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CHALLENGES IN ESP TEACHING: NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ESP

The demand for teaching English for Specific Purposes, or ESP, in higher education has grown in recent decades. ESP, widely regarded as a better approach for non-English department students, is generally designed to meet learners' current needs as well as the demands of their future careers (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Teaching ESP is difficult because most teachers are English for general purposes (Pei & Milner, 2016). Furthermore, teaching ESP courses necessitates not only English proficiency but also knowledge in a specific field of study. Furthermore, adopting an interdisciplinary approach in ESP classes poses a challenge for ESP teachers (Prudnikova, 2013).

Thus, researching the challenges of teaching ESP in higher education is critical because emergent issues can be used to propose policies to improve ESP practices. Research on ESP has been primarily focused on investigating needs analysis in ESP curriculum or materials development (Aldohon, 2014; Bialik & Fadel, 2015; Boroujeni & Fard, 2013; Gass, 2012; Gestanti et al., 2019; Hou, 2013; Kazar & Mede, 2015; Kellerman et al., 2010; Özyel et al., 2012; Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017; Saragih, 2014; Serafini et al., 2015; Setiawati, 2016; Trisyanti, 2009). Yet, nothing has been done to disclose the obvious difficulties ESP teachers face. In the Indonesian setting, Marwan (2017) and Poedjiastutie (2017) identified the following obstacles to ESP instruction: students' low learning motivation, the disparity between reality and expectations, teachers' workload, and poor quality resources (Marwan, 2017). In Poedjiastutie's (2017) research, the preparation of teachers and students for ESP teaching and learning emerged as a formidable obstacle. Due to their constrained research contexts, however, both studies provide minimal evidence.

Due to the paucity of renowned research that examine the obstacles of ESP instruction, the current study seeks to collect more information regarding the challenges of ESP instruction in various departments of private and public institutions in Uzbekistan. So, the research question for this study is: What are the actual obstacles faced by ESP teachers in higher education? This study's findings can be utilized to encourage policymakers and stakeholders of ESP in non-English departments of higher education institutions to take ESP practice more seriously and improve it.

The teaching of ESP should not be compared to the teaching of standard English classes. It necessitates that teachers complete complex duties. As stated by Luo and Garner (2017), ESP teachers should utilize a new strategy that emphasizes the use of language for communication. In addition, ESP instruction requires active participation from students in order to create a learning environment that is applicable to their present or future employment. The decision to implement ESP in language instruction cannot be divorced from teachers' fundamental functions. When an institution decides to engage ESP teachers, it should preferably meet certain prerequisites, one of which is providing them with preservice training. Bezukladnikov and Kruze (2012) stress the importance of obtaining a sufficient education in ESP teaching because there are significant issues with the creation of curriculum, syllabus, and teaching materials.

Similarly, Harmer (2001) says that ESP teachers require training to improve not only their language skills, but also their subject-matter knowledge. According to Bracaj (2014), ESP teacher training is crucial because subject-matter expertise contributes to meeting the demands of students. Some researchers have also emphasized the significance of ESP teacher training (e.g. Alsharif & Shukri, 2018; Bracaj, 2014; Chen, 2013; Kusni, 2013; Liton, 2013; Tabatabaei, 2007; Xu et al., 2018; Zhang, 2017). Additionally, Bracaj (2014) identifies certain factors that contribute to the professionalism of ESP teachers. ESP can only be taught by trained teachers (those who have mastered content knowledge) who are prepared to do it. Secondly, ESP teachers should be well educated or eager to seek advanced degrees in language teaching. Thirdly, students should receive general professional training as a teacher and educator in order to acquire pedagogical principles and other teaching and educating-related features. Fourthly, there must be specialized training for EFL or ESL teachers so they can comprehend the demands of their students and what they may offer to meet those needs. In a similar vein, Tabatabaei (2007) says that there are a number of strategies to make ESP teachers professionally competent. They should specialize in a specific field, participate in training to improve their expertise and teaching abilities, and do ESP research. Professional competence, which is influenced by teachers' motivation in the classroom, is also seen as the result of instructors' awareness of their strengths and flaws (Suslu, 2006). Teachers that care about their professional growth will recognize their

skills and limitations; as a result, they will find out how to utilize their talents and overcome their deficiencies. Maleki (2008) highlights the necessary abilities instructors must possess, which contribute to their professionalism and teaching efficacy. They must have "(a) understanding of the English language, (b) a strong grasp of course design, and (c) specialist knowledge of the relevant scientific topic" (Maleki, 2008, p. 9). According to Maleki (2008), the professionalism of ESP teachers is achieved not only by knowing the English language, but also by having the competence to construct the course and master the subject matter.

It is widely acknowledged and has never been contested that needs analysis plays a vital role in ESP. Hyland (2002) suggests that ESP curriculum creation should begin with a needs assessment. Thus, the curriculum, including ESP learning objectives, should be established based on the individual needs of students. According to Basturkmen (2010), doing a requirements analysis entails recognizing the language skills used in determining and selecting ESP-based resources. In addition, requirements analysis can be used to evaluate learners and the learning process after the completion of the learning program. Similarly, Ellis and Johnson (1994) suggest that the demands of ESP learners can be characterized through needs analysis. Consequently, the significance of needs analysis in the ESP course cannot be denied. Ahmed (2014) states that ESP teachers rely on needs analysis to determine learning outcomes. If a requirements analysis is not undertaken, it follows that learning outcomes will not be properly formulated. Although it is essential and serves as a foundation for designing the curriculum, learning outcomes, materials, and instructional activities, the absence of needs analysis can make teaching difficult.

Past research has revealed a variety of issues faced by ESP teachers, the majority of which are connected to the design of ESP courses and materials. Basturkmen (2010) claimed that developing an ESP course, which is often implemented for a brief period of time, is a challenging undertaking for teachers since they must examine the needs of their students beforehand. Hoa and Mai (2016) did a study in Vietnamese universities that revealed complex issues with the practice of ESP. Three significant difficulties regarding the teachers, students, and setting in which ESP was taught were highlighted. Principal findings were high class sizes, varying levels of English ability among students, and poor qualifications of ESP teachers. A study conducted by Poedjiastutie and Oliver (2017) at a private institution in Uzbekistan uncovered the presence of many students. It is stated that putting a large number of students in one class is due to the fact that, unlike public institutions, private colleges must pay their teaching and learning processes. In other words, by enrolling more students, institutions will generate more revenue to continue offering classes. Hoa and Mai (2016) proposed a number of suggestions for various emerging challenges. For colleges that offer ESP courses, class sizes should be reduced to improve the effectiveness of instruction. For ESP pupils, it is proposed that they participate more actively in the learning process. Regarding ESP instructors, they should look for training chances to expand their qualifications. Although Hoa and Mai's (2016) study was successful in highlighting key concerns in ESP provided by numerous research respondents, the problem inquiry would have been more thorough if interviews had been included. Alsharif and Shukri (2018) investigated the pedagogical obstacles faced by ESP instructors at Saudi Arabian colleges. The results of the study, which utilized a mixed-method approach, highlighted many major concerns affecting ESP instruction. The most important concerns were the lack of training provided by employers, which resulted in a lack of preparedness to teach ESP, and teachers' lack of acquaintance with the subject matter of students' linked discipline. The study's findings showed that collaboration between an English teacher and a content teacher should be formed in order to reduce the impact of instructors' lack of linguistic competence on their pupils' discipline.

Several ESP research (Ahmed, 2014; Bojovi, 2006; Luo & Garner, 2017; Zhang, 2017) also recommend collaborating with a content instructor to solve pedagogical issues (Ahmed, 2014; Bojovi, 2006; Luo & Garner, 2017; Zhang, 2017). In several ESP research, a lack of training among ESP teachers is also seen (Ali, 2015; Kusni, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2019; Pham & Ta, 2016). The study by Marwan (2017) revealed a discrepancy between the curriculum and the linguistic proficiency of students. In his investigation, it was determined that the stipulated curriculum could scarcely be implemented due to the comparatively low lan-

guage skills of students. In other words, the design of the curriculum is frequently unrealistic, making it difficult to achieve learning objectives. The setting of Marwan's (2017) study was constrained due to the fact that it was a case study conducted in a specific college and involved a single instructor. Despite the fact that Marwan's (2017) study showed several key challenges that ESP teachers encountered, the scope of his study was limited. Hence, the finding cannot be utilized to represent the reality of ESP instruction as a whole. Materials have also become a difficult factor. For instance, a study conducted by Medrea and Rus (2012) revealed that while designing an ESP course, it is crucial to take into account the materials used, whether they are chosen from commercial publications or created by teachers themselves. Although selecting particular resources can be expensive and the level of language does not necessarily correspond to students' proficiency, generating materials is also tough in that it necessitates a teacher with adequate subject matter expertise. Medrea and Rus (2012) also discovered that professors lacked expertise of their students' fields of study, which made ESP instruction more difficult. The teachers' restricted vocabulary on pupils' discipline was indicative of their lack of understanding of their discipline. According to a study by Poedji-Institue, the absence of a systematic needs analysis also contributes to the difficulty of teaching ESP (2017). The importance of needs analysis to the selection of instructional materials is emphasized. In other words, an insufficient or haphazard needs analysis will result in a less appropriate selection of instructional resources. Unsystematic needs analysis, as discovered by Poedjiastutie (2017), suggests that stakeholders may not have effectively managed ESP courses. Kusni's research also reveals the absence of a systematic needs analysis prior to the design of an ESP course (2013). While Poedjiastutie's (2017) study highlights that systematic requirements analysis will substantially influence the selection of instructional resources, Kusni's (2013) study says that it will also heavily influence course design. The aforementioned findings demonstrate that the practice of ESP instruction in higher education institutions is still far from optimal. As indicated in the preceding sections, the practice of ESP is plagued by numerous issues, such as the course materials, the curriculum, teachers' lack of preparation to teach ESP, and huge class sizes.

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