Challenges Facing ESP Teachers in Algeria – Meta-Analysis
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Abstract

The present study explores the challenges EFL teachers are facing in ESP teaching contexts. The methodology consists of a review of fifty-five (55) studies. Based on the findings, we argue that the way ESP teachers are recruited and trained without regarding the excessive expectations they must meet, renders their mission quite impossible. This situation undermines the quality of students' learning as well as the career and the well-being of ESP teachers. Nonetheless, EFL teachers can initiate changes to restructure their ESP work environment in order to make their mission more feasible and conducive to better students and teachers' experiences and satisfaction.

Keywords: EFL teacher, esp teacher, mission impossible, feasible mission, learning goals, teachers role.

Défis Auxquels sont Confrontés les Enseignants de l'ESP en Algérie - Méta-Analyse

Résumé

Cette étude a exploré les défis auxquels les enseignants sont confrontés dans les contextes d'enseignement de l'anglais langue de spécialité (ESP). Les résultats d'une analyse du contenu de cinquante-cinq (55) études indiquent que le mode de recrutement, la formation et les attentes excessives des enseignants ESP rendent leur mission quasiment impossible. Cette situation porterait atteinte à la qualité de la formation ainsi qu'à la carrière et au bien-être des enseignants. Néanmoins, les enseignants peuvent restructurer leur environnement de travail afin de rendre leur mission plus réalisable.

Mots clés: Enseignants EFL, enseignants esp, mission impossible, mission réalisable, objectifs d'apprentissage, rôle des enseignants.

التحديات التي تواجه أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة إختصاص في الجزائر– دراسة تحليلية

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة بالبحث التحديات التي يواجهها مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة إختصاص. منهجية البحث المستعملة هي تحليل مضمون خمسة وخمسين (55) دراسة. تظهر نتائج الدراسة أن الطريقة التي يتم بها توظيف وتدريب أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة إختصاص والتوقعات المفرطة المنتظرة منهم تجعل مهمتهم شبه مستحيلة. وهذا من شأنه أن يقوض جودة تدريب الطلاب وكذلك الحياة المهنية لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة إختصاص. ومع ذلك، يمكن للأساتذة المبادرة بإجراء بعض التغييرات لإعادة هيكلة بيئة عملهم من أجل جعل مهمتهم ممكنة والمساعدة على تحسين تجارب الطلاب والأساتذة ورضاهم.

الكلمات المفاتيح: مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اختصاص، المهمة المستحيلة، المهمة الممكنة، أهداف التعلم، دور الأساتذة.

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Introduction and Background

Through a meta-analysis of studies about the Algerian context, the goal of the present paper is to delve into the challenges that EFL teachers often face after accepting ESP teaching positions with departments in Algerian universities and private schools. Challenges may overwhelm unprepared teachers and lead to dissatisfaction among ESP teachers, learners and managers. Such dissatisfaction has been reported about ESP courses by many studies (e.g. [1]; [2]; [3]; [4]; [5]; [6]; [7]). After the identification of the key challenges, this paper offers some solutions that can make the challenges more reasonable and fairer, especially by defining more objectively and reasonably the role of ESP teachers. Diagnosing the issues and proposing solutions have become mandatory, as growing international interdependence has been making increasing demands for citizens who possess a good command of English in order to meet academic and professional requirements.

1- Methodology and Profile of the Corpus of Studies on the ESP Situation in Algeria

Consistently with the purpose of this research; i.e. exploring the ESP situation in Algeria, we used meta-analysis as a research methodology. After running multiple online searches, we collected fifty-five (55) studies. The analysis of these studies consisted of collecting data about several aspects that reflect the profile of these studies, especially research methodology and findings. The profile of the corpus of studies on the ESP situation in Algeria comes as follows:

a. 45/55 (82 %) studies were conducted in or about academic contexts (in universities) while ten 10 (18 %) searched professional (workplace) contexts like the Algerian National Oil Company [8] and a hospital in Bejaia, Algeria [9]. The analysed studies involved a variety (22 types) of university departments, especially Economics (06), Law (05 studies), Computer Sciences (04), Commercial Sciences (03), and Physics (03). Many Algerian universities (17/63) were covered by these studies, especially the universities of Tlemcen (12 studies), Blida 1 (03), Oran (02) and Constantine 2 (02). The doctoral programme in ESP offered by Tlemcen University probably explains the high number of studies from this university. This corpus of studies can be considered as a good sample that represents quite well the ESP situation in Algeria.

b. These studies were conducted by fifty-five (55) researchers of which sixteen (16) are collaborative studies. It is notable that while the high number of authors who researched the ESP situation in Algeria indicates that various perspectives are brought to the debate; there may be little specialisation of researchers in ESP except for two authors: Mebitil and Outemzabet with four (04) and three (03) published studies respectively. Specialisation of researchers in specific research areas probably would increase the quality of research.

c. These studies are generally very recent. Nearly all of them (46/55) have been published in the last decade (2012-2022). We may expect the data to be very relevant to the current ESP situation.

d. In terms of research goals pursued, the studies on ESP context in Algeria focused on the following goals: Identifying learners' ESP needs often for the aim of facilitating the process of preparing courses to meet those needs (29 studies; e.g. [10]; [11]; [12]; [13]). Other studies investigated ESP teachers' problems and challenges (09 studies), evaluation of an ESP course (06 studies; e.g. [14]), learners' motivation in ESP contexts (02 studies), and issues of training the future ESP teachers by Departments of English (03 studies).

E. Concerning the research methodology used by the studies on the ESP situation in Algeria, quite understandably, the most frequently used research tool is the questionnaire (used in 34 studies). Questionnaires are very practical and easy to collect data from a large sample of participants. Many studies used interviews (24) and focus groups were used three (03) times. Fewer studies used direct probes to investigate actual practices in terms of ESP teaching and learning. Classroom observation was used in eleven (11) studies. Similarly, content analysis of documents like textbooks, students' papers, and training programmes was employed six

times (06). Adli et al. [15] used a placement test and distinguished themselves by combining four (04) research tools.

Concerning the informants, the analysed studies probed students (30 studies), teachers (26 studies), and managers (06). Enrolling managers added another interesting perspective. Ten (10) studies were conducted in work contexts with professionals (finance employees, hotel receptionists, bank employees, air traffic controllers, etc.). This cohort contributes data from the occupational side of ESP as opposed to the academic (university) side. Finally, subject specialists who taught ESP were enrolled in five (05) studies. They bring in the perspective of teachers who have training in the knowledge field of the target learners unlike ESP teachers trained in EFL departments.

The above characterisation of the studies involved in our meta-analysis indicates that the corpus is quite extended, varied and hopefully acceptably representative of research on the ESP situation in Algeria.

2- Results of the Meta-Analysis of Studies on the ESP Situation in Algeria

The research analysed yielded the following findings about the Algerian ESP situation. The situation is starkly characterised by unrealistic and unfair expectations from ESP teachers, which makes their mission quite impossible. Indeed, "many teachers of ESP face serious problems and ongoing challenges in the ESP class"[16]. In the following section, We discuss these challenges that emerged from the meta-analysis of the fifty-five (55) studies.

2-1- Mission Impossible One: ESP Teachers Must Immediately Design a Syllabus

The first major challenge that ESP teachers often face is that an ESP syllabus is not available or not appropriate. Twelve (12) studies clearly found that ESP teachers were not provided with a syllabus for the course. Many Algerian university departments do "not provide clear courses' objectives, content, as well as a clear methodology"[17]. Twelve (12) others concluded that although a syllabus existed, it was not appropriate to ESP learners' needs.Their needs were not taken into consideration as well. Indeed, "Although it is said to be a learning-centred approach, the assessment of needs is still not considered among the ESP teachers"[18]. It may be the case that "a formal need analysis has never been conducted"[19]; [20]; [21]; [22]; [23]; [24]. This could explain why, often, the contents of ESP courses are "criticized for lack of relevance to the students' specialism" [25]. The materials often do not meet learners' needs [26]; [27]; [28]. Consequently, in Ghedeir & Nesba for instance, "a great proportion of the subjects voiced negative views to the usefulness of the ESP courses in English. This point of view is shared by the EST English teachers"[29]. Learners, eventually, realise that "The English course they received ... did not seem to be appropriate to equip them with the strategies and skills needed in their studies and future profession"[30]. ESP teachers often resort to teaching general English for all learners who express dissatisfaction, as they want a more job-related type of English[31]. Consequently, employability challenges emerge as "A great number of other students got problems in getting inserted in the professional life"[32].

When the client department does not provide the prospective ESP teacher with a syllabus, implicitly or explicitly, he/she becomes accountable for providing one. The "institution considers that the English language teacher can solve this problem"[33]. Therefore, he/she must be able to do a needs' analysis[34]. Almost everyone involved in the studies analysed seems to assume that the ESP teacher must take out from a magician's hat a ready-made course (outline and materials) to implement right away. 'Everyone' here includes Algerian researchers and those they quoted including the frequently cited scholars, ESP teachers, learners and department managers. Bouyousfi & Hammouda found that both ESP teachers and managers agreed that teachers must identify and analyse their students' needs and design the syllabus[35]. Implicitly or explicitly, ESP teachers seem to be expected to design an ESP syllabus immediately (the period between being recruited and the first class is often limited to a few days). This assumption may be underpinned by a lack of awareness of what it takes to design a syllabus. It can be stated that most EFL teachers are at best briefly introduced to

syllabus design. In addition, many researchers seem to overestimate ESP teachers' ability to do a needs' analysis, and to design a course and its materials. As Guerid rightly reminds us, designing a course is a difficult task [36] that requires training, resources and time. Part-time teachers represent the typical profile for ESP teachers in Algeria. For instance, in one university, the ESP teachers in six faculties and two institutes were all novice part-time teachers holding a Master or a BA Degree in English[37]. In terms of training, these teachers are, to borrow Afia & Mami's terms, "neither syllabus designers nor materials developers"[38]. Besides, as they are often "engaged in other situations and ... have other duties, besides their permanent jobs such as teaching at other departments; the Department of English,for instance, or teaching at other levels; secondary or middle school"[39], they may not possess time necessary to design courses. Therefore, Algerian university department managers, with the tacit agreement of many ESP scholars and the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education, seem to be assigning EFL-ESP teachers the impossible mission of designing, immediately after recruitment, an ESP syllabus appropriate to the specialty of the client department.

2-2- Mission Impossible Two: The ESP Teacher Is Usually Expected to Teach Special Content from Any University Department / Specialism

The second major challenge ESP teachers often face is that teaching must focus on specialist / technical content. In terms of the appropriateness of ESP syllabi to the needs of the learners, acquiring specialist vocabulary (of Medicine, Law, Chemistry, etc.) seems to be often overrated. Overall, "The literature on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has largely ignored one of its most distinctive features: many ESP teachers have to teach subject-specific texts from areas outside their primary areas of expertise"[40]. Naturally, as specialist vocabulary often refers to complex unfamiliar concepts, EFL-ESP teachers, as Mebitil found out, lack specialized knowledge of the related area of the students they are teaching[41]. They are, thus; expected to learn specialist knowledge[42]. As an illustration of misconceptions about ESP teachers, Dakhmouche found out that "Most science teachers and students think that the language teacher understands the field of Computer Sciences and that he or she can provide the specific scientific terminology"[43]. With the belief that ESP courses must focus on teaching specialist vocabulary (concepts), many ESP teachers stand meagre chances to succeed in such a mission.

2-3- Mission Impossible Three: The ESP Teacher Must Immediately Provide Course Materials

According to at least seven (7) studies, ESP teachers are expected to start teaching right away after recruitment while the client departments did not provide any teaching materials. The usual situation is that the ESP teacher "did not receive any support from his department in terms of teaching materials and aids"[44]. Thus, "teachers depend only on their personal efforts"[45] to design or find and adapt teaching materials. Here too, almost everyone involved in the studies analysed seems to assume that the ESP teacher can and should produce course materials to use often the week after recruitment. Many Algerian researchers, ESP scholars, ESP teachers, learners and managers seem to believe that providing learning materials is the exclusive responsibility of the ESP teacher. Department managers in Algerian universities usually do not provide an appropriate textbook or materials for the teachers to adopt or adapt to the course. Stakeholders, especially department or school managers, often seem to be unaware of what it takes to design teaching materials. The challenge is actually greater as EFL-ESP teachers are often expected to design materials related to the content specialty of the students and with which they are usually not familiar. It can also be stated that most EFL teachers are at best briefly introduced to materials design in their pre-service training. In most EFL contexts, however: teachers are provided, in both public and private schools, with a full and detailed syllabus as well as teaching materials with notes to guide teachers in the implementation of the textbook. EFL teachers teaching ESP are, hence; in much more challenging situations than when they teach EFL in public schools.

2-4- Factors Making the ESP Teacher's Mission Impossible

The above three missions (designing an ESP course, designing materials and teaching field-specific/specialised language) increase in complication for Algerian ESP teachers due to a number of factors that are briefly reviewed in the following sections.

2-4-1 Lack of Job Security and Decent Remuneration

The majority of EFL teachers serving as ESP teachers in Algerian university departments are novice and part-time teachers (Found by ten (10) studies like [46]; [47]; [48]; [49]). For instance, Hemche-Bereksi Reguig observed that ESP teaching "was offered by untrained and inexperienced teachers for whom delivering an ESP course was really a struggle" [50]. Soon, the teacher realises "the difficulty of his or her role." [51]. ESP teachers need time to do the least demanding of the tasks imposed on them, i.e. finding and selecting materials, which is hardly possible for many part-time teachers. They often have "other responsibilities outside the university (either at secondary school or tertiary level)" [52]. Most ESP teachers enjoy neither job security nor the minimum remuneration to invest time and energy in undertaking complex tasks like doing needs analysis, designing a programme and appropriate materials or even training themselves in the new ESP teaching business.

2-4-2 EFL-ESP Teachers Are Not Trained in ESP Teaching

Research on the ESP situation in Algeria is unanimous about the failure of institutions to provide training for teachers in ESP teaching (19 studies like [53]; [54]; [55]; [56]; [57]; [58]. According to Mansouri, "The demand for ESP teachers, from the various institutes of science and technology has, so far, not been met" [59]. Therefore, in terms of teaching profile, Khaldi maintained, "all ESP teachers were primarily "General English" teachers" [60] and the situation has not changed much since. Nonetheless, "Postgraduate studies in ESP have ...been opened in a number of universities like those of Laghouat, Chlef and Oran. Yet,the graduates rarely contribute to real ESP teaching as they often do not lecture in departments of technical sciences"[61].

The ESP module in the Algerian departments of English might be expected to prepare future ESP teachers. But, as noticed by Khaldi, the task of the ESP module teacher "was quite a daunting one: Not only did he/she have to teach the language of a particular subject (i.e. terminology) which even he/she did not know, but at the same time s/he had also to teach that particular field to students who, assumingly, knew nothing about it." This situation has understandably led, according to Khaldi, to the disappearance of the ESP module from the curriculum [62] before it was reintegrated again into the curriculum after 2004 with the LMD System. The failure of the ESP module in Algerian departments of English is due to inadequate specifications of course objectives, students' needs, teachers' training, teaching materials and teaching methodology[63]. Besides, this module may introduce would-be teachers to ESP discourse but do much less in terms of training in ESP pedagogy. Khaldi found out that at Algiers University, the Department of English provided no teacher training for EFL graduates in ESP teaching. In his terms, "there was no provision made for the possibility that students could be involved in a situation where they had to teach this kind of English"[64].

Unfortunately, in the absence of pre-training, many ESP teachers may also not be benefitting from collaboration with other EFL-ESP teachers, subject-specialists-ESP teachers and subject-specialist content teachers[65]; [66]; [67]; [68]; [69]; [70]. Some subject-specialist content teachers may be "reluctant to share common interest with English language teachers to help them in their tasks" [71]. Such reluctance may simply be due to a perception of being too overwhelmed with one's teaching and research workload to venture into exploring other areas and helping out ESP teachers with insights about the specialism of the department. After all, what incentives do these teachers have to expend time and effort in collaborating with ESP teachers?

Lack of ESP training and limited ESP teaching experience may have negative effects on the quality of ESP teaching [72]. The obvious consequence of the widespread lack of training

would be, as noted by Outemzabet, that ESP instructors lack expertise in ESP teaching methodology, course design and materials design[73] let alone "dealing with the subject content"[74]. Consequently, inadequate teaching methods were found by some studies that used observation or content analysis of the programmes (e.g. [75]; [76]; [77]). For instance, Afia & Mami revealed that "the course content was ... grammar-based only"[78].

The lack of teacher training in ESP stands out from research as a major hurdle against good teaching and learning in ESP courses in the Algerian context. In addition, ESP teachers are usually confronted with other unfavourable conditions that are the following:

2-4-3 ESP Learners' Low Proficiency in English

Students' low level of language proficiency is an additional challenge to ESP teachers. The issue was found in many contexts. It has been highlighted by twelve (12) studies (like [79]; [80]; [81]; [82]; [83]; [84]; [85]). Low proficiency makes it extremely difficult for ESP teachers to achieve the goal of developing a good functional communicative competence in learners.

2-4-4 Very Heterogeneous Groups of Learners

In the Algerian ESP situation, low proficiency often combines with very heterogeneous groups in terms of proficiency [86]; [87]; [88]; [89]. University departments organise learners in groups according to their overall achievement in their studies. Only in the departments of English are students grouped according to English proficiency as the main factor. Therefore, in ESP situations, the ESP teacher is usually confronted with learners in the same group at various levels of English proficiency. This situation makes it even more difficult for the language teacher to cater to the different levels in their classes.

2-4-5 Very Large ESP classes

Difficulties ESP teachers face with low proficiency learners and very heterogeneous classes are exacerbated by the fact that students from different groups in departments are combined to study together the ESP course. At least five (studies) documented the prevalence of large ESP classes [90]; [91]; [92]; [93]; [94]. ESP teachers not only struggle with different linguistic levels, but also class management and assessment issues. The latter tend to limit the possibilities for teachers in the choice of teaching methodology leading to more teacher-centeredness and less corrective feedback and variety in the learning materials and tasks that could be used.

2-4-6 Low Value Allotted to ESP Courses by Curricula and Institutions

Research seems to suggest that university department management seems to be enthusiastic about the importance of ESP courses [95]; [96]. However, practices may be telling a different story. Limited class time allotted to the ESP course (1h30 a week) was highlighted by at least ten (10) investigations (e.g. [97]; [98]; [99]; [100]). Besides, "a large proportion of the students together with teachers have the view that one semester is not enough for the English course to aid them gain proficiency in the language" [101]. Another sign of low value associated with the ESP course is bad time allocation [102]; [103]; [104]. In Mebitil's terms, ESP classes "are generally planned as the last course of the day, or even the last course of the week. This fact may have a negative impact on learners' attendance, motivation and achievements" [105]. Finally, research consistently underlines the low credit for ESP courses. It is, generally, allotted one (01) credit while the most important courses get four (04) credits. Thus, the ESP course has no significant impact on the students' academic success [106]; [107]; [108]; [109]; [110]; [111]. Benabdallah confirmed "the negative perceptions and attitudes of most students, as they believe that ESP is of secondary importance and minor interest" [112]. Clearly, a lack of attention to ESP observed in many studies [113]; [114]; [115]; [116] leads to lower students' motivation.

2-4-7 Low Student Motivation for Studying ESP Courses

The final major challenge ESP teachers usually face is widespread students' low motivation to study English. In seventeen (17) studies, many students reflected positive attitudes towards ESP (e.g. [117]; [118]; [119]; [120]). For instance, in one study, "the majority of the students put the English course on the same level of importance in comparison to other

subjects ... [They] identify a future job as being the target situation where English is going to be used" [121]. Indeed, students and teachers "were aware about the importance of English for future professional success" [122]. But, as a consequence of the above factors (absence of a clear programme that meets learners' needs, teachers' lack of ESP training, inappropriate materials, learners' low English proficiency, etc.), some studies (09) revealed low student motivation in ESP courses [123]; [124]; [125]; [126]. Once learners find out that the ESP course does not meet their needs and expectations, they show signs of demotivation [127]. Learners "expressed a great dissatisfaction with all aspects of the training program" [128]. They become "reluctant to learn English as there is no clear-cut and well-defined purpose" [129]. The absence of a clear ESP syllabus or overlooking learners' needs seem to have undermined significantly their motivation for ESP courses. Low student motivation potentially leads to certain disruptive behaviours [130]; also [131], absenteeism [132]; [133]; [134], lack of interactivity and excessive dependence on the teacher [135]. Indeed, it is quite easy to understand that, in these difficult conditions (described above), many Algerian ESP students were found to be "disinterested and frequently absent during ESP sessions" [136].

Overall, the findings of the present meta-analysis of research on ESP situation in Algeria reveal a discrepancy between policy statements and practice. To borrow Sahli's terms, "Though English is gaining more attention and importance in the Algerian teaching and learning disciplines at university, ESP, in particular, still has a long journey to be well-established" [137]; also [138]. The missions assigned to ESP teachers are so challenging that they tend to become impossible to accomplish. To reiterate one challenge, it could be useful to cite an investigation of how three teachers of maritime English in a Chinese college responded to unpredicted 'In-class Subject Knowledge Dilemma' (ISKD) situations where their subject knowledge is limited. The teachers believed that the occurrence of such problems made them appear less competent teachers [139];hence ;the negative impact on ESP teachers' motivation to teach, self-efficacy and well-being. Thus, teachers keep quitting ESP positions because "The ESP teacher who constitutes a key-parameter in the teaching/learning process has been neglected" [140]. Mebitil rightly summarised the plight of ESP teachers in Algeria; "the teacher who is already stressed, who has received no special training as an ESP teacher, who has no orientation and who receives no help from his colleagues, he often leaves his work" [141]. The evidence for this conclusion is the established fact, according to the studies analysed in this research, that ESP teachers are mostly novice teachers. They simply fail to stay long enough to become experienced teachers.

3- Implications / Suggestions

Based on the above findings, some suggestions can be made in a bid to improve the Algerian ESP situation. These suggestions are addressed to institutions and most importantly to the individual EFL-ESP teacher.

3-1- ESP Teaching Must Not Start before Syllabus And Materials Are Ready

Institutions of Higher Education should quit the misconception that recruited EFL-ESP teachers come in as a whole package of teacher, syllabus designer and materials designer. The syllabus needs to be designed "by professional ESP experts and specific-field practitioners" [142] starting with a needs' analysis. Many Algerian studies (18) highlighted the necessity of conducting a need analysis prior to ESP teaching (e.g. [143]; [144]; [145]; [146]; [147]).

Departments that are willing to offer their students quality training in ESP so as to boost both their academic (studies and research) and professional careers, should make a quick and firm decision to acquire a syllabus appropriate to the needs of their students. They can hire, for a limited time (1 to 2 years), syllabus designers who have the necessary skills and who will be given sufficient resources, especially time to design an appropriate ESP syllabus and prepare materials that teachers can adopt and adapt to the needs of specific classes of learners. As a quality assurance measure, departments can submit, for a fee, the designed syllabus and materials to an assessor so as to check whether they really are appropriate to their needs.

These measures constitute the first and foremost guarantee that learners and managers and eventually teachers will experience satisfaction with the ESP course.

If the institution (the client department) fails to deliver on the duty of providing syllabus and materials and if teachers take on the position anyway, ESP teachers can still autonomously step up and do something to, at least, find out some of the learners' needs using a quick and simple needs analysis questionnaire. They need to involve all stakeholders: especially managers and learners. Indeed, "ESP teachers could create a motivating learning atmosphere by focusing on learners' needs and involve students in the process of course design" [148]. Needs analysis is an objective transparent traceable procedure to involve learners and managers in decision-making about the course objectives, and hence; assuming some responsibility for its outcomes. The data collected will also enhance their self-confidence and self-efficacy about the content they teach as their decisions about learning goals and materials will be based on data. In addition, they will have evidence to defend their decisions and choices.

A standard needs analysis will define the needs of learners of a specific university department. The analysis must aim to answer two simple questions:
1. What do learners need to be able to do with English at university (academic needs)?
2. What do learners need to be able to do with English at work (professional needs)?
According to Khaldi, "The most thorough explanation of needs analysis is the system set out by Munby in "Communicative Syllabus Design" [149] in which he proposes a detailed profile of learners' needs in terms of communication purposes, communicative setting, the means of communication, language skills, functions, and so on" [150].

Another more direct and simple procedure could supplement the needs analysis questionnaire. A diagnostic test in the first class of the course should help teachers identify the needs of the specific group of learners for that semester as well as assess their current level in English. The latter is also useful to inform the teacher about how heterogeneous the class is. Finally, and very importantly, determining the current level of learners is vital to appreciate the learning achieved, and hence; protect the ESP teachers' work from unfair criticism. Learners should not be expected to achieve an intermediate level if they start the academic year at the elementary level especially as the ESP course is not intensive. It is useful to remember here that, "course development should be viewed as an on-going process. It can be revised and modified through course evaluation and needs' analysis" [151]; also [152]. Brief course review and needs analysis undertaken before the start of each course will ensure that it is appropriate to the needs of the upcoming group of learners.

3-2- Improving Working Conditions for ESP Courses

As discussed under section 2.4 above, environmental factors make the mission of ESP teachers extremely difficult. A few simple suggestions are offered below to Algerian Higher Education especially department managers and teachers to improve working conditions for ESP courses in Algeria.

3-2-1- Job Security and Decent Remuneration

The missions often assigned to ESL-ESP teachers are made impossible by the fact that they usually work as underpaid part-time teachers**.** Most ESP teachers enjoy neither job security nor the minimum remuneration to invest time and energy in undertaking complex tasks like doing serious needs' analysis, designing a programme and appropriate materials or training in ESP teaching. If the government truly wants to provide university students and future employees with minimum quality training in ESP, they must take measures that could make these positions more attractive to good teachers, and hence; competition between teachers will drive teaching standards higher. As teachers are usually expected to design courses and materials, recruiting them on permanent contracts will offer them the job security and regular decent salaries that should encourage them to invest the necessary resources (time and effort). Until the government rises to this responsibility, department managers can still take measures to attract good dynamic and committed teachers. They can compensate lack of job security

and decent remuneration by adjusting their expectations from ESP teachers, especially by not expecting them to produce a programme or design materials rich in specialised content. They can also provide them with more flexible time tables to allow them to take other jobs, and by paying them some overtime for self-training, and then for course and materials design.

3-2-2- Creating Less Heterogeneous Groups with More Reasonable ESP Class Size

Department managers can also improve the working conditions for ESP courses by dividing groups into at least two separate linguistic levels throughout a simple and quick placement test. This measure may alleviate the challenges posed by very heterogeneous groups of learners and enhance the possibility of better quality teaching and learning. It will make it easier for ESP teachers to provide teaching that will be better suited to the linguistic level of learners. Dividing each existing group of learners into two groups should also favour smaller classes that are more conducive to learner-centred communicative and interactive approaches.

3-2-3- Valuing ESP Courses by Institutions

The meta-analysis of research on ESP discussed above highlights insufficient class time allotted to the ESP course (1h30 a week), bad time allocation, and a low credit number for ESP courses. Such treatment may have a negative impact on teachers and learners' motivation. Course time should be increased to allow more time for teachers and learners to work toward learning goals. Indeed, ESP courses "should not be considered as a single project or selected to be taught for one or two semesters, but they should be well organized [in] a long term curriculum" [153]. Credit and Coefficient should be increased to motivate students to commit time and effort to learn English.

3-2-4- Economical Training for EFL-ESP Teachers in ESP Teaching

Research on the ESP situation in Algeria unanimously highlights the failure of institutions in providing training in ESP teaching. The obvious consequence of the widespread lack of training is instructors' lack of expertise in ESP teaching methodology, course design and materials design let alone teaching subject content. Thus, many studies underscored the need for adequate ESP teacher training (12 studies, e.g. [154]; [155]; [156]; [157]). Hence, concerning pre-service training, EFL teacher training programmes should be reviewed to make sure they provide sufficient training or at least an introduction to syllabus design, needs' analysis and materials design. In the 1990s, the department of English at Blida 2 University attempted to introduce an ESP "Licence" degree. Unfortunately, the project did not materialise like its counterpart at the University of Algiers in the 1970s [158]. Lessons from such experiences should be taken into consideration to design better ESP courses and implement them in a better way. Moreover, ESP teachers should better be recruited from graduates of the target department and offered full-time jobs that will ensure they fully engage in training in ESP teaching. Here too, Algerian departments of English can contribute by offering adequate training. Training must involve the necessary theoretical knowledge underpinning ESP teaching, characteristics of ESP registers (sciences, occupations, etc.) and introduction to elements of syllabus and materials design (see detailed suggestion in [159]). Such courses represent a major strategy for Algerian departments of English to lead efforts to train ESP teachers.

As for in-service training, client university departments can provide cost-effective 1-day training workshops that can be facilitated by experts in ESP and / or experienced ESP teachers with specialised knowledge in the academic area of learners. Teachers can also take the initiative for doing self-training through reading and watching videos on ESP course design, needs' analysis, and finding, adapting and designing teaching materials. Moreover, many ESP teachers may also not be benefitting from collaboration with other EFL-ESP teachers, subject-specialists-ESP teachers and subject-specialist content teachers. In designing materials, the ESP teacher can turn to a subject expert for advice on the technical content [160]. Indeed, team teaching is "an important key to the improvement of ESP teaching situations either by collaborating with subject specialists or other ESP teachers" [161]; also [162]; [163].

Thus, department managers should encourage and give incentives for collaboration as a powerful tool for professional development. Researchers recommended collaboration to improve ESP teaching [164]; [165]; [166]; [167]. As many university teachers may be reluctant to collaborate due to a perception of being overloaded with work, a short monthly collaborative meeting remunerated as overtime is a simple but rewarding strategy.

3-3- Implications for Future Research on ESP in Algeria

The findings of the meta-analysis of fifty-five (55) studies on ESP in Algeria in the present paper suggest that a few measures are advisable to improve the validity and reliability of the research. Better quality research can inform efficient measures to improve the quality of ESP teaching in Algerian Higher Education.

Concerning the methods of data collection, as the methodology was not clearly described in three (03) papers and, in one study, the sample was not clearly defined, future research must carefully describe the study in terms of context, participants, research tools and procedure of data collection. Researchers should indicate whether issues occurred in order to allow professional readers and researchers to assess those studies and their findings and eventually use them. To the latter end, and as out of the forty-one (41) studies reviewed that comprised primary data collection, only thirteen (13) appended the research tools used, future research must append them to allow other researchers to review them and assess the validity of the results.

Besides, only eleven (11/41) studies used classroom observation for data collection. More use of this direct probe is advisable to explore what is actually happening in ESP classes as opposed to what participants say is happening. For instance, Hamzaoui-Elachachi & Bouklikha-Graia discovered that "Although subject students reported being motivated to learn English, their classroom behaviour showed lack of interest and low motivation" [168]. Similarly, content analysis of documents like textbooks, students' papers, and programmes was employed only six times (06). This is, certainly, an irreplaceable tool that has been very rarely used to research ESP in Algeria. It helps researchers find out real versus perceived needs and real versus reported teaching and learning practices. Future research should systematically involve content analysis of ESP course descriptions and materials.

As for the participants enrolled in research, students are the second most widely used category of informants by research on ESP in Algeria. It is, therefore: important to remember, as Aliche & Sait remarked, that they may be confused about their ESP needs [169]. Future research should systematically and fully include teachers and managers in needs analysis, and hence; in decision-making; i.e. defining the needs and objectives of the course. In Algerian Higher Education, department managers are the most influential stakeholders in assessing the success or failure of ESP teachers. Their participation can serve as a strategy to sensitise them to the complexities the teacher is facing. Lack of awareness often leads to harsh simplistic judgement against ESP teachers; the managers' involvement in the process of needs' analysis and defining the goals of the ESP course should foster a better understanding of the situation, more realistic expectations and more objective evaluation of the course (teaching).

Moreover, research interested in the Algerian ESP situation should use previous research about the Algerian context to both compare and contrast the findings from different Algerian universities. Only thirty-five (35) out of the 1433 sources referenced by the studies reviewed in this research are written about the Algerian ESP context, representing 02.5 % only. The studies referenced in the present research hardly mention each other. Combining research about the Algerian context would help us formulate a better picture of the ESP situation, its challenges and pool the suggested strategies and solutions to the problems facing ESP in Algeria. Besides, as only one author had four (04) and another three (03) publications on ESP, specialisation of researchers in ESP research areas probably would increase the quality of such research.

Finally, Algerian departments of English can contribute to improving the ESP situation through research. Khaldi suggests that graduate student researchers (Magister and PhD) do

their theses on ESP needs'analysis and syllabus design and – or evaluate existing ESP courses. In his terms, each student can pick a Higher Education department or institute to analyse its needs and ultimately design an ESP course [170]. Accumulating a considerable body of research should improve the ESP situation.

4- Concluding Notes for ESP Teachers

Here, we would like to highlight a few key recommendations for ESP teachers to make their teaching experience more conducive to success and satisfaction.

4-1- ESP teachers should refuse impossible missions. Being the language and pedagogy specialist compared to the client university department or employer, they should step up to take the lead and explain to them what can realistically be done in the ESP course. They should also insist on signing contracts where the mission of the teacher is clearly stated and delimited to prevent any misunderstanding about their role.

4-2- ESP teachers should define and accept only teaching goals they can achieve. Realistic course goals give teachers, managers and learners a better chance to experience success and satisfaction. Broad, vague and too ambitious goals increase failure and dissatisfaction. The process starts with a simple needs' analysis where the learners and managers tell the ESP teacher what learners need English for. They should get them to list needs in order of priority, indicate how much time they can afford, how long the course is, and what their current level of English is. With these data, ESP teachers can step up as language learning specialists in the department and advise on what and how it can be done. No one can teach anything or everything. Syllabus design is mainly a task of selection.

4-3- The most important recommendation is that teachers should be proactive and pursue their own training and professional development autonomously [171]; [172]. Teachers have all the professional and personal reasons not to depend on institutions for their advancement through self-directed development. Resources and strategies are available to any teacher who wishes to become a better, and hence; more successful teacher (See for instance suggestions for CPD by Missoum, [173]).

Conclusion

ESP has recently gained considerable attention from the Algerian government. Higher Education is a central player in the effort to train citizens with a good command of English for academic and professional purposes. In order to examine the situation of ESP in Algerian Higher Education in a bid to gauge the extent to which it is able to achieve this national goal, the present research consisted of a meta-analysis of research on ESP in Algeria. Fifty-five (55) studies were analysed. This analysis yielded a number of challenges facing ESP teachers. Often, novice teachers with BA degrees in English are assigned to teach ESP modules at Algerian universities. The main reason for recruiting novice teachers is often related to costs; positions are offered for annual contracts with low salaries sometimes paid irregularly. Those teachers often experience feelings of loss and uncertainty about what to teach. They end up teaching anything determined by the materials they struggle to find on their own. This usually, as can easily be expected, leads to dissatisfaction on all sides; the teachers, the learners and eventually the management. University departments seeking to teach their students English that is suitable for their specialty often fail to assist teachers in terms of providing appropriate syllabi and materials, let alone teacher training. They simply tend to place unrealistic expectations on the teachers' shoulders. The latter are often expected to immediately design a syllabus and provide the necessary materials. Each of the latter tasks requires people with specific training; i.e. training in course design and material design. These complex tasks are also understandably time and effort-intensive. University departments usually fail to provide time and financial incentives for teachers to engage in needs' analysis, syllabus design and materials preparation.

The above situation negatively affects the quality of ESP teaching, and eventually, the students' motivation to learn and the teachers' motivation to teach. The immediate solution to this situation is to recruit ESP teachers based on a clear reasonable contract that takes into

consideration the tasks expected, teaching only, course outline design, and/or lesson design (including materials design). Expectations and the ESP teacher contract must be consistent with the means the client department is making available to teachers. If the department cannot provide a course outline and materials, it must provide instead the time, remuneration and job security that will allow the ESP teacher to design a course appropriate for the learners' needs. Otherwise, expectations from the ESP teacher must be kept realistic.

Most research focused on identifying needs in terms of ESP in different contexts. Of course, more research is needed to identify those needs for every academic and professional field. This stage is an essential first stage in the process of developing ESP education. However, research institutions must focus efforts on moving forward to specify the characteristics of ESP courses needed, designing those courses, preparing banks of materials to implement the courses, and implementing the courses under monitoring for assessing the courses. Then, data from this assessment should be fed back into course revision for better quality. This cyclical process will need to remain ongoing as needs will probably change over time. This process is both complex and labour-intensive. It has, thus; to be undertaken by institutions, not individual researchers.

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