

Towards a Sustainable Curriculum for ESAP Teacher Training Program: A Profile of ESAP Content Specialists' vs. Language Instructors' Needs

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Abstract

The first and most crucial step towards developing a sustainable curriculum for instructors teaching English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) is a needs analysis. Therefore, the main aim of conducting this study was to investigate the in-service needs of language instructors and content specialists teaching ESAP and to spot the differences between the needs of these two groups in order to provide them with systematic treatments in ESAP teacher training programs. This mixed method study was designed on a qualitative-quantitative survey basis using a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, and an observation checklist. The analysis of the data collected from 50 content specialists and 50 language instructors completing the questionnaires reveals that there is a significant difference between the in-service needs of these two groups, that is, language instructors desire more to be trained in an in-service ESAP teaching training program in terms of professional, procedural and personal needs. Furthermore, the results of the data obtained from the semi-structured interview and the observation of 20 of the above-mentioned instructors (i.e., 10 content specialists and 10 language instructors) indicate that language instructors have more difficulty selecting suitable materials, suffer more from low income, attitudinal difficulties and backwash effect compared to their counterparts teaching ESAP courses. It can be inferred that the results of the present study can sufficiently help the researchers to embark on an in-service teacher training program both for ESAP content specialists and language instructors based on their specific needs in the ESAP context.

Keywords: in-service teacher training program, content specialists, language instructors, instructors' needs, ESAP courses.

Introduction

Today in the developing world of science almost all university students need to have a supreme command of English in order to be able to have an unrestricted access to a wider variety of resources in their subject-specific field of study; owing to this fact, ESP courses in general and EAP courses in particular gain crucial importance. Robinson (1991) points out that ESP is an enterprise which has its root in three major disciplines

including language, pedagogy and the students' special field of study. She notes that one of the crucial implications that arises from the term "English for specific purposes" is that it is context-specific; in other words, it is sensitive to particularities of the learning situations in which particular learners work toward particular set of goals. Due to this fact, a universal definition of ESP is likely to be unattainable; however, she introduces needs analysis as one of the serious concerns of ESP and includes in her definition of the term ESP two major criteria: *a) goal-oriented*: According to this criteria, the reason that the students study English is not their interest in it, rather, this is the need of English for study or work purposes which is considered as a driving force behind them, and *b) needs analysis*: She notes that the ESP course evolves from needs analysis which 'aims to specify as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English' (Robinson, 1991, p. 3). Along with these criteria, she enumerates some other characteristics of the ESP course which are not considered as permanent. These characteristics are mentioned as follows:

- 1) In ESP course the specification and realization of the objectives are accommodated into the time available during the program.
- 2) The ESP courses are usually addressed to the adult learners rather than children.
- 3) The ESP courses are generally presented to the students majoring in a common field of study.
- 4) In ESP courses, the appropriate activities determined through *needs analysis* are prioritized over the inclusion of the specialist language and content.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) refers to the language course in which a close attention is devoted to the specific needs that the students have in order to undertake study or work in a particular discipline through the medium of English. ESAP is different from EGP (English for General Purposes) in that the latter aims at teaching of general language proficiency.

Therefore, teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been considered as a separated stream from general English language teaching considering the fact that some scholars such as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) consider ESP teacher as a "practitioner" who must adopt several vital roles namely, teacher, course designer, materials provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator of courses.

As it was mentioned above, ESP courses demand their own methodology and as a result they preferably require instructors who are trained for the sake of teaching these courses; however, this is one of the most controversial issues in the ESP/EAP literature because contrary to the ones saying that ESP methodology is basically different from EGP, there are some scholars saying that there is nothing specific to ESP methodology. Among these scholars are Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who say that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language or a particular kind of methodology, rather, it is an approach based on which all the decisions will be made by considering the learners' needs. The proponents of these scholars who outnumber the proponents of the former group just focus on the learners' need and do not pay specific attention to the teachers' needs, the materials designers' needs, the institutional needs, and the needs of other groups who involve in the process of ESP teaching and learning.

The term 'needs analysis' was first used by Michael West in India in 1920s when he endeavored to understand why and how learners learn English. He found that the purpose of learning English was to read and the route to learning was reading. West was teaching

the students who were referred to as TENOR (Teaching English for No Obvious Reason) by Abbot (1981, p. 12). As West mentions the term disappeared until around 1970s and then reappeared for the main reasons of the work of Council of Europe and the early work in ESP (e.g. the ones done by LTDU, 1970; Stuart and Lee, 1972/1985). The Council of Europe categorized personnel and then classified their needs into four categories of understanding, speaking, reading and writing; however, LTDU (1970) and Stuart and Lee (1972/1985) made a more detailed analysis especially on business language and classified the needs of the personnel based on the situations and tasks required by them. Basturkmen (2006) defines needs analysis as the process of identifying the language needs of different parties. In addition, Brown (1995) completes this definition saying that needs analysis pertains to the systematic collection of subjective and objective information needed for the purpose of justifying the goals of a curriculum. Graves (2009) contends that in order to plan an educational program some question such as what will be taught, who will be taught, how it will be taught and how what is learned will be evaluated should be answered. He notes that needs analysis is a great help to plan a robust and sustainable curriculum. According to Besong and Holland (2015), the concept of sustainability is a complicated concept for which there is no single unified definition. They (p.7) contend that “sustainability is conceived as the ability to maintain something for a long time at a specific rate or level”.

Two perspectives are involved in needs analysis for designing a sustainable curriculum for the main aim of teacher education: a starting perspective and an ending perspective. The main aim of the former perspective is to gather information about the learners experiencing the curriculum (e.g. who they are, what they know and their experience). Taking into consideration the context of second language teaching education, the learners may be teachers who are referred to as teacher-learner. In the ending perspective some information about what teacher-learners should know and should be able to do as a result of educational experience will be obtained. The information gathered in this phase are considered as the goals of second language teacher education.

ESP instructors do require a specialized knowledge about the trends in the ESP instruction that can be obtained through both in-service programs and practical experience; however, uniform beliefs, techniques, methods and classroom activities have not yet been devised in the field especially in the Iranian context. Robinson (1991) notes that the variations in ESP courses and the institutions offering them is to the extent that makes it impossible to define a unitary model for ESP teachers. In a similar line, Mattheoudakis (2006) considers the factors relating to the cultural and professional context as well as the amount of theoretical and practical courses offered by the teacher training programs as the issues determining the structure of these programs. Jackson (1998) mentions that besides the regular tasks of a language teacher, an ESP practitioner has to manage some extra issues such as administrative, personnel, cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, curricular and pedagogic issues which may be considered as unfamiliar for ESOL teachers. Jackson (1998) continues saying that more is needed to be done in 3 major areas: a) the development and distribution of ESP case materials, b) teaching with ESP cases and c) research.

As it was mentioned above, ESP courses demand their own methodology and as a result they preferably require instructors who are trained for the sake of teaching these courses; however, today the problem lies in the dearth of research in the field that

investigate different aspects of pre-service and in-service teacher training programs in the ESP context in our country. To this end, the present study aims at filling this gap by identification of the ESP instructors' needs and wants in order to offer a comprehensive package which demonstrate the standard directions towards teaching ESP.

This was done by comparing the needs of two parties teaching ESAP courses namely the language instructors (i.e. instructors majoring in English language teaching) and content specialists (i.e. instructors majoring in a specific field of study and teaching the ESP of that field). Furthermore, a comprehensive model of language teachers' knowledge base was adopted for an in-depth analysis of the teachers' needs. Different classifications of language teachers' knowledge base including theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, contextual knowledge, knowledge of learning, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of English, teaching skills, communication skills, decision making, personal reasoning and etc. have been proposed by various scholars (Andrews, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Elbaz, 1983; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Han, 2011; Richards, 1998; Shulman, 1986a, 1987; Tsui, 2003; Zhu, 2013); however, Kumaravadivelu (2012) group all of these insights under three categories namely (a) professional knowledge; (b) procedural knowledge; and (c) personal knowledge.

Professional knowledge embraces the theories of language learning and teaching which are mainly derived from experts and professional journals and books. Procedural knowledge pertains to teachers' expertise in managing the activities of learning environment in general and the classroom in particular (e.g. grouping learners, planning lessons, designing tasks and activities, handling classroom interaction, etc.). Finally, teachers' beliefs formed after years of experience which involve teachers' own social, cultural, and institutional values, norms, and expectations can be grouped into the third category of knowledge base which is called personal knowledge.

Methodology

Design

In order to ensure that a more vivid and comprehensive picture of the ESAP teachers' needs is presented via this study and to reduce method-related bias, the researcher endeavored to report the findings that are based on the triangulation sources of data. Therefore, the results of the present structured interview, a questionnaire and an observation have been exploited as research instruments.

Participants

A total number of 100 ESAP instructors comprising 50 content specialists and 50 language instructors took part in this study. The participants are those who complied to complete the questionnaire among the ones to whom the questionnaire was sent. The instructors were teaching ESAP at universities in Isfahan, Yazd, Shiraz, Tehran, Tabriz, Urmia, Mashhad and Kerman. In addition, they were teaching ESAP to the students majoring in technical and medical fields of study namely the students of urban planning, computer engineering, entomology, medicine, dentistry, agricultural engineering, nursing,

architecture, accounting, electrical engineering and biology. Furthermore, 20 of the mentioned instructors (10 content specialists and 10 language instructors) teaching in Isfahan, the hometown of the researcher, were selected for the purpose of observation and semi-structured interview.

Instrument

Questionnaire for ESAP Instructors

For the main purpose of identifying the general and specific needs of ESAP instructors, the researcher consulted different ESAP teacher training programs and workshops as well as some programs such as CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and DELTA (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) which are designed for training teachers teaching general English courses.

Subsequently, a questionnaire for determining the most central needs of the ESAP teachers was developed based on the above-mentioned programs by the researcher. The questionnaire demonstrated an adequate internal consistency reliability of 0.75 based on the Cronbach's alpha coefficient measured for it. This is because according to DeVellis (2003, as cited in Pallant, 2007, p. 95), the ideal value for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be above 0.70.

The distributed questionnaire for ESAP instructor (Appendix A) contains three sections: Section A gathers some background information from participants, section B contains 30 items which were designed based on a 5-point likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" and section C allows the participants to provide the items related to teacher's needs which they believe were not included in the questionnaire. It should be noted here that the items in part B of the questionnaire are organized based on the Kumaravadivelu's (2012) classification of language teachers' knowledge base into three different categories of professional knowledge, procedural knowledge and personal knowledge. Besides, in order to ensure the validity of the measurement, the questionnaire was shown to 6 experts in the field and their comments were elicited and considered for revising it.

Observation

Each instructor (10 content specialists and 10 language instructors) was observed for 3 sessions in order to identify the major difficulties they experience while teaching to ESP students and to determine the topics for an effective teacher training course.

The navigational instrument applied in this phase of the study was the teacher evaluation rubrics devised by Marshall (2011). The rubrics embrace six domains comprising all aspects of a teacher's job performance namely: A) planning and preparation for learning, B) classroom management, C) delivery of instruction, D) monitoring, assessment and follow-up, E) family and community outreach and F) professional responsibilities. Each of the mentioned rubrics has ten subsections and they use a four level rating scale carrying the labels of: 4) highly effective, 3) effective, 2) improvement necessary and 1) does not meet standards; however, it should be noted here that sections E and F and five subsections in each rubric were considered as irrelevant to the present research and were subsequently eliminated after the implementation of pilot study.

Table 1

Teacher Evaluation Rubrics (adapted from Marshall, 2011)

| A. Planning and Preparation for Learning | B. Classroom Management | C. Delivery of Instruction | D. Monitoring, Assessment and Follow-up |
|---|---|---|--|
| a. Knowledge (familiarity with subject matter and how students learn) | a. Relationships (being respectful toward students) | a. Expectations (convincing the students that they can master the material) | a. Diagnosis (administering a diagnostic test at the beginning in order to fine-tune the instruction to the knowledge of the students) |
| b. Standards (having a plan which is compatible with high standards and external assessments) | b. Responsibility (developing students' self-discipline and decreasing their dependency on teacher) | b. Goal (providing a clear explanation about the main objectives of the lesson at the beginning of the instruction) | b. On-the-spot (checking the students understanding with effective methods) |
| c. Assessment (monitoring the students learning via diagnostic and summative assessments) | c. Efficiency (using every minute of instructional time to maximize academic learning) | c. Clarity (presenting the materials clearly by using suitable examples and appropriate language) | c. Interims (analyzing the tests and using the obtained data to adjust teaching) |
| d. Engagement (planning lessons which lead to the students' motivation and active engagement) | d. Prevention (preventing discipline problems instantly) | d. Repertoire (applying a range of effective teaching strategies and materials) | d. Analysis (analyzing the assessment data with colleagues to draw action conclusions) |
| e. Materials (exploiting effective and high quality materials) | e. Incentives (using incentives to encourage student cooperation) | e. Engagement (involving all the students in focused work and avoiding to be a passive lecturer) | e. Reflection (thinking about the effectiveness of the instruction and working toward its improvement) |

Interview

A semi-structured interview was carried out with the content instructors as well as the language instructors concerning the problems they usually confront in their ESAP classes. Furthermore, some questions were addressed to the students in order to understand their ideas regarding their instructors' blind spots. For the purpose of interview, a set of questions was prepared concerning the objectives and applicability of the materials that were used, the lesson plan, classroom interaction, the methodology applied, the role of mother tongue in ESAP classes and the students' needs and expectations.

Results

Content Instructors' and Language Instructors' Preferred Areas of Knowledge

The main purpose of this section is to explore the content instructors' and language instructors' preferences concerning the three areas of professional, procedural and personal knowledge in order to develop the base for the initial framework of in-service ESAP

teaching training course; therefore, to facilitate the interpretation of the results, the nominal categories ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ were reduced to ‘agree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ were reduced to ‘disagree’. Subsequently, In order to communicate the results and to answer the research question, the obtained data were processed and subjected to the statistical analysis using the SPSS software, that is, the percentage is obtained for the answers to each and every question included in the distributed questionnaire. Appendix A contains the questionnaire used in this study.

Table 2
Content Instructors’ Preferences

| | Agree | No idea | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------|----------|
| Identifying and analyzing learners’ needs and expectations | 42 | 0 | 58 |
| Identifying and analyzing learner characteristics | 54 | 0 | 46 |
| Designing ESAP tests | 62 | 0 | 38 |
| Establishing rapport | 32 | 0 | 68 |
| Professional websites, forums, and clubs | 26 | 32 | 42 |
| Learner’s different styles of learning | 16 | 16 | 68 |
| Different genres | 0 | 32 | 68 |
| Teacher roles | 16 | 0 | 84 |
| Disciplinary/professional culture | 12 | 0 | 88 |
| Theories of ESP learning | 6 | 0 | 44 |
| Professional knowledge | | | |
| How to teach reading | 44 | 0 | 56 |
| How to teach listening | 34 | 0 | 66 |
| How to teach speaking | 28 | 10 | 62 |
| How to teach writing | 46 | 0 | 54 |
| How to teach grammar | 46 | 0 | 54 |
| How to teach technical vocabulary | 60 | 0 | 40 |
| How to teach semi-technical vocabulary | 80 | 0 | 20 |
| How to teach general vocabulary | 56 | 0 | 44 |
| How to integrate language skills | 72 | 0 | 28 |
| lesson planning | 50 | 0 | 50 |
| Materials selection, adaptation and evaluation | 46 | 0 | 54 |
| Motivating learners | 20 | 22 | 58 |
| learner autonomy | 16 | 18 | 66 |
| Syllabus/course design | 24 | 12 | 64 |
| Increasing student talk time | 12 | 24 | 64 |
| Increasing L2 use in classroom and reducing L1 use and translation | 34 | 20 | 46 |
| Promoting classroom interaction | 34 | 0 | 66 |
| Dealing with Large classes | 30 | 0 | 70 |
| Procedural knowledge | | | |
| Adjusting personal beliefs to contextual realities | 54 | 0 | 46 |
| Critical reflection on personal beliefs about teaching and learning | 54 | 0 | 46 |
| Personal knowledge | | | |

Based on the results of the above table, more than 50% of the respondents showed their agreement for the 9 mentioned items in table 3. Therefore, these items can be considered as the priorities of the content instructors in an in-service ESAP teaching training course.

Table 3

Items that Can Be Included in an In-service ESAP Teacher Training Program Targeted to Content Specialists

| Item | Agreement (%) | Rank |
|--|---------------|------|
| 1. How to teach semi-technical vocabulary | 80 | 1 |
| 2. How to integrate language skills | 72 | 2 |
| 3. How to teach technical vocabulary | 62 | 3 |
| 4. Designing ESAP tests | 60 | 4 |
| 5. How to teach general vocabulary | 56 | 5 |
| 6. Identifying and analyzing learner characteristics | 54 | 6 |
| 7. Adjusting personal beliefs to contextual realities | 54 | 6 |
| 8. Critical reflection on personal beliefs about teaching and learning | 54 | 6 |
| 9. Lesson planning | 50 | 7 |

Table 4

Language Instructors' Preferences

| | Agree | No idea | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
| Identifying and analyzing learners' needs and expectations | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Identifying and analyzing learner characteristics | 82 | 18 | 0 |
| Designing ESAP tests | 94 | 0 | 6 |
| Establishing rapport | 64 | 36 | 0 |
| Professional websites, forums, and clubs | 76 | 24 | 0 |
| Learner's different styles of learning | 88 | 12 | 0 |
| Different genres | 72 | 16 | 12 |
| Teacher roles | 92 | 8 | 0 |
| Disciplinary/professional culture | 78 | 16 | 6 |
| Theories of ESP learning | 82 | 4 | 14 |
| Professional knowledge | | | |
| How to teach reading | 78 | 10 | 12 |
| How to teach listening | 70 | 12 | 18 |
| How to teach speaking | 70 | 18 | 12 |
| How to teach writing | 76 | 12 | 12 |
| How to teach grammar | 88 | 0 | 12 |
| How to teach technical vocabulary | 70 | 12 | 18 |
| How to teach semi-technical vocabulary | 76 | 12 | 12 |
| How to teach general vocabulary | 76 | 12 | 12 |
| How to integrate language skills | 70 | 14 | 16 |
| Lesson planning | 94 | 6 | 0 |
| Materials selection, adaptation and evaluation | 82 | 12 | 6 |
| Motivating learners | 92 | 0 | 8 |

Sequel to Table 4 see on the next page.

Sequel to Table 4.

| | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
| Learner autonomy | 70 | 18 | 12 |
| Syllabus/course design | 74 | 6 | 20 |
| Increasing student talk time | 94 | 6 | 0 |
| Increasing L2 use in classroom and reducing L1 use and translation | 64 | 12 | 24 |
| Promoting classroom interaction | 92 | 0 | 8 |
| Dealing with Large classes | 64 | 16 | 20 |
| Procedural knowledge | | | |
| Adjusting personal beliefs to contextual realities | 68 | 18 | 14 |
| Critical reflection on personal beliefs about teaching and learning | 70 | 22 | 8 |
| Personal knowledge | | | |

Table 4 indicates that the items that can be placed at top of the list as the interests of language instructors are as follows:

Table 5

Items that Can Be Included in an In-service ESAP Teacher Training Program Targeted to Language Instructors

| Item | Agreement (%) | Rank |
|---|---------------|------|
| 1. Identifying and analyzing learners' needs and expectations | 100 | 1 |
| 2. Designing ESAP tests | 94 | 2 |
| 3. Increasing student talk time | 94 | 2 |
| 4. Lesson Planning | 94 | 2 |
| 5. Motivating learners | 92 | 3 |
| 6. Teacher roles | 92 | 3 |
| 7. Promoting classroom interaction | 92 | 3 |
| 8. Learners' different styles of learning | 88 | 4 |
| 9. How to teach grammar | 88 | 4 |
| 10. Identifying and analyzing learner characteristics | 82 | 5 |
| 11. Materials selection, adaptation and evaluation | 82 | 5 |

Content Instructors' Needs Versus Language Instructors' Needs

In order to address the question of whether there was any difference in the educational needs of EFL teachers and field specialist ESP teachers with regard to professional area of teacher's knowledge, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. There was a significant difference in responses provided by content instructors ($M=29.90$, $SD=11.62$) and language instructors ($M=41.32$, $SD=4.36$); $t(-6.50)=62.56$, $p<0.005$ (two-tailed). Calculating the magnitude of the differences in the means (the effect size) revealed a large effect ($\eta^2 = 0.30$). Table 6 presents the findings of the comparison between the two groups regarding their professional needs.

Table 6

Independent-samples t-test Comparing Two Groups Regarding their Professional Needs

| Group | N | M | SD | Df | t | P |
|----------------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Content instructors | 50 | 29.90 | 11.62 | 62.56 | -6.50 | <0.005 |
| Language instructors | 50 | 41.32 | 4.36 | | | |

In addition, another independent-samples t-test was conducted in order to compare the two groups of ESAP teachers in terms of their procedural needs. As the results in table 2 indicate, there was a significant difference in the scores of content instructors ($M=50.92$, $SD=16.14$) and language instructors ($M=76.32$, $SD=13.72$); $t(-8.47)=95.52$, $p<0.005$ (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means showed a large effect ($\eta^2 = 0.42$).

Table 7

Independent-samples t-test Comparing Two Groups Regarding their Procedural Needs

| Group | N | M | SD | Df | t | P |
|----------------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Content instructors | 50 | 50.92 | 16.14 | 95.52 | -8.47 | <0.005 |
| Language instructors | 50 | 76.32 | 13.72 | | | |

Lastly, in order to discover the difference between content instructors and language instructors in terms of their personal knowledge, an independent-samples t-test was used. The results presented in table 8 indicate a significant difference between content instructors ($M=2.32$, $SD=1.23$) and language instructors ($M=4.22$, $SD=0.54$); $t(-9.94)=67.38$, $p<0.005$ (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means showed a large effect ($\eta^2 = 0.50$).

Table 8

Independent-samples t-test Comparing Two Groups Regarding their Personal Knowledge Needs

| Group | N | M | SD | Df | t | P |
|----------------------|----|------|------|-------|-------|--------|
| Content instructors | 50 | 2.32 | 1.23 | 67.38 | -9.94 | <0.005 |
| Language instructors | 50 | 4.22 | 0.54 | | | |

Summary of the Results of the Observation and the Semi-structured Interview

In order to spot the difficulties language instructors as well as content specialists experience while teaching English, to draw a comparison between these instructors and to outline a meticulous teacher training program for them, each instructor was observed for 3 sessions before the main phase of the study. The results of the observations are as follow:

Deficiency and Weakness in ESAP Materials

In 1985, SAMT (the official Iranian center for materials development) took over the responsibility of developing English language materials for students studying in different areas of specialization. The ESAP books published by SAMT usually include several lessons (ranging from 16 to 20) which cannot be covered in the limited time

available in one semester. Each lesson starts with a list of vocabulary followed by a text adopted from authentic materials with some adaptations and modifications. The texts are often accompanied by some comprehension questions and a paragraph for translation with serious neglect of speaking, writing, listening and the grammatical structures frequent in that specialized field of study.

The above-mentioned facts demonstrate that the general format of the books designed by SAMT induces translation as the principle method used in ESAP classes and subsequently does not leave room for other communicative skills necessary for ESAP students. Nazarova (1996) points out that in the current ESP programs, the focus is on providing specialized vocabulary and translating numerous texts. These inefficient methodologies along with the materials most of which are designed based on the traditional environmentalist approach are incompatible with the needs of the students and therefore will result in their poor motivation and participation during the course. Jordan (1997) mentions that materials can be effective when they are designed based on the learners' needs since when the learners find a relationship between their needs/wants and the subject-matter of the materials, they become strongly motivated.

Limited Knowledge of Materials Selection

The results of the observations in the present research demonstrate that language instructors are different from content specialists considering the issue of materials selection. The content instructors treat materials as the source book while language instructors consider materials as the course book.

Reinder (2013, p. 1) notes that "teaching is a delicate balancing act between conformity and creativity." He asserts that language is a personal and complex subject requiring the teachers to react appropriately to the various individuals, circumstances and challenges which are ingrained in teaching it. On the contrary, teachers must adhere to the set objectives, the planned curriculum and try to teach to the test. According to him, these constraints can be best manifested in the course book which can surrender the teacher's freedom with its prescribed content, sequencing, gradation, activities and assessment.

Although the course book is a necessity in the class, it does not mean that teachers are prohibited to bring their own creativity and teaching style to classroom. Edge and Wharton (1998) mention that experienced teachers are the ones who make deletions and bring about change into the tasks in the planning stage and they modify their plans in class in order to provide response to the interactions. Put it in other words, they consider the prescribed materials as a source book rather than a course book.

The results of the present research reveals that content instructors are more likely to use materials which are compatible with the needs and wants of the learners and also they can add endless variety to their teaching through teaching different materials in every session of their classes; however, it is obvious that language instructors are toughly restricted by the rules imposed by the ministry of education and by the language departments' heads.

Language Instructors' Low Income

One of the noticeable differences that exist among the content instructors and language instructors in the present study concerns their payment and position at university. Language instructors are mainly hourly paid instructors who are usually gripped

by the fear of layoff; however, content instructors are the ones who are officially hired by the ministry of science, research and technology and as a result they have a more stable job status and a fixed salary.

The hourly paid language instructors have always been experiencing the ever-worsening economic conditions of universities. Universities continue to allocate shoestring budget to the hourly paid instructors in a way that today these instructors are paid \$2 on average for each hour of teaching in Iran.

The slashed allocation of payment to the hourly paid ESP instructors has the following unfortunate outcomes in all phases of language teaching including preactive, reactive and post-active phases:

In the preactive phase, they have less impetus for syllabus designing, materials selection, evaluating the selected materials and getting ready before the actual phase of language teaching.

The wrong pronunciation of the vocabulary, lack of knowledge about the content area, bewilderment during teaching, presenting an unorganized lesson, inability to provide suitable answers to the students' questions and relying just on translation can be considered as the consequence of the neglect of this phase of teaching by hourly paid ESAP instructors; however, this does not mean that they are unable to observe the requirements of this stage.

Hourly paid instructors can design a careful lesson plan, select suitable materials and become ready for teaching even better than content instructors but due to their short income, they do not spend their time conducting such kinds of activities.

On the contrary, content instructors teaching ESAP have a more stable job and this motivates them to go ahead with a meticulous preparation. In addition, their constant readiness can be due to their expertise both in the specialist field of study and in teaching.

Regarding the latter, Tsui (2003) notes that expert teachers have mental lesson plans which sometimes accompany small notes. The mental lesson plan of content instructors can also be due to the fact that they always teach the ESAP course of a specific major; however, language instructors have to deal with students studying in different fields of study.

Working in these low-income contexts results in the sharp decrease in teacher's motivation and patience to deal with usually crowded and heterogeneous ESAP classes which subsequently can adversely affect their teaching in the interactive phase of teaching.

Above all, they will not reflect on their teaching after the class and as a result they do nothing for the problematic parts of their teaching in the subsequent sessions of their class.

Attitudinal Difficulties

Another important fact that was revealed in the observations concerns the issue of rapport management and mutual respect between the ESAP students and teachers. Spencer-Oatey (2000) defines rapport management as the relationship which involves face management and management of sociality rights understood as "personal/social expectancies ... reflect[ing] people's concerns over fairness, consideration, social inclusion/exclusion and so on". In the present research, it was found that content instructors were more prosperous comparing to the language instructors as far as rapport management was concerned. Content instructors could develop a close rapport with their students mainly because they studied in the same field of study as their students did. In addition,

language instructors teaching ESAP feel downgraded when teaching language to the students of science because they think that their students are more knowledgeable comparing to them just because of the nature of their field of study. Ewer (1983) refers to these problems as “attitudinal difficulties” which are considered as the unwillingness and negative attitudes of the traditionally humanities trained teachers of English toward science which in turn can exert an adverse influence on their students as well as on their own performance in teaching.

The Backwash Effect

Oxford dictionary defines backwash as the unpleasant after-effects of an event; however, in the context of language assessment, washback is defined by Messick (1996) as the influence a test can exert on both language teachers and learners and which subsequently leads them to do things that otherwise they would not naturally do in order to promote or inhibit language learning.

Regarding this issue, Hayati (2008) considers ‘reading for understanding the test items’ and ‘poor translation for the sake of doing the assignments’ as the overriding goals of the Iranian ESP classes. He continues saying that Iranian students studying in majors other than English are required to pass a two-credit Basic English course, a three-credit General English course followed by a three credit (or more) ESP courses according to the nature of their fields of study. Subsequently, he claims that the sole aim of the majority of these students is just to pass the course because they believe that learning English perfectly within a limited course of study is impossible and this leads to a teacher centered classes in which teachers are always translating texts into Persian and the students are busy writing the mentioned translations.

Similarly, the observations made by the researcher in the present study prove the above mentioned facts. In the present research, backwash effect was highly conspicuous especially in classes taught by language instructors. This is because the ESP course of a specific major taught by a specific language instructor was also taught by other ESP instructors in the language department and all the students were going to seat for a similar exam. Due to this fact, all the language instructors teaching the same ESP courses had to teach similarly and follow the same pace of teaching. It seems that translation was the only way to bring everything under control. On the contrary, content instructors are more independent of others and mainly they teach the ESAP courses which are not offered in many groups. Therefore, they do not need to coordinate everything from methodology to test items with other ESAP instructors. They can attune their teaching methodology to the language proficiency of the students and they do not need to finish a set number of chapters in hurry.

The results of the conducted observations demonstrate that language instructors teaching ESAP courses were distinctly more familiar with the fundamentals of ESAP teaching comparing to their content counterparts; however, it is obvious that they had to follow the rules of language department for which they were working and they were not able to decide independently about everything.

Based on the results of the observations, a comprehensive ESAP teacher training course for language instructors must address issues such as learners’ needs, materials selection and adaptation as well as testing; however, the focus of the course designed for content instructors must be on new methods of teaching vocabulary and teaching the four skills. In addition, content instructors must become more familiar with the

English structures which are frequent in the ESAP materials that they are teaching; however, these instructors do not need training on learners' needs and material selection because they are the people who are most familiar with these matters.

Conclusion

Basturkmen (2017, p. 1) mentions that "to date, the literature in EAP and ESP has tended to foreground the needs of learners and background the learning and knowledge needs of teachers". To this end, a needs analysis survey was undertaken with the help of two groups of stakeholders namely language instructors and content specialists teaching ESAP courses at different universities in Iran with the main aim of developing a sustainable teacher education curriculum.

The first research question explored the teaching needs of language instructors and content specialists teaching ESAP courses. In addition, the present study aimed at finding the possible differences in the needs of the mentioned two groups of ESAP instructors considering three areas of knowledge namely professional, procedural and personal needs. The findings of the study support the view that language instructors and content specialists have different teaching needs and therefore should be trained in different in-service teacher training programs which are compatible with their attitudes and needs. It can be concluded that the ESAP language instructors participating in the present research preferred more to be trained in the areas of professional, procedural and personal needs compared to their counterparts.

Moreover, the results of the observation and the semi-structured interview with both language instructors and content specialists revealed that content specialists had less problems regarding the issue of ESAP materials selection compared to language instructors. Furthermore, content specialists evinced more interest in teaching because of their higher income in comparison with language instructors. Also, closer rapport between students and teachers was evident in the classes taught by content specialists because they had studied in a similar field of study. In addition, language instructors mainly teach to the test because they have to seat their students for the final test which is designed by different language instructors teaching the same course.

It can be implied from the present research that most of the mentioned problems that ESAP content specialists and language instructors face can be managed through embarking on a comprehensive ESAP pre-service and in-service teacher training program. In addition, cooperation between the language instructors and the content department, collaboration (a share of experience between the language instructor and the content specialist and team teaching (the actual working of two experts namely the language instructor along with the content specialist) can satisfy most of the needs of both ESAP language instructors and content specialists.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for ESAP Instructors

Thank you for taking time to fill out the questionnaire. This questionnaire which contains 3 sections (A, B and C) is part of an academic research. The information you provide on this rating is intended for use by the researcher to identify the contents of an in-service ESP teacher training program. The researcher promises to maintain strict confidentiality of your information, so be candid in your answers.

A) Background information.

Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐

Teaching experience as an ESAP instructor: _____ years

Teaching experience as an EGP instructor: _____ years

Your field of study: _____ English teaching _____

Teaching at: Public sector ☐ Private sector ☐ Both ☐

Education: MA ☐ MA student ☐ PhD student ☐ PhD ☐

The ESAP courses that you teach: _____

Do you have specialist knowledge? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how did you come to acquire it? Attending lectures ☐ Your own reading ☐

If not, how do you deal with the lack of it? Please specify _____

Do you believe that specialist knowledge is essential for ESAP teachers? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you had formal training to teach ESAP? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, of what form? In your MA/PhD courses ☐ Teacher training courses ☐

Do you use a different methodology in ESAP classes from EGP classes? Yes ☐ No ☐

B) Indicate your agreement or disagreement by the following statements by circling your responses.

If I take part in an in-service ESAP teacher training program, I want to be educated on

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Identifying and analyzing learners' needs and expectations | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 2 | Identifying and analyzing learner characteristics | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 3 | Designing ESAP tests | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 4 | Establishing rapport | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

Sequel to Table see on the next page.

Sequel to Table.

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | Professional websites, forums, and clubs | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 6 | Learner's different styles of learning | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 7 | Different genres | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 8 | Teacher roles | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 9 | Disciplinary/professional culture | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 10 | Theories of ESP learning | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 11 | How to teach reading | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 12 | How to teach listening | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 13 | How to teach speaking | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 14 | How to teach writing | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 15 | How to teach grammar | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 16 | How to teach technical vocabulary | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 17 | How to teach semi-technical vocabulary | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 18 | How to teach general vocabulary | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 19 | How to integrate language skills | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 20 | lesson planning | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 21 | Materials selection, adaptation and evaluation | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 22 | Motivating learners | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 23 | learner autonomy | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 24 | Syllabus/course design | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 25 | Increasing student talk time | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 26 | Increasing L2 use in classroom and reducing L1 use and translation | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 27 | Promoting classroom interaction | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

Sequel to Table see on the next page.

Sequel to Table.

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 28 | Dealing with Large classes | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 29 | Adjusting personal beliefs to contextual realities | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 30 | Critical reflection on personal beliefs about teaching and learning | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

C) If you believe that there are other issues which are not included in part B above, please write them in the table below and mark the appropriate box for each item.

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 31 | | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 32 | | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 33 | | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 34 | | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 35 | | Strongly agree | Agree | No idea | Disagree | Strongly disagree |