional space that constitutes the students' chosen disciplinary culture". It was further explained that the

multidimensional space included "social, cultural and political factors as well as functional ones" (ibid.: 3). Strevens' (1998) supported the same notion because one of the absolute characteristics of his definition identified ESP as being "in contrast to General English". Resultantly, ESP should concentrate on the learners' special needs in particular occupations and activities. Fiorito (2005: 1) supported the same belief and declared that "the ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world (or wishes); instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners."

1.5 Types of ESP

Dudley-Evans and St. John, (1998) have divided EAP into two divisions: English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and ESAP. EGAP is related to the teaching of language skills that are common in different disciplines but ESAP refers to the teaching of language features that are specific for various disciplines.

The majority of researchers have confined their classification of ESP to EAP and EOP. Robinson (1991) has also included these two types in his classification of ESP. Kennedy and Bolitho (1985) have added English for Science and Technology (EST) in their list of types of ESP. "Tree of ELT" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 6) describes the classification of ESP in detail which offers significant insights into the broad scope of ESP:

English for Specific Purposes

English for Academic Purposes

English for occupational Purposes

English (Academic) for Science and Technology

English (Academic) for Medical purposes Technology

English(Academic) For Management, Finance and Economics

English(Academic) For Legal Purposes

English for Professional Purposes

English for Medical purposes

English for Business purposes

English for occupational Purposes

Pre-vocational purposes

vocational purposes

1.6 Purpose of ESP Courses

There has been a lot of research on the issue of the rationale and purpose that an ideal ESP course should serve. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 12) stated that "the purpose of an ESP course is to enable learners to function adequately in a target situation". ESP course contents should be "goal-directed" (Hadley, 2006 c.f. Robinson, 1991) and "centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register etc.), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to (the activities of the discipline it serves)" (Hadley, 2006 cf. Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998: 5). Much research has suggested that ESP program should be aim-directed, learner-directed and situation-directed. Therefore, the principle of "one size fits all" does not apply to ESP courses and ready-made ESP textbooks are not suitable for specific teaching settings (Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans, 1997; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; offered deep insights into "designing a short course" and reported that "the teaching

material should be prepared specifically to meet the needs of the students either for their academic purposes or their careers". ESP practitioners have been advised to modify the ready-made textbooks because "adapted materials are more suitable to ESP learners than textbooks since no textbooks could fully satisfy the particular needs of any ESP learners" (Chen, 2006 cf. Chen, 2005: 40) .Chen (2000: 395) has also proposed that ESP practitioners need to develop their own ESP courses considering their specific teaching environment and the learners' specific needs. Chen (2006: cf. Robinson, 1991: 41) has recommended that "in-house materials" are much more valid and useful as compared to ready-made published textbooks because they are tailored according to the specific needs of the learners and the indigenous teaching settings. However, "they are also more expensive and time consuming to produce" (ibid.: 41). It has been reported that ESP practitioners have to carry out action research alongside teaching practice because the English teaching units have "to develop and to administer courses in keeping with the requirements of the institutions. These requirements vary from university to university, and very often they vary from faculty to faculty within individual universities" (Gunawardena and Knight, 1989: 111).

1.7 Characteristics of ESP Courses

The researchers who have discussed the characteristics of ESP do not seem to disagree on this particular issue and most of them (Strevens, 1988; Bojovic, 2006; Dudley-Evans, 1997; Gatehouse, 2001) have supported the main characteristics proposed by Carter (1983). He identified the following "three features common to ESP courses: a) authentic material, b) purpose-related orientation, and c) self-direction" (Gatehouse, 2001 cf. Carter, 1983: 2).

"Authentic material" means using material, not developed or written for teaching purpose, from the main area of study of the learners or their occupation. This material may include books, forms, charts, graphs etc. and these forms of authentic texts may be exploited in modified or unmodified forms according to the requirement of the teaching circumstances. Authentic material will be an appropriate choice if ESP courses are offered to advanced or intermediate level as proposed by Dudley-Evans, (1997). "Use of authentic content materials, modified or unmodified in form, are indeed a feature of ESP, particularly in self-directed study and research tasks" (Gatehouse, 2001: 4). He further mentioned that the learners who were taught language for employment in health services were mainly evaluated through a lot of independent study assignments given to them in their chosen area of interest. The students were encouraged to utilize various resources to complete their research assignments.

Purpose-related orientation (Gatehouse, 2001 c.f. Carter, 1983) has been identified as the simulation of different communicative tasks to prepare the learners for different target situations. The learners are given practice through simulation to enable them to handle various linguistic roles in the target situation. Carter (1983) reported student simulation of different tasks which were required for a conference. These tasks included preparation of papers, reading of papers, note taking etc. "Self-direction" is the third characteristic of ESP courses which means "that ESP is concerned with turning learners into users" (Carter, 1983: 134). It means that the students should "have certain degree of freedom to decide when, what and how they will study" (Gatehouse, 2001: 5).

1.8 ESP Contents

An extremely important area of discussion among ESP researchers has been the inclusion of specialized contents in ESP courses. The first phase of ESP that lasted till the beginning of 1960's, confined itself to the teaching materials consisted of authentic texts in different fields of specialization (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Furthermore "S" that stands for "specific" suggests that ESP "can be differentiated from general EFL/ESL by its concern with specialized language and practice"

"Relevant lexical items" constitute an integral part of an ESP course and Bejan (1989: 94) suggested a practical "division of vocabulary words into three classes: technical, sub technical and nontechnical". This seemed to offer valuable insights into the fact that an ideal ESP course should strike a balance between these two extremes: general English courses and strictly content-based language courses. Gatehouse (2001) has proposed that "three abilities" are required by the learners to handle a professional target communicative situation: ability to use special jargon, ability to use general academic or business skills and the ability to communicate in any other social setting. This comprehensive objective can be effectively achieved through an ESP course that includes subject contents and general English. Fiorito (2005: 2) advocated that "ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching". He has concluded that such a combination is highly motivating because it enables the learners to apply what they have learned in their main field of specialization. Another added benefit of including subject contents is that the learners' ability in their specialized field enhances their ability to acquire different language functions taught to them through these semi-subject content-based ESP courses.

"How much" and "what" subject contents should be included in an ESP course does not have a definite answer and only learners' needs can determine it. A proper NA is required to decide about the percentage of specialized contents and general English. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 59) have contended that:

> *If learners, sponsors and teachers know why the learners need English, that awareness will have an influence on what will be acceptable as reasonable content in the language course and, on the positive side, what potential can be exploited.*

NA plays a distinguishing role between ELT and ESP. All four language skills are equally emphasized in ELT as a general rule whereas NA determines, for an ESP course, what language skill/skills should be given priority on others according to the specific needs of the learners. An ESP program may target to develop learners' reading skills who are studying in a business administration graduation course or it may concentrate on speaking skills development of the learners who are taking the course to become tourist guides (Fiorito, 2005). Such a balanced ESP course

> *Can also show the students that their perceived needs are being addressed and persuade them that the language classes are both important and relevant to their final goal----- to sum up, there is no perfect answer to the question, but the inclusion of content in any ESP course is important.* (Cozens, 2006: 14).

The above discussion seems to suggest that a realistic NA-based combination of specialized content and general English is necessary to address the learners' specific needs and to enhance their interest and motivation.

1.9 ESP Practitioners

Considering the adult learning tendencies of ESP learners/participants, Sifakis (2003) has declared that the role of ESP teacher has become all-encompassing and challenging. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 13) have contended that "we regard ESP teaching as extremely varied, and for this reason we use the term "practitioner" rather than teacher to emphasize that ESP work involves much more than teaching". They have identified the following five key roles for ESP practitioners who need to discharge their work as a :

1. teacher;
2. course designer and material provider;
3. collaborator;
4. researcher;
5. evaluator;

ESP teaching demands well-trained teachers but research has reported that the number of such ESP practitioners is much below the required strength in different countries which is the main reason behind ineffective ESP teaching. Furthermore, the chances of ESP teacher education programs seem non-existent (Chen, 2006; Master, 1997). Research has reported that action research is a useful tool for teacher development (Chen, T, 2000 cf. Stringer, 1996) and several research studies have offered insights into its primary goal: to foster teachers' ability to reflect, improve their teaching and grow in personal professionalism (Nunan, 1997; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Palmer and Posteguillo, 1997; Dudley-Evans, 1997). Other research studies have also highlighted this "heavy demand" of not only having "a knowledge of the language of scientific discourse but also an awareness of the technical subject" (Gunawardena and Knight,

1989: 111). Dudley-Evans (1997: 10) has declared that ESP teaching goes beyond teaching just language and it also involves teaching skills related to "macro-skills" of four language skills such as "importance of listening or reading for meaning, the importance of writing for an audience". Hull, (2004: 1) has identified the role of an ESP practitioner as "a facilitator rather than presenter of content". It has been argued that ESP teachers are not "specialists in the field, but in teaching English," because their subject is English for the profession but not the profession in English (Milavic, 2006). A professional ESP teacher should have this ability to get ready to teach the students from one professional field to another without spending months. An experienced ESP practitioner only carries the required "tools, frameworks, and principles of course design" and applies them to new content subjects (ibid.).

Course designing and providing relevant materials is one of the most important aspects of ESP teaching. The needs of ESP learners are specific and ready-made teaching materials do not suit their learning objectives. Dudley-Evans (1997: 10) has chosen the term "material provider" to emphasize that "the ESP teacher should survey what is available, select units from a number of course books adapting these if necessary, and write a number of extra units". This job becomes rather more challenging because usually "ESP teachers find themselves in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs of a group of learners, but are expected to do so with no, or very limited, preparation time" (Jones, 1990: 91).

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) have asserted that the specific work of ESP teaching should be dealt with through content subject specialists' collaboration. This collaboration

may involve simple cooperation to find out about the subject syllabus or it may involve specific collaboration by actually including "the actual content of a subject course by exploiting texts in English that present additional relevant material" (ibid.: 15) and this collaboration may extend to the level that "a specialist checks and comments on the content of teaching materials that the ESP teacher has prepared" (ibid: 15). They have rather gone to the extent of expecting the "fullest collaboration" where subject specialists and ESP teachers collaborate in "team-teach classes".

ESP practitioners' role as counselors and motivators is also seemed mandatory because they deal with adult learners. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, motivation is "the process of helping an individual discover and develop his educational, vocational, and psychological potentialities and thereby to achieve an optimal level of personal happiness and social usefulness". Counseling involves both appreciation and helping the learners in their learning and study needs (Sifakis, 2003 cf. Underhill, 1998). A good counselor has been identified as "a good person, intelligent, creative, sincere, energetic, warm towards others, responsible and of sound judgment" (Sifakis, 2003 cf. Wheeler, 2000: 66).

2. Needs Analysis

NA is an inevitable component of all learner-centered, tailor-made and focused course content (Richards, 1983). Research has provided sufficient insights of its crucial role in systematic curriculum development in the realm of ESP/EGP (Seedhouse, 1995; Rokowski, 1996; Masahura, 1998; Benesch, 2000;). Various research scholars have defined NA in different ways but its significant role needs no confirmation (ibid.). Richards et al. (1992: 242-243) defined NA as "the process of

determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities". West (1994: 1) has stated that NA could be defined as an attempt to know "what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training".

Effective ESP teaching depends on "S" for "*specific*" in ESP as Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 12) theorized that "the purpose of an ESP course was to enable learners to function adequately in a target situation". "Target needs" have been classified into necessities, lacks and wants. "*Necessities*" have been defined as what the learners have to know in order to function effectively in "the target situations" (ibid.). A scientific analysis of carefully observed target situations is inevitable to gather authentic information regarding "necessities" of ESP learners. The gap between the existing English language proficiency and the target proficiency of learners has been reported as *"lacks"* while the ESP learners' perceived needs were identified as *"Wants"*. Research has provided significant insights into the fact that learners' perceived wants might be different than the necessities perceived by the sponsors or EAP/ESP teachers. It has been recommended that EAP/ESP course designers or practitioners need to sort out such differences when they develop ESP course contents and select teaching methodology (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). "Learning needs" delineate how students will be able to move from the starting point to the destination: from lacks to necessities. They have also emphasized that the learning situation must also be taken into account along with target objectives. The learning situation, the learners' knowledge, skills, strategies, and motivation for learning

should constitute an ideal NA project (ibid.). Mackey and Bosquest (1981) have identified two kinds of needs. According to them, "the expectation needs" are unrealistic because they are expressed by fresh students who are unaware of ELT echo system. They have suggested that the old students, experienced faculty members and classroom observation should be exploited to identify "the practice needs" to make sound judgments (ibid.). Brindley (1989) stated that needs can be classified into two kinds: "objective needs" which are mainly linguistic needs and the individual's preferences which are "subjective needs" and they should also be taken care of. These include learners' personality, their learning attitudes, learning styles etc. Norris et al. (1988) have emphasized the need to assess performance assessment of the students as well.

Research has emphasized the importance of eliciting information from the learners' perspective and Widdowson's (1994: 2) concept of "subjective needs" is meant to explore what the learners have to do "to actually acquire the language whilst objective needs reflect what they need to do with language once the learning is complete".

3. Learning Styles (LS)

Students' non linguistic needs also play an important role in deciding upon teaching methodologies and classroom activities. When language teachers and curriculum specialists get enlightened about their non-linguistic needs, i.e., their preferred LS as well as evaluation techniques, this awareness definitely has positive dual bearing on the performance of both the language instructors and their students. This awareness helps to determine appropriate teaching methodologies and classroom dynamics. LS have been defined as follows:

Learning style refers to an individual's natural, habitual, or preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and

retaining new information and skills which persist regardless of teaching methods or content area. Everyone has a learning style but each person's is as unique as a signature. Each signature appears to be influenced by both nature and nurture; it is a biological and developmental set of characteristics. (Sally Ali, 2005 cf. Kensella, 1995: 253).

Richard M. Felder (1995: 21) has defined LS as follows: "the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains, and retrieves information are collectively termed the individual's learning style".

Studies have suggested that students can identify their preferred LS that help them decide upon appropriate learning strategies (Sally Ali, 2005 cf. Reid, 1995).

3.1 Teaching Methodology (Eclecticism)

Selection of appropriate methodology or methodologies is another integral component of ESP teaching process. Much research has offered deep insights into the fact that no single teaching methodology can be sufficient to address diverse and peculiar needs of ESP learners (Hutchinson, 1998; St. John and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Rao, 2001; Johnson, 1982; Widdowson, 1983 and Stern, 1992) and ESP practitioners have to pick and choose from a host of teaching methodologies to run an effective ESP course. The specific demands of modern challenges in the field of ESP have forced ESP practitioners to "move away from following one specific methodology" and select "techniques and activities from a range of language teaching approaches and methodologies" and this trend is termed as eclectic approach . This approach demands that the teacher "decides what methodology or approach to use depending on the aims of the lesson and the learners in the

group" (ibid.:1). Widdowson (1983: 130) suggested that appropriate teaching methodology should be placed "at the very heart of the operation with course design at servicing its requirements"

4-   ESP Situation in Sudan and its Historical Background

English for specific purposes (ESP/EAP) is an obligatory subject for the first two levels in most of the Sudanese universities. It is taught as a university requirement. Accordingly, the students are more concerned with how to pass the examination rather than to achieve any development in the language field. Even the teachers concentrate on the content rather than the skills, which the students ought to gain.

English for specific purposes(ESP), so far, is probing its way in Sudanese universities. It is taught as a university requirement. Unfortunately, the students are disappointed when they graduate confronting the real situation in the workplace to use their ESP background. Most of the students feel discontent with the syllabus which had been taught, because it does not meet their needs. Furthermore, the EFL teachers concentrate on teaching general English rather than ESP (Ibrahim,2010).

Through a government decree, the academic year 1965/66 marked the beginning of compulsory implementation of Arabicization in Sudanese government schools. English language was hence reduced to a subject in the school time-table. As a result, when the students entered university, the status of English suddenly changed from a subject of no active use outside the English classroom to the medium of instruction. This immediate transition from Arabic to English as a medium of instruction has called for the introduction of English for specific purposes(ESP) to bridge the gap between

the students' real competence and the level needed for the enrolling at higher institutes of learning. Consequently, in 1975, the English Language Servicing Unit (ELSU) was established by the University of Khartoum in Collaboration with the British council. The Unit used to offer a two year English course of 100 hours to the faculty of science, and one year English course of 60 hours to the rest of the faculties, with the exception of the faculties of Arts and Education which were serviced by their own English language departments. The second phase of Arabicization was formally launched in 1991. Arabic replaced English as medium of instruction in all Sudanese universities and higher institutions of learning. At University of Khartoum, the English Language Servicing Unit was left to cater for English for specific purposes(ESP) till1996. After 1996, University of Khartoum introduced university requirement subjects: English, Arabic, Islamic Studies, Computer studies and Sudanese studies.

4-1 University of Gezira Practice

ESP in Sudanese universities is in its infancy, it has a promising future. No doubt, EFL teachers who teach the ESP courses are more aware of the new progress of the theory and methodology in the field of ESP and its role in the community it serves.

ESP practice at the University of Gezira is considered one of the successful experiences practiced.

They teach ESP for four semesters for different fields of specialization according to the following objective and plan:
Semester one:
Course title: English (introductory skills)
Objectives :
1-To develop listening and speaking skills.
2-To train the students to skim and scan the text

3- To develop strategies for critical thinking .

4-To get students to take notes and write summaries

The content of the course include :

1-proper pronunciation .

2-improve the four language skills

3-develop communication skills

Semester two:

Course title :English (language in use)

Objectives:

1-To use situational English e.g. visiting a hospital, at the airport, at a bank etc. (using listening authentic material).

2-To fill up forms e.g. .application , passport.

3-To write formal and business letters

Semester Three:

Course title :English(Register in focus)

Objective

1-To introduce the commonly used terms of specialization .

2-To familiarize the students   with the language of specialization through textual studies.

4-To practice the register of the specialization orally and in writing.

Semester Four:

Course title : English (professional skills)

Credit hours: Two

Objectives:

1-To prepare the student for their future career by providing them with :

    Up –to date language of profession e.g. language of computer and internet .

  b-Writing and answering business letters .

2- To enhance professional and work place communication skills in range of different context .

3-To focus on the appropriate spoken speech functions needed for communication n profession e.g. formal polite requests .

4- To introduce the language and practices relevant to the profession e.g. interviews, filing ,writing reports ,holding a meeting etc.

5- to develop communication skills e.g. the skillful expression ,transmission and interpretation.

These objectives are introduced and applied in different sectors of the university such as medical ,agricultural educational etc. putting into consideration the difference in specialization.

(university of Gezira-deanship of academic affairs January 2010)

5. Findings and Recommendations

First, ESP students, their needs and other related pedagogical dynamics are specific and ready-made teaching materials cannot fulfill them. It is recommended that all institutions that require addressing specific needs of ESP learners ought to develop in-house course contents based on a comprehensive and standard NA. Content subjects play an important role in ESP textbooks and appropriate content passages should be exploited for developing English language skills. If this is not possible due to some restraints, appropriate sections of the ready-made teaching materials should be selected according to the needs of the learners to begin with. Necessary modifications have to be made to tailor them to learners' needs. But institutions have to keep on working on developing their own in-house course contents so that the

specific needs of the specific learners may be addressed to effectively.

Second, Comprehensive NA is the backbone of the process of developing in-house ESP textbooks. Multiple tools of data collection should be used to gather authentic data to help present clear picture. It is vital to explore the whole academic echo system of the institution: the learners, the English faculty, the content-subject faculty, the administration and the teaching facilities available on the campus. PSA and TSA are two main components in this regard. PSA includes identifying the present academic situation of the learners; their English language proficiency, their motivation for learning, as well as the academic situation of the institutions; availability of teaching facilities, availability of the faculty and the finances required for the development and the implementation of ESP course contents. Detailed interviews of the related faculty members and the key figures in the administration should be held in the beginning to collect authentic data concerning PSA. An English language proficiency test should be administered well before the commencement of practical teaching to determine their English language proficiency. It will also help identify the language areas the learners can handle effectively as well as the weaker language areas that need to be addressed to and improved. Classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with the content specialists and English language teachers should be arranged in the beginning of NA so that necessary information are there to prepare detailed and appropriate questionnaires so that learners' precise and genuine needs can be identified.

Third, it is recommended that along with identifying linguistic needs of ESP learners, it is also extremely important to identify their non-linguistic needs: their preferred learning

styles and assessment techniques. This will be instrumental in deciding suitable teaching methodology and assessment tools.

Fourth, effective implementation of these courses demands that English teachers and the content-subject teacher should exercise a close coordination and communication with each other. Precision and accuracy of ESP course contents depends on the fact that ESP practitioners should seek continuous advice of the content teachers. Technical concepts and specialized vocabulary should be verified by the content teachers. This close collaboration will ensure that the learners are provided with effective and authentic course contents that will not only satisfy their linguistic needs, improve their required language skills but also impart authentic content-subject information. This technical support can be taken even from the learners who are mature and reasonably competent in their content subjects.

Fifth, it is also advised that the administration should be taken into confidence about the utility and practicability of these courses because they play a crucial role in the success of ESP courses. Appropriate support is only possible if the administration is convinced of its utility. Necessary financial support and administrative assistance is the most importance factor after the availability of professional ESP expertise for a successful and fruitful ESP project.

Sixth, another salient feature of ESP course contents is that they should be flexible and adaptable. Guide lines should be there for other ESP practitioners to follow but they need to adapt these course contents according to their learners needs, their preferred learning styles and the availability of teaching facilities.

Seventh, Teachers should concentrate on the learner's interaction (student-centered) rather than lecturing and

overwhelming the course with exhaustive list of words and boring grammar exercises. Meaningful interaction with others speakers in the target language enhances the opportunity for competency. Therefore, we have to create opportunities for the learners to create effective communication skills in the classroom. Many researchers have revealed that especially adult learners differ Teachers should concentrate on the learner's interaction (student-centered) rather than lecturing and overwhelming the course with exhaustive list of words and boring grammar exercises. Meaningful interaction with others speakers in the target language enhances the opportunity for competency. Therefore, we have to create opportunities for the learners to create effective communication skills in the classroom.

Eighth, EFL teachers who teach ESP courses have to distinguish between ESP and EAP in order to grantee its steady progress of areas of concern. There should be much more researches in this vital field to explore the needs and draw clear objectives of each discipline.

Ninth, nowadays, there is an immense breakthrough of the modern information and communication technologies (ICT). Computer is the corner stone of these technologies; via this smart machine we listen, speak, read, write and even communicate at distance. Therefore, it is applicable to invest these facilities in the teaching and learning process. Now, we can change our traditional classes to more modern styles of instructing either utilizing the multimedia or even online learning via the web.

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