

Who Qualifies to Monitor an ESP Course: A Content Teacher or a Language Teacher?

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ABSTRACT

As it is known, ESP materials are developed in order to respond to the specific needs of English learners. ESP is a branch of applied linguistics in which investigators attempt to put their fingers on the specific needs of individuals or groups of individuals in English in order to design materials related to their specific interests or specialties. And there is always a need to look at ESP within the context of language teaching in general, i.e., it should be considered as an offshoot of English language teaching. As Alan Davies (1990) argues, all language teaching can be perceived within a broader context of language for specific purposes (LSP). Therefore, the pedagogic problem is whether the general (ELT) and the particular/specific are so different that it is useful to teach them separately. Since there is a general misconception among subject teachers at non-English faculties that ESP courses should/must be taught by teachers of the subject matter, the question is how it is possible to come to a judgment on who is qualified to monitor an ESP classroom: a content (subject) specialist or a language teacher.

The ESP point of origin, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), can be pursued in three ways. The end of the Second World War was simultaneous with the demand of the world for technology and commerce in the consequence of which the requirement of an international lingua franca arose.

Therefore, the goal became that of teaching English, which would be useful in technology and commerce. This was the beginning of placing value to the demands of the learners. Synchronically, new ideas began to emerge in the study of English. Traditionally, the aim of linguistics had been to teach the rules of correct grammar. But now the world witnessed a shift of focus to the rules of use. The line of improvement was all around the needs of the learner or what the learner needed the language for.