CHANGE FROM A GENERAL ENGLISH TEACHER TO AN ESP PRACTITIONER: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This research aims at exploring issues that a general English teacher in Pakistan encounters when he/she opts for a comparatively more diverse and effort demanding job of ESP teaching. It also aims to find the reasons for their occurrence, taking into account the effects these issues have on quality education, and to offer practical solutions to them. Investigating into the future challenges standing ahead for an ESP practitioner in Pakistan and how these challenges can be met with successfully are the other objectives of this research. Interviews were taken from ESP practitioners having prior experience of general English teaching, and ESP classes were observed in order to verify the results of the interviews. More than 17 issues and challenges have been identified along with their solutions. The findings provide glimpses of the possible interconnection between the issues and help to identify dependent and independent issues. This

research paper serves as a guide for the new ESP practitioners and a *Needs Analysis* for ESP teacher training institutes. Indirectly, it highlights the need and significance of ESP teacher training and ESP teaching, respectively, in Pakistan. The results of the research however can easily be generalized to India, Bangladesh and many other developing countries that share same economical, historical and geographical background.

Key Words: Issues, Challenges, Solutions, ESP

Introduction

The existence of language is no less than a substantial leitmotif, diffused in every episode of human life. We are endowed with a natural ability to communicate our ideas, thoughts and feelings to others through language. It is just as hard to visualize communication in a life bereft of language as it is to envisage mute isolated souls living in prosperity. There are many languages in the world; some of them endangered while some in the process of becoming global. Languages share certain genes with human life; they live and die like us (Crystal, 2002), their existence pivots on the principle of survival of the fittest just like ours. Presently, English has proved itself to be the fittest of all the existing languages, acting as a lingua franca for a wide majority of people around the world. Learning English is akin to learning a life skill, as more than eighty percent of the world's knowledge nowadays is estimated to be in English. Currently, it holds the status of a global language. Even the nationalist nations like China and Iran are emphasizing on learning and teaching of English. For this reason perhaps, the language that faced severe criticism in the sub continent now holds its position as the second language of Pakistan.

Owing to this increasing need and many-folded importance of English at global level, it is being taught as a compulsory subject from Grade I to Bachelors level in Pakistan. Two types of English language courses are being offered in the country. These are English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). English which is taught at the schools and colleges is called EGP while English courses offered for some specific purposes or to the professionals are termed as ESP. Due to emergence of various professions and fields of study, there is a need to give importance to learning and teaching of ESP courses. Two types of ESP

courses, i.e. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), are being offered in various institutions of Pakistan. Business Communication, English for Social Sciences and English for Engineering and Medical students are EAP courses, whereas English for Engineers, Doctors and Bankers are tagged as EOP courses. These language courses are being taught by EGP teachers and/or ESP practitioners.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, there is scarcity of ESP practitioners as there is no concept of establishing ESP teacher training institutes that can produce quality ESP practitioners. As a result, EGP teachers are hired by the institutions to teach ESP courses. A majority of these EGP teachers carry no professional training for teaching specialized courses and therefore find themselves in an abyss of teaching-related issues. The situation is almost the same for those who carry with them some formal training before stepping into this field. Even they face several challenges related to curriculum, syllabi, students, methodology and so on.

A detailed study of related literature provides us with some similar issues confronted by ESP practitioners world-wide. To begin with, the needs analysis stage is impregnated with multifarious problems. The issue as from whom to gather needs remains unresolved (Auerbach, 1995). According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), the use of technical terms, topics or tasks may de-motivate the learners. The EOP learners, if newly employed, may not have a complete idea of the upcoming scenario in which they are to perform and therefore might not be able to predict their future needs (Long, 1996). The issue remains the same for the EAP learners since it is improbable that they form sound decisions about their needs with the kind of ingenuous acquaintance they hold regarding language (Chambers, 1980). Xenohidis (2002) is of the view that this aim should be realistic, otherwise it would lead the learners towards demotivation. This implies that the ESP practitioner should conduct activities that educate the learners while keeping up their zest for learning. A similar balance should be observed while choosing course contents for learners. There is a range of issues when it comes to curriculum development and course content selection. First, the question as to how broad or narrow a focus should an ESP course have when it comes to choosing the relevant course contents for a specific discipline has been under debate for long (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, Flowerdew, 1990). This issue of focus can be further bifurcated as follows:

- Having the target situation at its nexus, what should be the size of its circumference?

- How to position the priorities of course contents in this circumference?

Whether the perceived needs of the learners be targeted acutely while designing the syllabus (narrow focus) or should there be some elasticity in this regard, i.e. a range of skills and target events be covered other than the acutely targeted needs (broad focus)? Second, in situations where the needs are too specified, Tollefson (1991) argues, language training can be a "covert means to channel immigrants into marginal occupations", equipping them with the amount of skills hardly adequate for them to perform in their target situations. Due to this factor, ESP, for some experts, (e.g. Widdowson, 1983), produces a rather rigid view of language needs, since they are, at times, "too unpredictable to be identified in any certain terms". Language learnt through ESP procedure might not cater to the demands of the variation existing in the target situation due to this rigidity. Out of the circle, too, the learners might find themselves linguistically impotent and handicapped. Third, recent debates as to the authenticity of ESP teaching material have arisen, since there exists no universal criteria to rate them (Bojovic, 2006). These issues determine the complexities that the ESP teachers have to face if they are not properly equipped with relevant teaching tools.

In Pakistan, too, these issues exist as an unexplored phenomenon embedded in ESP teaching. Researches related to needs analysis of students (e.g. Ahmed, 2005; Alam, 2005; Sultana, 2004) and comparative studies of curricula, teaching methodology, examination system, organizational structure, physical facilities, etc. have been carried out (e.g. Naeemullah, 2007, Iqbal, 2005). Issues related to language planning in higher education have also been searched thoroughly (Mansoor, 2005). What remains undone is therefore to sort out and list these present issues and to search for their possible solutions.

This research aims at exploring these issues and challenges and finding out possibilities that will lend a helping hand to ESP practitioners. The study has two key objectives:

- To investigate and identify issues faced by ESP practitioners and the challenges they think might emerge in the future

- To come up with practical solutions to these issues and challenges.

In addition, this study will function as a detailed *Needs Analysis* for the ESP teacher training institutes to base their training on. Future researches may take this research as a spring board to dive further into these phenomena; group similar issues together and bring about a refinement to their solutions, in order to minimize pedagogical obscurities for the future ESP practitioners.

This study addresses three major questions:

- Do ESP practitioners encounter pedagogical issues in Pakistan?
- Are there any future challenges that the ESP practitioners in Pakistan foresee as coming ahead?
- Do possible solutions for these issues and challenges exist?

Research Methodology

Type of Research

Basically it is a non-experimental research which includes survey interviews and naturalistic observation, since these are the most widely used approaches when it comes to data collection from environments and situations where extraneous variables are involved (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005: 149:154). It falls into the realm of qualitative research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007) for it involves qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

Population and Sampling

This research involves samples of

- ESP practitioners evolved from General English teachers
- ESP classrooms

Three major cities of Pakistan were considered for sample selection, namely Islamabad, Faisalabad and Multan (Fig.1). They were selected on the basis of the large number of ESP teaching programs running in various institutes of these cities. The Higher Education

Commission of Pakistan also launched a language and research based project of English Language Teaching Reforms in 2004 encompassing a number of institutes of these cities (Higher Education Commission, Pakistan). The two main reasons for selecting these institutes, therefore, were that they hold a large ratio of ESP practitioners and were easily accessible. A sample of 30 ESP Practitioners (10 from each city) and 6 ESP classrooms was selected as the representative sample of their respective population types. Method of purposive sampling (Gay & Airasian, 2003) was used on the basis of the researcher's prior study done in related area.

Fig.1 Map of the cities used for sampling

Data Collection and Tools

Data from ESP practitioners was collected through interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). These interviews were kept unstructured in order to generate an uninterrupted conversation as they were aimed at inquiring in detail about them experiencing issues (if any) during their ESP teaching careers. A probe to the interview questions was however made which can be seen in the Appendix. ESP classes of the interviewed practitioners were video-taped for the purpose of observation and notes were made on these observations for verification purposes. They comprised mainly of teaching of Communication Skills, Spoken English and Business English.

Procedure of Research Study

Step I: Interviews Interviews were recorded from ESP practitioners. They were then transferred to laptop via Bluetooth device and card readers and further transcribed. Notes were made on these transcriptions in order to generate a detailed discussion on them.

Step II: Naturalistic observation of ESP classroom environment This was done through video-taping ESP classrooms, since it provided a detailed description of ESP teaching phenomenon in its natural setting. They were transferred to laptop via card reader and played on Windows Media Player in order to observe the classrooms meticulously. Later, notes were made on these observations.

Data Analysis Tools

A thorough analysis of the collected data was made using methods of analytical induction and constant comparison, since according to LeCompte & Preissle (1993), they are the most valuable techniques used in analyzing data and generating theory.

Data Analysis

Graphical Representation of Issues

The graph in Fig.2 shows occurrence of the listed issues, extracted from the notes made on transcribed interviews. They are jotted down according to the procedure of ESP teaching, starting from needs analysis, moving onto course content selection, designing/redesigning syllabus, understanding specific vocabulary, implementation of syllabus, teaching methodology, use of A/V aids, student evaluation and teacher feedback, followed up with several other dimensions that exist as issues alongside the process of ESP teaching. These include large sized classrooms, student motivation, class heterogeneity, class time duration, maintaining classroom discipline, teacher training/competency, poor EGP background of students and future challenges as foreseen by the ESP practitioners that were not a part of the probes that were collected for the interview questions.
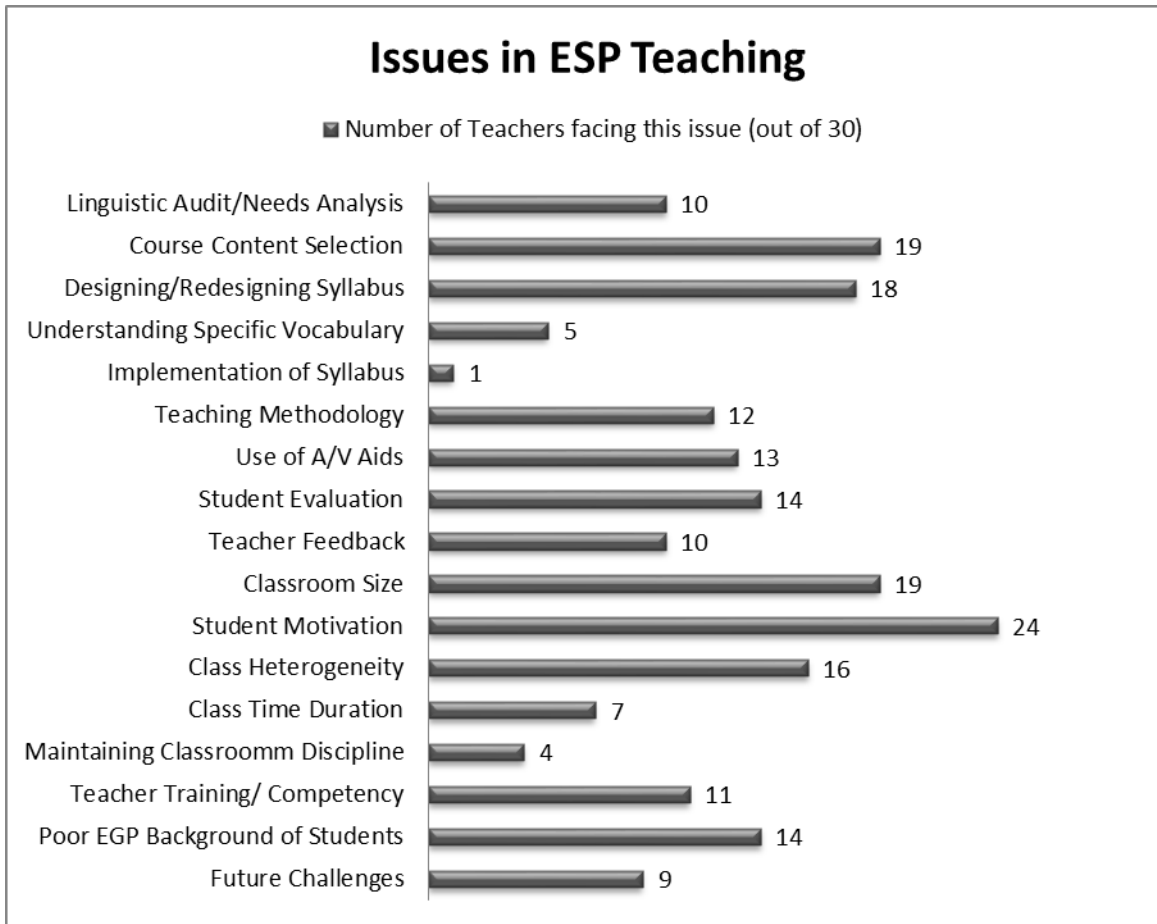
Issues in ESP Teaching

■ Number of Teachers facing this issue (out of 30)

Issue	Value
Linguistic Audit/Needs Analysis	10
Course Content Selection	19
Designing/Redesigning Syllabus	18
Understanding Specific Vocabulary	5
Implementation of Syllabus	1
Teaching Methodology	12
Use of A/V Aids	13
Student Evaluation	14
Teacher Feedback	10
Classroom Size	19
Student Motivation	24
Class Heterogeneity	16
Class Time Duration	7
Maintaining Classroomm Discipline	4
Teacher Training/ Competency	11
Poor EGP Background of Students	14
Future Challenges	9

Fig. 2 Representation of issues and number of teachers facing these issues

As the graph presents, 10 out of 30 ESP practitioners faced issues related to needs analysis of the students, 19 out of 30 faced issues in course content selection, 18 out of 30 in designing/ redesigning syllabus, 5 out of 30 faced difficulties in understanding the specific vocabulary of their respective ESP courses, 1 out of 30 had issues regarding implementation of syllabus in the classroom,12 out of 30 had difficulties regarding teaching methodology, 13 out of 30 in using A/V Aids, 14 out of 30 in student evaluation and 10 out of 30 faced issues in giving feedback to their respective students. 19 out of 30 ESP practitioners had problems due to large sized classrooms, 24 out of 30 faced issues regarding student motivation, 16 out of 30 had difficulty in managing heterogeneous classrooms, 7 out of 30 faced problems regarding time duration, 4 out of 30 found it difficult to maintain discipline in their respective classrooms, 11 out of 30 found the lack of teacher training as an issue, 14 out of 30 complained of the poor EGP background of

their respective students while 9 out of 30 highlighted some future challenges that they see as emerging in their ESP teaching.

Discussion

The discussion has sequenced the issues catering to the type they belong to, with the most frequently occurring issues followed by the less frequent ones and so on. Results from researches made in similar areas are also added in the discussion in order to provide a constant comparison with the existing data. The organizational pattern owes to one of the objectives of this discussion, that is, to serve as a guide book for ESP practitioners. The discussion on each issue is divided into four parts, viz. reasons for its occurrence, the effects it leaves on quality education, the solutions offered by ESP practitioners and finally, the solutions that emerged as a result of other researches done in similar area.

Student Motivation

The biggest issue in terms of frequency of occurrence, according to the ESP practitioners, is a lack of students' motivation in ESP classrooms. 80% of ESP practitioners complain about a lack of student motivation in their classrooms and give several reasons for this. These range from non-serious attitudes on part of the students; long class time duration, bad physical classroom condition, inappropriate syllabus designs, attendance systems, misdirected objectives of the students, and some psychological reasons like students' shyness in learning English or their considering it as a burden.

The students' lack of interest and shyness in learning English language can be tackled with patience and perseverance on part of the ESP practitioner. There are several solutions given by the practitioners themselves in order to diminish this issue to the maximum ranging from good lesson planning, bringing about a variety in classroom activities, rearranging seating positions of the students for different activities, throwing in some "tit-bits" every now and then, negotiating and describing the importance of English language learning to them to remembering names of the students, giving individual consultation to the students and conducting pair work activities instead of group work activities. In order to eliminate shyness, however, the students

can be made to practice more and more. If the students are not happy with the class tests, they can be evaluated on the basis of their summative examination.

A similar solution to this issue is given by Tsui (1996:160) who suggests that "allowing students to check their answers with their peers before offering them to the whole class also encourages students to speak up". Wong *et al.* (1994) are of the opinion that arranging small group discussions before proceeding on to the real exchange of ideas might in turn prove helpful, for it will provide the students with more confidence and security and they will feel free to participate in the ongoing debate/discussion.

Classroom Size

The second major issue that 19 out of 30 ESP practitioners claim to come across is that of large number of students in an ESP class (Note Class#5 and Class#6 in Fig.3). There are several reasons like lack of funds, saving time, lack of teaching faculty that force the administrators to combine several classes into one large group. The effects it brings, other than ineffective teaching, are lack of proper student evaluation, teacher's inability to conduct activities in the class properly and a lack of students' motivation.
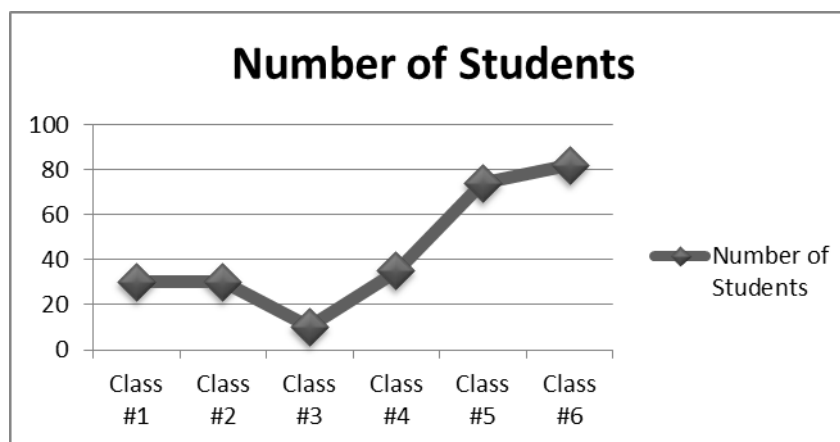

Fig.3 Number of students per ESP class

ESP practitioners have developed different strategies in order to deal with the issue of large sized classes like asking for an extension in time duration, dividing large classes into smaller sections and arranging separate classes for them, taking help from the more intelligent students of the class in evaluation and group work activities, taking work home, giving feedback by grouping similar issues together and assigning pair work activities where the sitting arrangement is linear (e.g. seminar rooms). Complaining the administration about large classes is not a good idea since these complaints usually go unheard. Another "don't" is combining several sections in case the classroom size is too small, since this will increase the diversity in the nature of class.

A solution to this issue is given by The ELT Weekly Newsletter which offers a 14-module teacher training video series, Module 6 of which corresponds to the issue of managing large classes. It was produced in cooperation with the University of Oregon. (ELT Weekly Newsletter Vol. 2 Issue #76, 2010)

Course Content Selection

The third issue regarding ESP teaching that came out from the results of this study is that of finding relevant course contents. The contents are either irrelevant to the culture and/or are not in accordance with the students' needs. Its irrelevance branches up several other issues like making urgent changes in course outlines and/or redesigning the courses within a short period of time and/or a lack of student motivation. The question as to why the contents selected turn out to be irrelevant when implemented in the class has more than one answers: lack of freedom/ interest on part of the ESP practitioner, unavailability of standardized outlines, inappropriate system of conducting needs analysis, lack of authentic material, outdated libraries, unavailability of refresher courses for the ESP practitioners and a their lack of awareness regarding internet and its use.

This, in turn, leaves some effects and brings up more issues like lack of student motivation and their understanding of the subject, disciplinary problems, ineffective teaching and the ESP practitioner's inability to achieve the desired results. Since most of the issues are interlinked, it is hard to decide whether the hen came first or the egg.

In order to minimize the effects of irrelevant course content selection, some solutions are offered by the practitioners: conducting proper needs analysis, incorporating revised and standardized outlines in the curriculum, improvisation in the standard of books, enhancement in materials' relevance to culture and society, designing course contents instead of importing them and taking help from internet, colleagues, experts and libraries.

Hayati (2008) suggests that the ESP practitioners ought not to be too concerned about authenticity in the language classroom. They should rather trust the sociolinguistic capabilities, experience and educational knowledge of their students. Perhaps the momentary artificiality experienced in the language classrooms can be ignored for a while in order to keep more focus on assigning the right kind of tasks to the learners.

Designing/Redesigning Syllabus

The fourth most popular issue among the ESP practitioners is that of designing/ redesigning the syllabi. There are several issues within this issue but first the reasons as to why the syllabus needs to be revised or redesigned should be considered. For example, mismatch between course title and course contents, insufficient time allotment, lack of proper needs analysis conduction and class diversity. The situation in Pakistan is well expressed by Johns (1991), "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." This effect the students' comfort level and their comprehension regarding their syllabus, and consumes more time, effort and money from the institution as well as the teachers. These issues can be tackled with by offering teacher training programs, involving teachers in the process of syllabus designing, conducting a proper needs analysis, allowing small changes to be made afterwards and motivating the teachers for self-study in order to understand the theory of ESP.

Class Heterogeneity

The fifth issue that a ratio of more than half of the ESP practitioners comes across is that of class heterogeneity. In Pakistan, as in any other country of the world, an ESP class comprises of students of different demographics, that is, different educational, socio linguistic and socio

economic backgrounds. The ESP practitioner faces several issues due to the reason that the ESP courses are developed for students having a common objective, no matter what their demography is. This objective can be academic and/or professional. This results in an increase in classroom heterogeneity, a diversity in class dynamics, a need for thorough needs analysis and a set of different evaluation criteria for different students.

This issue can be dealt with if the class teacher gives extra time to the less proficient students or arrange a zero semester, by dividing the class into sub-sections or groups, encouraging peer help and showing leniency regarding evaluation of the weak students in the beginning.

A study at Kuwait University Language Centre suggests that well made comprehensive objective tests and direct-proficiency performance tests are indispensible in bringing about homogeneity in an English language classroom (Mason, 2002). According to Gatehouse (2001), "Minimum entrance standards must be established in the areas of language level, motivation, and prior education and experience. Most importantly, these standards must be strictly enforced at the time of placement" (Gatehouse, 2001). In an article on classroom management, Rana (2010) points out that the differences in ability go side by side with variation in learners' background of the social-cultural-linguistic tripod. He claims that the responsibility falls on the teachers to choose themes and topics that lie in accordance with the learners' needs and interest.

Poor EGP Background of Students

In Pakistan, mostly the EGP knowledge of the students provides the ESP institutions with a perception of the students' needs. EGP course books are considered as a set basis on which the ESP courses are developed. Unfortunately though, other than a few students in a class, most of the students have a very low understanding level of general English. Almost half of the ESP practitioners who were interviewed claimed that the students do not understand the basic sentence structures and parts of speech. This brings a sort of double challenge for the ESP teacher; first to build an EGP foundation and then to work on the skills. There are several reasons for this poor EGP background of the students: exam oriented EGP courses, rote learning, lack of competent teachers and good material, and students' habit of taking EGP examinations.

These issues create a lot of effects on ESP teaching, like students' demand to be taught by GTM method or local language and their non-responsive attitude. Yogman & Kaylani (1996) support Gatehouse's (2001) point that when the minimum proficiency level required to initiate an ESP course is not met by the learners, they lag far behind in comprehending the assigned content activities and keep struggling to catch up with the general language proficiency instead.

This can be solved in various ways; by applying ESP courses at matriculation or higher secondary level, by providing competent teachers at nursery level, by re-designing books of primary, secondary and higher secondary level, and by making a separate section of students with poor EGP background.

The issue of poor EGP background of ESP students is not just confined to Pakistani settings. Zohrabi (2005) complains that there are obvious short comings in the General English courses in Iran due to which most of the university students are unable to comprehend specialist texts. The European scenario is not much different either. The situation of poor EGP background of students persists in countries like Spain too. Palacios (2007) suggests that one way of resolving this issue is to encourage communication between the secondary (EGP) school teachers and the tertiary (ESP) level teachers. This will give a boost to the flow of information exchange among them and will lend them a forum to share their experiences, discuss present issues and find out possible ways of solving them. Gatehouse (2001) solved this issue by referring the students with poor EGP background either to their teachers or their peers for clarification and help. Meanwhile, the advanced students were encouraged to detail as much information as possible, carry out enhanced reading related to their topics and themes and lend a hand to their classmates as well.

Students Evaluation

Evaluating the students has always been an issue for the ESP practitioners. Almost half of the ESP practitioners claim that they face difficulty in evaluating the students of their respective ESP classes. There are, however, reasons as to why they face such difficulty, for instance, large classroom size, unavailability of proper guidelines for evaluation and the students ignorance regarding the evaluation criteria.

This creates some limitations regarding evaluation for the ESP practitioner; tasks like essay writing cannot be assigned, level of student motivation decreases, back-benchers do not get assessed, students with humble EGP background experience a lack of motivation, ESP teacher faces difficulty in practicing uniformity in the classroom, students do not know what is expected of them.

The ESP practitioners have come up with a number of solutions for these issues, like opting for objective type questions in examination, conducting peer evaluation, group evaluation and/or whole class evaluation, teaming up of teachers to set one evaluation criteria, showing leniency to the less-able students in the beginning, and asking the institution for provision of proper guidelines for evaluation.

Use of A/V Aids

Regarding A/V aids, its use and availability were the two major issues that the ESP practitioners face and there are several reasons to it. Seven out of thirty ESP practitioners claimed that A/V aids and multi media are the demand of an ESP class and are needed but they are not provided by the institutions. They are reluctant to provide this facility as most of them are commercialized and want to earn more and spend less. One tenth of them complained about the power cuts that become a hurdle in the use of A/V aids and multi media in the classrooms. The institutions do not have an alternate electricity provision. Some of the teachers do not have a know-how of handling A/V aids and other multi media in the classroom. There are several useful soft wares and devices, the use of which is unknown to ESP practitioners. In some cases, the students are not comfortable with the use of technology in the class because they are not habitual of it, while in others, the ESP practitioner does not prefer the use of multi media in the classroom because students tend not to listen and keep focusing on the slides. They know that they are going to get a copy of the slides anyway.

Interestingly, however, the ESP practitioners have come up with solutions to these issues such as, asking the administration for the provision of A/V aids, collecting funds to purchase technology, installing generators, terminating activity in case of power cut and switching on to some other activity, offering teacher training or peer help for the use of multi media and bringing

about a consistency in its use in order to familiarize the students of projectors and other multi media in the classrooms.

A recent study at Alza'eem Alazhari University came up with similar solution to this problem. Ibrahim (2009) recommends that the ESP practitioners either have to make use of modern technologies or at least include A/V aids according to the needs of the students in order to make the them learn and to enhance their level of motivation.

Teaching Methodology

The ESP practitioners face certain issues regarding teaching methodology due to several reasons, like lack of knowledge of language teaching tools, large classroom size, heterogeneous classes and bolted desks.

This holds a direct effect on teaching efficiency, classroom management, students' responsive attitude, their understanding of the activities, their level of shyness, and on conducting classroom activities.

The practitioners offer several solutions for these issues like introducing different teaching methodologies, their significance and use, to the teachers via workshops or seminars and planning lessons with the help of senior colleagues and/or experts, assigning mediators to groups while conducting group work activities, abstaining from too much experimentation in methodology adaptation, following GTM initially and encouraging students' participation in classroom activities in order to eliminate issues like shyness, piloting tasks on smaller groups before assigning them to the whole class and asking the management for classes where the desks are not fixed. The pair/group work activities should be arranged in a manner that every student's presence be made necessary in order to complete the task. "It is best if each participant has "unique, essential information" or distinctive role to play" (Nation, 1997).

The teacher should not act like delivering an authoritative non-stop monologue and should not go to the class unprepared. She should not be partial and should avoid screaming and shouting on students and/or making empty threats to non-serious students. The tasks assigned to the learners should be devoid of monotony (Rana, 2010). Ibrahim (2009) recommends that the

teachers' approach should be student centered, i.e. in an adult learner class, the teacher should concentrate on learners' interaction rather than delivering redundant lectures and overwhelming the contents with complicated lists of words and boring grammar exercises. A variety of assessment techniques need to be employed "focusing on the development of whole brain capacity and each of the different learning styles" (Ibrahim, 2010).

Teacher Training/Competency

All researches interested in assessing the progress of ESP as a component of ELT agree that one of the most constraining factors to this progress is the lack of "specialized teacher-training" (Swales1985: 214)

Although the issue of teacher training holds its position as the tenth major issue in ESP teaching as deduced by the research results, yet the gravity of this issue can be judged by the figure present in the pie chart below:
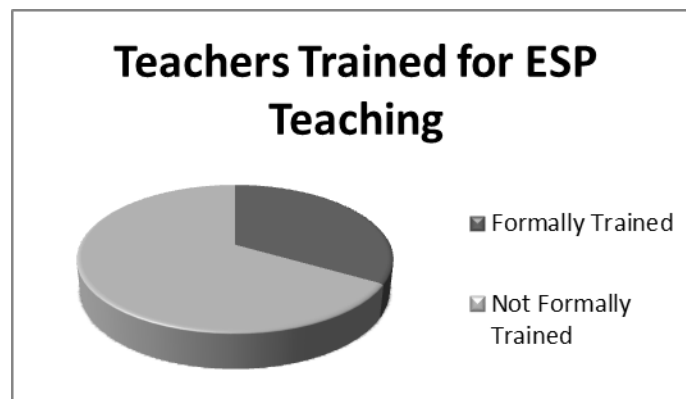

Fig.4 Percentage of ESP trained teachers

The chart represents the fact that almost 66 percent ESP practitioners in Pakistan are not formally trained for ESP teaching, while the remaining lot either studied ESP as a subject in their post-graduate degree courses, diplomas or certificates, or got their training through HEC teacher training program.

I shall emphasize the importance of this issue by the results presented in Shamim's (2006) report on a case study of organization of English language teaching in the universities of Pakistan:

"It was found that… more often than not visiting teachers were hired for teaching of English on considerations other than the teachers' capacity to design and teach a quality program of English. Thus,… English was taught by teachers who lacked the necessary capacity, skills and motivation for using innovative methodology or assessment practices." (Shamim, 2006)

The only reason for the lack of ESP teacher training in Pakistan is the absence of ESP culture in this country. There are no refresher courses available, nor workshops and seminars in order to update the ESP practitioners about their present responsibilities, students' current objectives and the changing world. Preparing the teachers for their upcoming tasks will minimize several issues adhered to ESP teaching and their effects to the maximum.

These effects are summarized below:

a) Teachers inducted to offer knowledge of communication are often not aware of the parts of speech especially in Government institutions. Some of them belong to Urdu medium background and are not well versed in communication themselves.

b) The teachers are unable to sort out the students' needs in a proper way.

c) They are found naïve when it comes to designing and implementing syllabi for different ESP courses. Therefore, either they develop ESP courses based on their instincts or do not take the responsibility of designing them at all, thus shifting the entire burden on the administrators.

d) Lesson planning, class management and time management issues occur.

e) Due to a lack of English teaching faculty, some institutions combine several sections/ classes into one large class and assign an ESP practitioner to teach it. This in turn brings several issues like handling a diverse classroom, teaching large classes, student motivation, evaluation, feedback and discipline problems.

The ESP practitioners offered several solutions for these issues:

a) The untrained ESP teaching staff can either be changed or trained.

b) ESP teacher training is essential if we want ESP to flourish and work for the students. Teacher training programs can be launched for the untrained ESP practitioners, which will enlighten them with the theory and practice of ESP. They will also serve as an attraction to get more people into ESP teaching if they are offered free of cost.

c) Workshops and seminars on ESP can be conducted to increase teacher motivation and awareness.

A similar situation exists in other parts of the world as well. China is facing a shortage of well trained and qualified staff for Business English Teaching. According to Li (2010), these teachers hold more responsibilities than a common language teacher or a subject teacher.

Linguistic Audit/Needs Analysis

The concept of linguistic audit in Pakistan is still at the inception stage. Usually there is no formal needs analysis conducted before starting an ESP course. The students' existing level of proficiency and target situations are perceived in different ways, like taking students' opinions on what they think they need, which can be misleading. Again, the only reason for this is explicitly the lack of ESP teacher training and indirectly, the lack of ESP culture in Pakistan. When the needs of the students are not thoroughly investigated in order to design a course for them, it affects ESP teaching in more than one way. This leaves the following impacts on ESP teaching:

a) Since the teachers are not trained, they usually rely on their intuition and students' responses as to what they think they need which is not equivalent to what they need.

b) Since the courses are not needs oriented, they do not serve the true objective of the learners.

c) In a majority of cases, the course outline is provided by the institution.

d) Designed courses need to be redesigned when implemented in the class since their ineffectiveness surfaces at that point.

ESP teacher training is the solution to it. The teachers have general know-how of linguistics, but not an in-depth knowledge of their work. Training them can prove fruitful. If the teachers are

not trained, the administration can conduct a needs analysis and provide the teaching faculty with an outline to develop their courses on. Consultation with ESP experts and doing a self-study on ESP can also serve well.

Teacher Feedback

Every 1 out of 3 ESP practitioners comes across issues related to giving feedback to the students. There is either no system of feedback or the teacher faces a shortage of time in giving individual feedback due to large classes and short time duration for each class. Giving objective feedback is also a difficult task. In turn, the front benchers and/or the more active students get constant feedback while the back benchers are devoid of it. Also, subjectivity on part of the teacher is inherent in the feedback. The question as to how this issue can be resolved has various replies to it:

a) Individual feedback can be given to the students at the back of their assignments or exam papers in the form of suggestions. Students can, at times, react to the feedback given to them in a sensitive way, so the ESP practitioner should be diplomatic in pointing out their errors while not making them feel bad about it. According to an ESP practitioner,
   "No doubt it is a right thing, but if wrongly done, can lead to trouble."
b) Assignments can be checked, similar errors can be grouped together and then feedback can be given on those errors. This will save time and effort on part of the teacher.
c) The ESP practitioner should try to eliminate subjectivity in his/ her feedback.

Class Time Duration

Class time duration decided by the administration sometimes creates issues for ESP practitioners. There are several reasons for this: voluminous courses, evaluation of large classes, feedback to large classes, no time estimated for needs analysis conduction. This results in ineffective teaching, teachers' inability to provide the students with evaluation and feedback on individual level and their inability to conduct needs analysis. The ESP practitioners offered several ways to tackle with this issue:

a) Either the course contents can be reduced or time duration be increased.

b) Either the number of students per class can be reduced and/or class duration or course duration can be increased.

c) As for bad time management, proper training and planning can solve this issue.

d) Feedback and evaluation can be given in the form of groups or the teacher can ask the administrators for an extension in class duration.

e) Johns (1990) suggests that a resource bank of pooled materials be made available to all ESP instructors in order to deal with this issue as this will prove to be time saving.

f) Gatehouse (2001) proposes that a list of ESL publishers be made available online for all curriculum developers of ESP. In addition to this, since googling the websites is time consuming, review copies can be made available instantly on request.

Understanding Specific Vocabulary

Sometimes the ESP practitioner encounters issues regarding understanding of the contents or the specific vocabulary items related to different fields that he/she is teaching. In order to practice effective and wholesome teaching, it is necessary for the ESP practitioners to have a complete grasp on the contents they are teaching. The difficulty in understanding the specified vocabulary can be on many levels and there can be more than one reasons for that, e.g. drawing of items from other languages, understanding specific concepts since they are culturally bound and understanding topics and themes since the books are written in foreign context. As a result, the teacher makes a fool of himself/ herself while explaining the text and the students lose interest. Therefore, in order to see to this issues, choices can be made in selecting the text that is not too specialized and/or context bound, intelligent students can be taken help of in order to explain complex terms and outside help can be sought from colleagues, senior teachers, subject teachers, books, dictionaries, print media, etc.

Maintaining Classroom Discipline

Maintaining classroom discipline in an ESP class is not a very difficult task since ESP mostly deals with adult education. The ratio of complaints from the teachers' side is rather low. Only 2 out of 15 teachers find it difficult to maintain discipline in their respective ESP classrooms due to some reasons; the problem peaks when a new batch of students arrive since they are untamed

for group activities, etc., sometimes the university students go on strikes and sometimes they are seen as bargaining for an increase in their marks because they are habitual of it. As a result, the ESP classroom presents an aura of extreme nervousness and excitement and the students at times do not attend classes. In order to tackle with this issue, the following strategies can be adopted:

a) Pair work, instead of group work, can be assigned to the students.

b) Marks can be assigned to keeping discipline in the class. The students will know that they are being noticed for their acts and will be evaluated for it.

c) In case of strikes, the ESP practitioner can ignore the students' move and conduct the class anyway. According to an ESP practitioner, it worked for her. Initially, the number of students was less in her class but gradually it increased.

d) Some strictness can be shown to those bargaining for marks or the evaluation criterion can be explained to them before giving them a task/ test.

e) If some students are unwilling to cooperate or creating disturbance, their seats can be changed.

According to Rana (2010), explaining anti-social behavior and a heart to heart talk can be beneficial in taking care of disciplinary issues.

Implementation of Syllabus

One out of 30 ESP practitioner faced problem from the administrative side regarding the implementation of devised syllabi. Although the ratio is very small, the issue is weighty. The only reason is that the administration does not permit ESP practitioners to implement their designed syllabi. They prefer giving course outlines to them and in some cases providing them with a compiled syllabus instead of relying on faculties of untrained ESP practitioners. As a result, students complain that the contents are *too updated* and at times irrelevant. The ESP practitioner can try to satisfy the administration through dialogue and underhand satisfy the students by making minor changes according to the students' needs; he/she can opt for a balanced approach.

Future Challenges

There are a number of issues that the ESP practitioners came up with, other than the ones explained above. I have to include them exclusively since they do not belong to the list of probes that I prepared for my interview questions. In fact, they stand outside the expected boundary of the realm of this research but reveal important and useful information.

1. Pronunciation of certain vocabulary words borrowed from other languages had always been an issue, according to an ESP practitioner. Help was taken from colleagues in this regard.

2. The course title did not match the qualification of an ESP practitioner. She was supposed to take a class of Business Communication while her qualification at that time was Masters in English Literature.

3. According to an ESP practitioner, the students needed a course in EAP but the outlines given catered more to their EOP needs. A finer distinction had to be explained to the administrators in order to redevelop a relevant course outline.

4. One ESP practitioner elucidates what he foresees as a future issue for an ESP practitioner in Pakistan. In the future, students will come up with different objectives and specialized vocabulary and expressions. More field-specific vocabulary will emerge. There will be more fields like, English for Development Purposes (Karn, 1994), English for Teachers (since English is required right from the nursery level nowadays), English for Internet, English for Mobile Phone Texting, etc. Due to globalization, there will be an enormous explosion of vocabulary and a mixture of Englishes will be required by the students according to their needs. For example, Japanish, Indianish, Chinglish, etc. In order to overcome situations as these, the ESP practitioners need to be more dynamic in their approach; keep themselves sentient and updated about the demands of the world, learn to make use of the internet, listen to news channels, watch dramas/ movies, etc.

5. Another issue put by the same practitioner as upcoming in the future is that of a steep increase in the number of students in ESP institutions. More trained teachers are therefore needed and so are teacher training institutions required because the teacher training programs run by the Government offer a very minute number of seats and cannot supply sufficient

amount of trained English teaching faculty. Commercialized private institutions can fulfill these demands as can be seen in America and Britain where these institutions are certified by their higher education commission and/or educational ministries.

6. In Pakistan, there are high chances of Academic English to flourish because the avenues of HEC are offering more M.Phil and PhD programs for the students. This, in turn, will bring several issues for the ESP practitioner and will demand a complete training on his/her part.

7. A couple of ESP practitioners complained about the fact that the students had a lot of difficulty in accepting a very young person as their teacher. They were non serious in the beginning, but the practitioners managed to solve this issue with good planning and having a good grip on their subject.

8. In certain cases, the heads of other departments were not willing to let their students know about English since they thought that it involves inculcating all those practices which constitute English culture. Sometimes, this attitude came from the parents' and the students' side too. They had to be negotiated with and told about the significance of English language learning.

9. According to some ESP practitioners, the teachers are mostly self-motivated. Very little support is offered by the institutions. The service structure, therefore, needs to be improved in order to bring about an increase in the teacher motivation level.

10. According to an ESP practitioner, her students did not know how to attempt the exam questions since they were unfamiliar with the format. Details can be provided before the exam, in the class, about the type of questions and evaluation the students are going to face.

11. The question as to how to get more people in ESP teaching is quite an issue nowadays. An ESP practitioner suggested that this objective can be achieved

   - By offering teacher training programs and

   - By offering ESP courses in the institute and making them attractive.

   - Arranging workshops and seminars are a waste of time and money since no theory is taught in them. Without understanding the theory, the teachers cannot understand ESP.

12. In the future, according to one, there will be problems faced by teachers and students who do not accept ESP as an emerging field/ a research based field. Researchers can be trained,

media can be used to showcase the importance of ESP and seminars can be conducted for awareness purposes.

13. For another ESP practitioner, the biggest issue that she sees ahead is the self challenging aim of doing better with every new batch. When handed over a class of different area/ subject, the teacher can try to locate researches that have already been made in that area so that he/she can have some idea of the problems that he/ she might encounter.

14. Team teaching of subject/ content teacher and language teacher is a new concept. Therefore, issues might emerge regarding this new notion of their working in collaboration for course designing/ implementation, etc. I shall quote Gatehouse (2001) to reinforce the existence of this issue as,

> *"... we could not teach the restricted repertoire in isolation. What is more, it was highly unreasonable to assume that the content instructor would take on the role of ESL instructor."* (Gatehouse, 2001)

15. Some ESP practitioners are not aware of the fact that they are teaching ESP. such teachers either are not willing to understand their responsibilities or ignore the idea. New teachers can be hired for better future results.

16. ESP practitioners should be good researchers as well. Nowadays, however, the researches done are focused more towards achieving fame and not for learning. They are not in-depth studies. Their quality should be assured.

Further Discussion and Conclusion

The above discussion adduces an obvious interconnectedness between the issues. A line of demarcation, however, can be drawn between them regarding their dependence. The first nine issues presented in the graph, viz. *Linguistic Audit/ Needs Analysis, Course Content Selection, Designing/ Redesigning Syllabus, Understanding Specific Vocabulary, Implementation of Syllabus, Teaching Methodology, Use of A/V Aids, Student Evaluation* and *Teacher Feedback* prove themselves to be dependent on the next seven issues, viz. *Classroom Size, Student Motivation, Classroom Heterogeneity, Class Time Duration, Maintaining Classroom Discipline, Teacher Training/ Competency and Poor EGP Background of Students.* I may, therefore, bifurcate these sixteen issues into an array of two; *Dependent Issues and Independent Issues*. A decrease in the intensity of an independent issue will result in a direct decrease in the intensity of

all its dependent issues. It is therefore suggested that more focus be given on eliminating independent issues like Classroom Size, Class Time Duration, etc. since they tend to preclude perfection in the practice of tasks like Student Evaluation, Teaching Methodology, etc.

To conclude, we shall extract the essence of the above discussion and place it in a network diagram in order to demonstrate the persisting interconnectedness as well as the dependence/ independence of the issues that are mentioned in the discussion above. As can be seen in Fig.5, for instance, Classroom Size acts as an independent issue generating issues related to Needs Analysis, Student Evaluation, Teacher Feedback and so on.
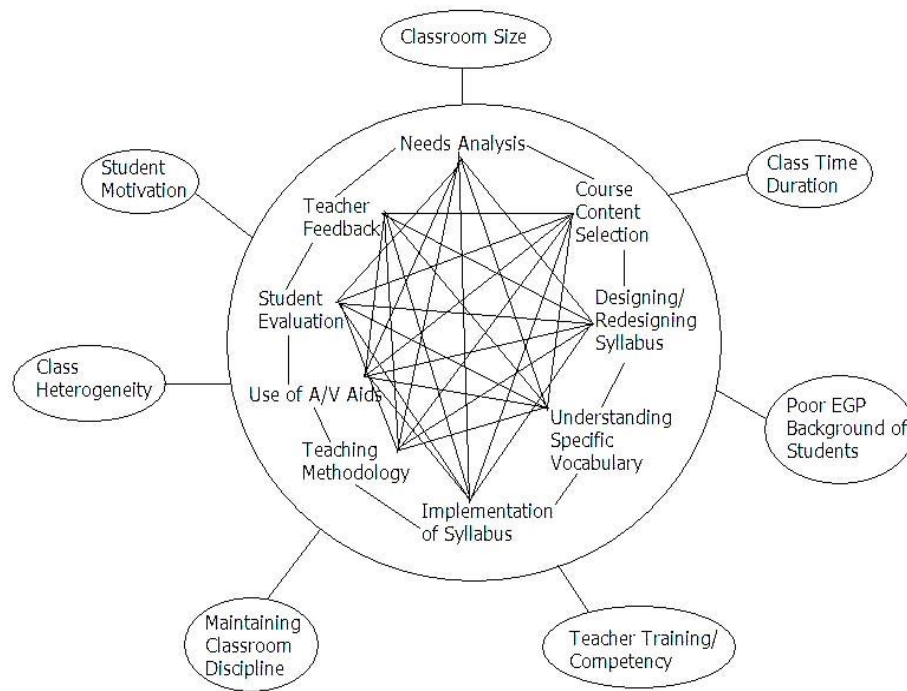

Fig.5 Interconnectedness found between the issues

An estimated ratio of the interconnectedness between different variables needs to be searched under the scrutiny of particular ESP settings in order to investigate into the very fundamentals of their nature and intensity. This gives the future researchers an opportunity to explore the intricacies weaved in the ESP teaching phenomenon through empirical methods. The results of

this discussion (the provided solutions in particular) are not specified for Pakistani ESP settings. Rather they can be generalized and applied to all similar situations in South East Asia and abroad.

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Appendix
Interview Questions from ESP Practitioners
Biography

Name	Institution	Contact Number
_____	_____	_____

Have you been formally trained for ESP teaching? If yes, was it a degree/ diploma/ certificate?
How long have you been into ESP teaching?

Phase I: Issues that you encountered when you started ESP teaching
Did you encounter any issue when you first started your job as an ESP practitioner?
What were those issues?
Probes: Issues regarding…
- ➢ Analyzing the students' needs
- ➢ Choosing relevant course content
- ➢ Material development
- ➢ Course implementation
- ➢ Teaching methodologies
- ➢ Use of A/V aids and other multi media in the classrooms
- ➢ Classroom management
- ➢ Student motivation
- ➢ Class evaluation and assessment
- ➢ Feedback
- ➢ Time availability
- ➢ Class heterogeneity
- ➢ Class size

Did you deal with them successfully? If yes, how?

Phase II: Issues that you are encountering nowadays (mention the time elapsed from the first teaching)
Do you still encounter issues regarding ESP teaching?
What are those issues?
Do you have their solutions? If yes, how do you deal with them?
Are there issues that you are unable to solve?
What are those issues?

Phase III: Challenges that in your opinion might emerge in the future
Do you think there are challenges regarding ESP teaching that might emerge as time passes?
What are those challenges?
Do you think they can be tackled with? If yes, how?