Yazd University

Faculty of Languages and Literature

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Title:

Team Teaching in English for Academic Purpose Classrooms

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March, 2012

In the Name of God

TO MY BELOVED PARENTS

FOR

THEIR LOVE AND SUPPORT

Acknowledgements

I have been encouraged and helped by a number of people along the way. First and foremost, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation to Dr. Mazdayasna, my thesis supervisor, who has supported me throughout my thesis with her profound knowledge and continued support which made it possible to complete the thesis. I am also very grateful to Dr. Rezai whose advice and help made very special contribution to the present study.

Furthermore, my sincere thanks must go to all the content instructors, undergraduates and heads of departments at Yazd University who cooperated with me. I also offer my gratitude to all the professors of English Department at Yazd University during my M.A. I warmly thank my classmates especially Mr. Ariamanesh who helped me throughout my thesis.

Last but not least, I am most grateful to my dearly beloved family especially my parents for their tolerance, encouragement and emotional support throughout all my studies. My apologies if I have inadvertently omitted anyone to whom acknowledgement is due.

Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate the efficacy between two approaches of teaching English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), namely team teaching and traditional independent teaching. For this purpose, three ESAP classes, that is, English for the students of Geography, Computer, and Theology & Law were team-taught by both English language instructor and content specialist in Yazd Province, during the fall semester of the academic year 2010-2011. Simultaneously, three parallel ESAP classes for the above-mentioned academic disciplines were taught by the same content specialist alone. At the end of the semester, a questionnaire was administered only to the three team- taught classes.

The results of data analysis indicated no significant difference between team teaching and traditional independent teaching for the students of Geography. However, there was a significant difference in the case of students of Theology & Law. The students of Theology & Islamic Sciences who were team-taught outperformed the batch of students who had been taught only by the content instructor. Nevertheless, the findings also indicated that the students of Computer who were taught by the content specialist outperformed the batch of students who were team-taught.

Moreover, the results of the questionnaire distributed to the team-taught classes revealed that a good majority of the students from the three academic majors strongly agreed that ESAP courses should be taught collaboratively by both language and content instructors. An overwhelming majority of the students also believed that co-operative methods can fulfill students' learning needs. Likewise,

most of the ESAP students reported that they benefitted from having access to content knowledge and assistance with language simultaneously. Correspondingly, the findings of this study also suggest that content instructor and language instructor respect each other's expertise and professionalism. The interdisciplinary contact between language and content specialists might be viewed as a possible model for teacher development, that is, the teacher's ability to make adjustments to one's teaching practices according to the demand of a curriculum, learners' needs and the institution where an instructor imparts his knowledge and experience to the students.

Key words: Team teaching, English language instructor, Content instructor, Computer, Geography, Theology & Law.

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Table of Abbreviations

EAP	English for Academic Purposes	ESS	English for Social Sciences
EBE	English for Business and Economics	EST	English for Science and Technology
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes	EVP	English for Vocational Purposes
EGP	English for General Purposes	GE	General English
ELP	English for Legal Purposes	LSP	Language for Specific Purposes
ELT	English Language Teaching	PSA	Present Situation Analysis
EMP	English for Medical Purposes	SLA	Second Language Acquisition
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes	TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes	TSA	Target Situation Analysis
ESP	English for Specific Purposes	VESL	Vocational English as a Second Language

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preliminaries

Due to the undeniable role of English worldwide, a growing number of people including the immigrants and foreign language learners have followed English as the prime language at schools, universities and workplaces. Many in the world are seeking proficiency in English for different purposes like business, academic study, and higher education. Therefore, over the past 30 years, we have witnessed the vigorous development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) within the field of TEFL (Savaş, 2009).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) indicate three factors in the emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The post-World War II period witnessed a rapid expansion in science and economy. Therefore, people required an international language to do business and scientific research. As a result of this need, English was chosen. The second reason was that the study of language underwent a revolution, namely a shift of focus from the description of the grammar to the language for real communication. Therefore, the linguists came up with the idea that the use of language varies from situation to situation. The third reason was that learners' attitudes, needs and interests are also vital to the process of learning a language. In this regard, discipline-related texts were selected for courses. However, a question arises as what ESP is? This question has been addressed in different ways, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

ESP is seen as an approach to language learning rather than a product of learning. It is defined not as a particular kind of language, teaching material or

methodology. Rather the importance of need is emphasized in ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Robinson (1991) defines ESP according to two main criteria: ESP is normally goal-oriented, that is, students learn English for study or work purposes. Also ESP develops from a needs analysis which tries to identify the reasons for which learners want to learn English. In addition, Robinson's (1991) definition of ESP includes two characteristics, namely it is taught to adults and lasts for a limited period of time.

From its beginning in the 1960s, ESP has passed different stages during its development. It started with the identification of predominant grammatical and lexical features of specific disciplines at the sentence level. Being criticized for its overemphasis on form and a need to focus on language use and communication, ESP broadened its scope to a level above the sentence which tried to analyze how sentences are combined to create a desired piece of text. However, no special attention was paid to the development of study skills. The third stage of ESP development emphasized that, first, the target situation should be identified, and then the linguistic features of that particular situation should be analyzed. The first three stages focused mainly on the surface linguistic forms of language. With taking the thinking processes underlying language use into account, ESP entered into its fourth stage. It was argued that there are universal strategies which learners use to function appropriately in the language. The fifth stage takes a learning-centered approach in which the focus is on the understanding of the processes of language learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

One of the key stages in ESP is needs analysis. Needs have been defined and categorized according to different perspectives. There are various dichotomies as

follows: objective/subjective, product-oriented/ process-oriented, perceived/felt, to name a few. Target needs refer to those abilities and knowledge that learners need so as to be a competent speaker of language in the target situation. Therefore, a main concern of target situation analysis (TSA) is language use. However, learning needs are another kind of needs which refer to what learners need so that they can learn the language. Contrary to the TSA, learning situation analysis (LSA) is concerned with language learning. However, for an effective language course both target situation needs and learning needs must be considered.

Needs analysis is an integral part of ESP. What distinguishes ESP from General English is an awareness and identification of needs. In the past, there was no necessity to specify needs; hence in General English, learners' needs were not taken into consideration. This process of awareness and identification of needs will result in an efficient and focused language course. ESP is goal-oriented (English for study or work goals) and is based on a needs analysis (reasons for learning English). Based on the results of needs analysis, materials and textbooks are selected in order to fulfill the needs of a particular group of students (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Regarding the subcategories within ESP, two main divisions are mentioned: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Jordan, 1997; Robinson 1991**).** English for Academic Purposes (EAP) refers to English for academic purposes, that is, for study needs of those whose first language is not English. On the other hand, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) is related to English for non-academic purposes-in other words EOP involves work-related needs (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Some scholars (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2006) make a distinction between common core and subject-specific within EAP. While common core is English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), Subject-specific English is English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). EGAP concerns the teaching of the skills and language common among all the disciplines, a large part of which is the study skills such as listening and understanding; summarizing and paraphrasing; reading textbooks and articles; and writing essays. However, ESAP is concerned with the teaching of distinguishing features of disciplines which is the language needed for a particular academic subject with its disciplinary culture.

One outstanding feature of EAP is the requirement of a high level of cooperation between the language instructors and the specialist instructors (Gulliver, 2001). This aspect of EAP is uncommon in general English language teaching. There are varied models within EAP courses; consequently, different levels of cooperation are needed. According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), there are three levels of cooperation for subject-specific work: Cooperation, Collaboration and Team Teaching.

Cooperation is the first level in which the language instructor takes the initiative and attempts to get information about the students' special subject, the learners' needs and those objectives which are given priority by the department and learners. This level requires minimum effort on the part of the specialist instructor.

The second level of integration is collaboration which involves a mutual relationship between the language and the specialist instructors about the issues such as course planning and selection or creation of materials. At this stage the language instructor and subject specific instructor work together outside the classroom.

The third level of subject-language integration brought into EAP practice is team teaching. In this teaching model, the language specialist and the subject specialist work together in the classroom. Both of them are present in the classroom simultaneously. The language and specialist instructors focus upon their own field. That is to say the specialist instructor deals with the specific content, while the language instructor pays attention to and discusses language components such as vocabulary, grammar, language skills and pronunciation.

Several advantages and disadvantages of team teaching have been reported in previous studies. For example, Barron (1992) considers educational efficiency as the purpose of team teaching which is achieved through the simultaneous development of cognition and language. Dudley-Evans (1983, cited in Robinson, 1991) believes that team teaching will be of benefit to the language teacher, students as well as the subject specialist. The language teacher will have a better picture of difficulties students face and of the way communication takes place in the subject course. Students are also in a better position to assess the required objectives defined by the department. It is not the case that the language teacher and students will merely benefit from team teaching. The subject instructors will receive feedback on their own performance. However, this level of cooperation is the most difficult one to be established. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), suspicion or hostility between the language and subject instructors will spoil the outcomes of collaboration or team teaching. If the participants are not willing to work together, the project may not be successful.

The main aim of conducting this study was to explore how ESAP team-taught classes are different from ESAP classes which are taught by a content specialist