ESP FOR LAW - CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

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Abstract: The extension of the EU and the aspiration of many Balkan countries entrance to the European Union, has led to the increasing relevance of foreign language learning, especially English, in the area. Therefore, the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has a particularly significant role to play in the undergraduates' future on the European common market. What has also led to the increasing relevance of teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is globalization, the economic crisis in the region and migration of young people to more developed countries. All these aforementioned reasons have given ESP a special place in the future careers of these young professionals. Nevertheless, learners face many difficulties while trying to learn the specific vocabulary and terminology related to their major but in the foreign language, more specifically, in English language. Applying frequency statistics, Fraenkel&Wallen (2003), the study has analyzed the difficulties learners face while studying ESP. Quantitative data has been collected using an online questionnaire which was sent to respondents via Google Docs and analyzed using frequency statistics. Qualitative data has been collected using semi-structured interviews with volunteers. Content analysis (Silverman, 2005) has been applied to identify themes biases and meaning, by which the study investigated specific strategies employed by ESP for Law learners while learning English as a minor subject, along their major Law one and the difficulties they encounter while doing this. Convenience sampling among students enrolled in the sixth semester, in the academic year 2018/2019 at the University of Tetovo and South-East European University identified a non-random sample of 33 respondents for the quantitative study; while two participants agreed to participate in the second confirmatory stage, interviews. The findings of the study revealed that students have many difficulties while learning specific vocabulary related to their field of study, in this case Law. However, using various strategies, like the internet and several other strategies they managed to a certain extent to overcome these limitations. Furthermore, respondents had some useful suggestions for teachers and higher education institutions on the improvement, delivery and realization of these perceived significant courses for their future careers. In conclusion it is argued that research designs involving an extended period of time and with a larger sample will be needed to confirm these results.
Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, vocabulary, tertiary education

1. INTRODUCTION

North Macedonia has offered English from the third grade in primary school, however, since 2006, it has introduced English from the first grade in primary school. This change has come as a result of the rising trend of English around the globe and its role as the 'lingua Franca' of the world. Further, it is offered in throughout the four years of secondary education and tertiary education, depending on the various majors students have chosen. All this shows the importance the language has in the country.

Nevertheless, referring to tertiary education, the importance of English seems to vary. For example, universities and faculties give the impression of accepting the foreign language as a course of minor importance, therefore, both institutions and students appear not to put much importance on it. As results, teachers seem to struggle finding the right ways and strategies to prepare and deliver effective ESP courses.

What exactly does the notion ESP imply? According to Hutchinson& Waters (1987) the term ESP came into play after World War II, based on the requirements and needs for specific English language based on professional necessities, as well as the growing interest for international businesses. They even go as far as the 60s and 70s by claiming that there was a need for written scientific and technical English (ibid.p.7).

According to the Dictionary of Language teaching & Applied Linguistics (2002:293), language for specific/special purposes is described as,

Second or foreign languages used for particular and restricted types of communication (e.g. or medical reports, scientific writing, air-traffic control) and which contain lexical, grammatical, and other linguistic features which are different from ordinary language (see REGISTER). In language teaching, decisions must be made as to whether a learner or group of learners requires a language for general purposes or for special purposes.

The explanation shows that ESP courses deal with specific lexical items, referring to vocabulary, grammatical items as well as other linguistic features specific to a field, in our case the Law vocabulary. The other specific items could be the ones mentioned by Dudley-Evans&St. John (1988) which will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Dudey-Evans& St. John (1988) argue with Hutchinson& Waters on the role of ESP and the need for teaching English by focusing on the learner needs. Thereafter, they propose some 'absolute' characteristics:
ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner;
ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves;
ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate for these activities. (p. 4-5)
They also have divided ESP in two main streams: EOP (English for Occupational Purposes and EEP/EAP (English for Educational Purposes/ English for Academic Purposes). This is in line with the Longman dictionary mentioned above.
Trying to develop and improve ESP courses nowadays, various studies have been conducted in the world. For example, Lin et. Al. (2014) has argued for the construction of ESP courses focusing on the integration of curriculum design theory in to an English course for Civil Aviation University of China. They have offered an example framework by providing a model. The target were aircraft engineers in China.
Dragoscu& Stefanovic (2010) focus on knowledge and skills concerned with the English language and categorized these as ESP for professional and occupational purposes to enable students to read technical literature and contribute to students' specialization and ESP for soft skills such as entrepreneurship, business communication, IT, etc. They argue that by including additional skills into the syllabus, students will acquire a higher level professional and occupational skills of Mechanical Engineering.
Other studies by Dragoescu& Mergheș, (2008) have focused on English on Sports and Tourism by focusing on words describing lifestyles which have come from English loanwords in the Romanian language of sports and tourism. Their main intention was to draw a comparison between loanwords and counterpart words in both languages by looking for common patterns to develop their vocabularies (p. 23).
Dragoescu et. al. (2019) further have focused on extending the collaboration between universities; designing an ESP textbook for sustainable learning (2019), by which teachers and universities have been urged to encourage cooperation among universities. They suggest further research and mutual support of teachers and universities in the region.
Another scholar, Xhaferi (2010) has focused on vocabulary learning strategies employed by university students in Macedonia. The sample included eight ESP learners from different departments of the South-East European University, like Law, Business Administration, Computer Sciences and Language Cultures and Communications. Participants were given one week to try and learn the words. They were then asked to note down and then retrospect on the discovery strategies they used to find out the meaning of the unknown words. Her study revealed that participants used a variety of strategies to guess meaning from context, but the four most frequently used strategies were: Discovery strategies– guessing from the context, asking the teacher, monolingual dictionary and analyzing parts of speech (p. 238).
Nevertheless, teachers need to also focus more on teaching ESP and involve learners in decision making, by doing needs analyses, as an earlier comparative study in North Macedonia and Romania was conducted, Kamberi et. al (2019) analyzing teachers' perceptions with regard to teaching subject specific English courses. Their study revealed that materials used for teaching ESP courses were the same as those for teaching general English in the context of North Macedonia; while the Romanian context specific books were designed by university staff. It was suggested that teachers of various neighboring countries, in collaboration, design books for the specific courses- a step ahead towards integration in the European Union.
All the above mentioned studies and contexts have revealed that there is an immediate need for teachers to prepare specific materials, except those available, by focusing on the context specific needs of the learners. This is considered the only way to prepare specialists for the global market. Therefore, this study focuses on the learners' perceptions towards learning ESP for Law, in this case.

2. METHODOLOGY
2.1 THE FOUNDATION FOR THIS PAPER
Having realized difficulties learners face while learning specific terminology in English for specific purposes, the authors of the study have analyzed the difficulties learners majoring in Law face and the strategies they employ in soling the same.
2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Based on my professional teaching interest and informed by the emerging findings reported in review above, the research questions addressed in this paper include:
　　1.　What are the difficulties learners face while learning ESP?

2. To what extent do courses provide learners with the necessary support they need for their future professions?

2.3 THE STUDY

The preliminary study reported in this paper was undertaken with (n=33) students of Law, representing two universities; the University of Tetovo and the South East European University in Tetovo, North Macedonia. They were all in their final year of studies and have attended ESP in their undergraduate studies.

2.4 PARTICIPANTS

Acknowledging convenience sampling, the 33 subjects who participated in this study responded to the online questionnaire. These were the ones whose email we found after looking at the student lists. Participants ranged in age from 20 - 22 years old. Females constituted 43% of the sample group (n=48) with the remaining 57% being male (n=57).

2.5. INSTRUMENTS

Seeking to analyze the difficulties learners face while learning English, the study investigated specific strategies employed by ESP for Law learners while learning English as a minor subject, along their major Law. The study consisted of quantitative and qualitative instruments. The quantitative instrument represents the student questionnaire which contained five questions they were required to answer online, on Google docs. Two of the questions were closed and two open-ended ones; whereas the qualitative study consisted of student semi-structured interviews.

Seeking to analyze Law students' perception on learning ESP at tertiary level foreign language learneing, a combined open ended and closed questionnaire, containing five questions was sent to studnets via Google Docs. It was developed based on Dörnyei (2009). The questions in the questionnaire, elicit information in a non-evaluative way, based on respondents' beliefs and experiences. They required respondents to give their perceptions on their needs, difficulites and strategies for overcoming their limitations (See Appendix A).

Questionnaires were followed by semi-structured interviews seeking to determine learner attitudes to their experience and needs.

2. 6 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data derived from the quantitative and qualitative instruments which were triangulated by using methodological triangulation based on Brown&Rodgers (2002). This implies that multiple data-gathering procedures like questionnaires and student interviews were used. Student interviews were analyzed using content analyses based on their.

3. RESULTS

As stated in the previous section 2.5&2. 6, the study used a combined method of data collection and analyzes. Quantitative data were gathered first, in the form of questionnaire responses. Those were analyzed using statistical analyses, comparing responses and percentages. Following the quantitative analyses, content analytical procedures were applied to analyze student interviews. Finally inferences have been used to report data and make conclusions.

3.1 Results of the questionnaire

As stated previously (see section 2.1 and 2.2) the study aimed to analyze Law students' perceptions and their difficulties they face while learning vocabulary related to Law.

The first question required respondents to state the extent to which their needs were met by their ESP for Law course. The responses were surprisingly positive. On one side there were some who were satisfied and stated a lot (64%), with other claiming a bit (28%) and only (8%) being not at all satisfied.

The second question required participants to state if their teachers do needs analyses in their ESP courses. The responses to this question were divided, some giving a positive response claiming yes (37%), while others claiming no (28%). The rest did not give a response. It can be inferred that some of the respondents gave no response because they either were not sure what to say, or did not understand the question.

The third question required learners to express the difficulties they faced while learning Law related vocabulary, phrases and other lexis. Almost all of them listed law related terminology was the most challenging one. However, they claimed that this type of genre was probably the difficult one in the native language too. They further added that finding the appropriate translation or word in the native was also a challenge.

Question four asked participants to state which strategies they used to overcome the limitations they face while learning Law related terminology. Answers varied to this question, the majority listing Google among the top ones, followed by asking friends, guessing meaning from context and finally asking teachers for help.

The last question asking for recommendations for teachers and institutions, was to some extent similar to the ones recommended by teachers in earlier studies (Kamberi et.al., 2019b), "…bring classroom in line with the future professional life of students" (2019b: 8), by respondents suggesting: making courses more practical, using visual

aids, engaging in simulated trials in the target language. Unlike Xhaferi's study (ibid.), none of the respondents mentioned dictionaries as a tool for looking up new words, but rather Google and probably *Google translate* as an online dictionary, considering the time her study was conducted and the present one.

3.2 Results of the semi-structured interviews

In an attempt to triangulate the results from the quantitative section of the study with those of the qualitative section and to provide a broader perspective on how or why the findings may have been significantly different, volunteers were asked to engage in a brief interview to discuss their experience with ESP.

The semi-structured interviews were used to validate the results and to address the last research questions related to the extent to which learners are provided with the necessary support they need for their future professions. A modified content analysis (Silverman, 2008) identified two main themes from the students' semi- structured interview responses: the need for technological support and more practical experience.

The results of the qualitative study show that while respondents were highly motivated about their future careers and the necessity of English, their learning preferences were substantially influenced by the novelty of access to technological support and opportunities for practical use of the target language by either simulations in English or more communicative activities in the lessons. .

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sample size is recognized as a substantial barrier to meaningful quantitative interpretation of the data from this study to this point. While analysis suggests that there is a significant positive attitude towards ESP and its relevance for their future jobs, some concerns related to practical skills suggest that there may be issues teachers need to think of. One of these could be the top theme of learner and learning centered learning and teaching, which probably implies that there is a need of conducting needs analyses at the beginning of each ESP course.

On the other hand, qualitative results establish a mixed student attitude toward course delivery and organization at both institutions, claiming that there was an urgent need for more practice and practical experience. This attitudinal difference among students and what the literature claims is derived from the content analysis of students' interviews, related to ESP teaching. The most significant claim was that respondents believed more on the teacher assessment than their peer ones. This shows that peer assessment, at least in this case study is not a reliable source of evaluation and therefore not a valid instrument.

The differences of the quantitative and qualitative findings with earlier studies suggest that a more finely developed instrument and a larger sample are required. More interestingly, perhaps, involving all universities in North Macedonia, including teachers as well, may offer significant results for students and teachers. In either case, it seems clear; a more extended study with a larger sample is required.

In conclusion, future research in this area needs to address the issue of ESP for law and other related ESP courses, with this, research designs conducted over an extended period of time and with a larger sample to confirm factors potentially affecting reliability and validity of these results. Finally, the aspects identified in this paper seem likely to shed light on future pedagogical approaches in North Macedonia and in the wider world.

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Appendix A

1. How much are your needs met by the ESP courses?

a) a lot
b) a bit
c) not at all

2. Do your teachers do needs analyses at the beginning of the course?

a) yes
b) no

3. What are the difficulties you face while studying ESP for Law?

4. How do you overcome these difficulties?

5. Do you have any recommendations for teachers and institutions?