

# ESP for Psychology and Law Tertiary Level Students: Attitudes, Challenges and Obstacles

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## Abstract

Educators have not started talking about affective factors in ESP until lately (Makrami, 2010). ESP has found its way in daily lives of a majority of people and it has also become a part of tertiary education programme in Iranian universities. However, rarely has anything been done after putting these ESP courses into work, and many obstacles appeared soon after putting ESP courses into practice. The current study aims to investigate the attitudes and views instructors and students hold towards ESP courses. Data were gathered by interviewing instructors and students of psychology and law at Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch. The results showed that crowded classes, lack of motivation, and poor infrastructure are the main issues that they are dealing with. Furthermore, the need for integration of some aspects of English like pronunciation and grammar is felt in ESP courses. The findings of this study could be of help to practitioners and material designers.

## 1. Introduction

ESP-related issues have concerned many researchers all over the world. Though ESP has taken a learner-centered approach towards learning and teaching, in Iran and especially in some majors only lip service has been paid to learner-centeredness. Many problems have arisen because no studies have been done concerning the

aftermath of applying ESP courses in Iran. With developing human societies and increasing peoples' psychological problems, psychology has attracted many university volunteers to continue their studies at B.A. level in psychology. Further, it tends to be the same level of interest in law; therefore, psychology and law students constitute a large community in many universities.

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Since the flood of science tends to be unidirectional from modern English societies to countries like Iran, it puts a burden on students' shoulder to not only increase their knowledge, but also to be acquainted with English texts and get the recent work done in their own field.

In Iran, unfortunately, less has been done to examine ESP-related issues through clearer spectacles. Although here all students are supposed to pass English for their major purposes in tertiary education, many do not show any eagerness to attend ESP courses and, unlike usual ESP courses, students are not want-oriented i.e. in many university majors here, students do attend ESP courses at least three hours a week (for two semesters) because it is a *must*, not an option for them to satisfy their future needs.

## 2. Literature Review

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) point out that one significant discovery was in the ways that spoken and written English vary. If language in different situations varies, then tailoring language instruction to meet needs of learners in specific contexts is also possible. Hence, in the late 1960s and in the early 1970s, there were many attempts to describe EST (English for Science and Technology). The same authors mention the role played by psychology. More attention was given to the ways in which learners acquire language and the differences in the ways language is acquired. Although, in this context, both students and instructors are aware of the fact that psychological issues especially motivation play a crucial role in students' success in ESP courses, because of economical, social and cultural obstacles, no one takes a step forward to solve these problems. Furthermore, language difficulties are often cited as one of the factors which contribute most to students attrition (Swiggum & Slette, 1997). These language difficulties encompass a very

wide range of difficulties, from lack of appropriate level of English proficiency to lack of interest and motivation in learning.

Peacock (2001) also reminds us of three important implications of his study: first, if trainees have any beliefs about second language learning that may negatively affect their future students' learning, it is important for programme instructors to consider changing them. Second, teachers should try to amend the beliefs at the start of the programme. Third, work on beliefs should be an integral part of TESL core courses. He also finds out learners' lack of self-confidence about their language learning ability and this matter justifies either teacher intervention or more attention to trainee proficiency. Furthermore, Schumann (1998) stated that learners' metacognitive knowledge and beliefs have been found to have a pervasive influence on their academic learning, thinking, reasoning and problem solving and this finding also has been mentioned by Kardash and Scholes (1996).

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), ESP is a teaching program in which the content to be taught and the wished-for aims of the course are fixed to the particular needs of specific groups of learners, and it contrasts with those English for General Purposes courses which are not related to any specific scientific or nonscientific content and aim to instruct general language proficiency. Labassi (2010) also asserts that poor infrastructure, large classes, and the low campus prestige of the discipline should be taken into consideration in order to set realistic ESP teaching objectives. Furthermore, Liton (2012) asserts that ESP course curriculum should be redesigned and reshuffled in keeping with the learners' specific need because the contents of existing ESP syllabus are not appropriate so far as the Business Studies is concerned.

To date many researchers have specified the importance of the role students' beliefs

and attitudes plays in learning a second language (e.g. Brown, 2007 & Levine, 2003). ESP as a learner-centered approach is supposed to consider students' beliefs and attitudes in the process of learning. However, in Iran, ESP in tertiary education follows a rigid design from what is taught to the hours of instruction; everything is determined by curriculum designers and instructors as the authority of classrooms. Even ESP materials in tertiary education, as Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2008) assert, are textbooks (published by SAMT, the official Iranian center for materials development in humanities) and they follow a rigid format of such instructional exercises and activities as 'pre-reading', 'reading', 'homework' and 'language' exercises for all academic disciplines, with the major focus on reading comprehension skills. In their opinion, the contents of these textbooks are not designed to address the learning needs, wants and desires of Iranian students; the materials are selected mainly on the basis of topic, as being related to the students' field of study, and not on the basis of genre or discourse of the particular discipline. Of the four skills, only reading has been emphasized. In this trend, students' attitudes and wants receive less attention and much is devoted to what authorities have identified as important for ESP courses.

In Iran, students are to learn English as the only foreign language taught; this process begins in junior high schools and continues to high schools and then comes to tertiary education, and it is supposed that during these seven years before entering university, they have gained a good command of English and as they enter universities, their only need is to take ESP courses and to be trained for special and technical English texts. However, what is mostly observed is how difficult English learning is for tertiary education students, especially social science students and they are burdened by ESP courses.

It is compulsory in Iranian universities that students pass at least two ESP courses (6-credit course about 96 hours in two semesters for a four-year university programme) and learn general concepts, technical terms and structures of their majors but as a surprise what is gained at the end of the course is not satisfying in that it is not what was expected beforehand. Most of students would forget what they learned a moment after their final exam, and generally they feel weak in English even after passing these courses.

To date, most studies have investigated students' wants and requirements to see what has seated our students in ESP classes but after that less has been done to see if these courses were successful or not and if students' needs have been met. In other countries, some studies have been done in this regard but lack of appropriate feedback from these courses in Iran led the researcher to conduct a study on how students' needs are satisfied. Furthermore, this study aims to investigate instructors' and students' challenges and beliefs about ESP taught in two majors of psychology and law in Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch. The following research questions were raised in this regard:

- 1) How is English for specific purposes taught to tertiary education students of psychology and law?
- 2) How do psychology and law students react to the ESP courses they have to pass in the tertiary education?
- 3) What challenges do students and instructors encounter in ESP courses?

### **3. Methodology**

To answer the above-raised research questions, data were gathered from instructors and students using interview, as a flexible data-elicitation method, and a questionnaire. Although a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions was administered, the researcher decided to focus more on the interview because in

many cases, questionnaires are responded loosely in that only stating whether they do strongly agree, agree and disagree will not give an accurate picture of what they really need and how they really think about the ESP courses. Interviews can go beyond that boundary to capture in-depth insights towards the ESP courses. Furthermore, in the interaction of the interviewer and interviewees, more important details would reveal. Therefore, this study has made use of both qualitative approach (a triangulation method including questionnaire, interview and observation) and a quantitative approach within which the results of the qualitative approach were refined and tabulated.

**3.1. Participants**

To collect data, 3 instructors, 20 students of psychology and the same number for law majors from Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch were interviewed. They were also given a semi-structured questionnaire and their views towards the ESP courses were gathered. They were also asked to determine what challenges they encountered in these classes. Interviews were conducted in Persian for students and instructors. The questionnaire was also designed in Persian

and it took about 20 minutes to be responded. Though quantitative research could give us numbers and digits upon which one can make more decisive judgments, the qualitative study (interview here) revealed more in-depth attitudes about the problems and obstacles students and instructors face in ESP courses in Iran.

The interview consisted of sequential questions on how ESP was taught, how it was evaluated and which problems were faced and at the end the probable solutions were elicited. Students' interview was conducted in two phases: randomly some students were interviewed individually, and a group of students were interviewed collectively and when one of them was interviewed, the interviewer asked others to express their own ideas about that issue and whether they agreed or disagreed with what their classmate posed and why. It was really more fruitful and interesting when they spoke of their own experiences. The researcher also observed some ESP classes and the materials taught in ESP classes.

**4. Results of the Study**

Students' views towards the problems they face in ESP courses have been summarised in the following table.

**Table 1. Students' Views**

	AGREE	MODERATELY- AGREE	DISAGREE
Sufficiency of 96 hours of ESP in the four-year university programme	16%	34%	50%
The importance of knowing general English	71.5%	14.25%	14.25%
The importance of instructor's motivation for teaching	55.6%	33.3%	11%
The importance of students' motivation for learning	100%	-	-
Weakness of guidance school and high school instructions	100%	-	-
Weakness of university instructions	20%	40%	40%
A need for ESP courses in tertiary education	60%	25%	15%

Students also mentioned the following as inhibiting factors:

- Crowded classes with more than 50 students in each
- The excessive units and texts to be learned
- Tedious and traditional style of teaching
- Lack of educational facilities like films, slides, pictures...
- Lack of motivation and presence of anxiety to pass the course
- Outdated texts

However, during the data collection process, the first issue that caught the researcher's eyes was the fact both students and instructors complained about lack of motivation on the part of students mainly, and on the part of instructors partially. As McDonough (2007) states, motivation is what moves us to act and it reveals that lack of motivation in this situation has resulted in less achievement. This problem will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

### Needs Analysis Results

Needs analysis is considered as the core of ESP courses. As Liaghat and Latif (2013) assert one of the fundamental prerequisites in ESP classrooms is the deployment of appropriate learner needs analysis procedure to evaluate their general English level, their actual need concerning ESP after graduation before enrolling for the courses. They also mention that the absence of appropriate consultation opportunities with TEFL materials development experts and veteran instructors in syllabus design, materials selection, development and finally deployment has led to ample problems and deficiencies in Iranian universities ESP classrooms.

One way to classify the needs of students is to consider Berwick's learner-centered approach. Berwick (1989) asserts that 'Perceived needs' are from the perspective of experts while 'felt needs' are from the perspective of learners. Based on this classification, students' felt needs are as follows:

- 1) to contribute and share their own research results in English,
- 2) to get the latest achievements and news in their major from other English journals and websites,
- 3) to write academic articles,
- 4) to make contributions to international seminars and conferences, and
- 5) to be accepted in M.A. entrance exam since they feel English for psychology and law is an important unit in that exam.

Furthermore, all students agree on the point that if the technical vocabularies and special and needed grammar and texts are taught besides each unit during the four year of tertiary education, this would more beneficial and the words, concepts, and their meanings would be retained more.

As Table 2 shows, all students agree on including translation as a method of teaching English for psychology and law students; further, they want pronunciation to be integrated in their ESP courses since they feel that even if they know the meaning of the words but they cannot pronounce them, it means that they do not know the word anyway. According to the following table, 60% of students think that vocabulary must be emphasized in ESP courses. They also pointed out that vocabulary per se does not suffice for the ESP courses. And 70% of students think that grammar also must be integrated in ESP courses. They also felt no need of writing, speaking and listening.

**Table 2.** *Students' Views on What to Be Integrated in ESP Courses*

Elements of ESP course	AGREE
Translation	100%
Pronunciation	100%
Vocabulary	60%
Grammar	70%
Speaking	-
Writing	-
Listening	-

Regarding materials, students were not satisfied with the texts that they have to read and comprehend; as mentioned by Northcott and Brown (2006), consultation with members of the target discourse communities as part of lesson preparation is very important matter; this is what Tsui (2005) describes as preactive decisions. Disregarding such an important matter in tertiary level ESP courses has led to some out-dated and less useful texts or materials. Furthermore, Tsui (2005) asserts that teachers do not consider all the possible alternative ways of proceeding, but choose a strategy that they can use to deal with such situations. This is the case in Iran where rarely do instructors try new ways of dealing with problems they face. When they find lack of motivation and less achievement among their students, it seems necessary to take a step backwards and see what has been wrong with their classrooms, method of teaching, their relationship with their students and the materials. In this way, and as Bouzidi (2009) asserts, getting to know the real needs of learners, ESP teachers can judge the distance between classroom material and the requirements of the workplace and be able to bridge that gap”.

### Students' views

"For what?" is the question often asked by the individuals as they want to do something. It is not of controversy that if this question is solved for them, they would pass the way smoothly. This question equals to the *purpose* of doing things, i.e. if both students and instructors know the exact direction of their movement and the end result of what they are supposed to do, the main obstacle in their movement will be resolved.

It seems that lack of motivation is a challenge faced in ESP classrooms as students themselves believe and mention. Gardner (1985) describes individual differences in motivation to learn a second

language in terms of instrumentalist and integrative goal orientations. Instrumentalist goals reflect a desire to learn a second language for academic purposes, passing an exam, furthering professional career, seeking financial benefits, etc. Students are suffering from lack of motivation. It was repeatedly mentioned by psychology students that it is like killing a dragon when they want to attend ESP classrooms.

An important issue they generally agreed upon was that although reading and translating the texts are two important strategies to learn English, they are in need of knowing the exact pronunciation of the words, without which even if they can understand the word from a text, they hardly can articulate the words when it is necessary. The example a student provided was that I know what "visual memory" means but when I cannot pronounce or write it, does it mean that I know that word?! Then knowing the meaning without knowing how to pronounce it is equal to "*ignorance*: not knowing!" According to Nassaji (2004, p. 112), researchers have indicated "the complexity and multi-dimensionality of word knowledge and have suggested that knowing a word well should mean more than knowing its individual meanings in particular contexts." Various kinds of knowledge are associated with a word that a learner must know, ranging from knowledge of its pronunciation, spelling, register, and stylistic and morphological features (Haastrup & Henriksen, 2000; Nation, 1990; Richards, 1976) to knowledge of the word's syntactic and semantic relationships with other words in the language, including collocational meanings and knowledge of antonymy, synonymy, and hyponymy (Chapelle, 1994; Henriksen, 1999; Read, 2000).

Similar to what Wu and Badger (2009) point out "ESP teachers, subject specialist teachers and students are all potential sources of information about the subject

specialism and its language"; according to the results, it is very important for the Iranian students that their instructors have good command of English and at the same time instructors are required of having good knowledge of subject matter, i.e. psychology and law in this context. In this regard, we have to put in mind that if English instructors are not fully aware of subject matter, they may be put in Subject Knowledge Dilemma situations (mentioned by Wu & Badger, 2009) in which they have to answer their students' questions or to avoid answering or simply save their face.

In all the available literature review, and in the field of English for Specific Purposes, four main factors have been focused: instructor, course materials, needs analysis and assessment. Regarding ESP courses in tertiary level, an important challenge is the matter of evaluation. Tertiary students in this study think that the assessment of ESP course in how and to what extent students have understood the texts has major deficiencies. Their exams in ESP courses mainly consist of translating a few paragraphs and some technical vocabularies.

### **Instructors' views**

"Unfortunately, a big lack of materials is felt in English for law students" one of the law ESP practitioners and instructors said. "We have to prepare our own materials. Once we wanted to design a comprehensive English course for law students, it was strongly resisted by the authorities in the university" he continued. "They did not understand the importance of the matter. Then I decided to gather something relevant and useful, something that is in line with traditional model of teaching English for law students. I found some related books and texts which were available in Iran; I found that the books are similar to each other except for trivial differences; therefore, I decided to teach parts of those

books. I know this is not enough and this is not an academic way of teaching, but what I can do." This instructor has got Ph.D in law from abroad.

Moreover, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) assert that ESP teachers have to struggle to achieve two things to get ready to teach ESP. They have to master both language and subject matter beyond the limits of their old experience; in this regard, questionnaires' results revealed that students had equal interests to take ESP courses either with an English instructor or psychology and law instructors. But the results of interviews with students showed that if English instructors are specialized in the fields of psychology and law, they would benefit more considerably.

All in all, Law and psychology Instructors mentioned the following obstacles in law texts teaching:

1) Improper scheduling and lack of proper infrastructure:

As mentioned earlier, students in Iran must learn English constantly and periodically and it is assumed that as they enter university, they have enough knowledge of English and they are ready to pass some English courses for their specific majors.

2) Limited time:

In ESP courses, students have to pass 64 hours in ELP (English for law students) course and about 96 hours in English for psychology students! And it is hardly enough to teach the content and terms that students are in need of. West (1994) asserts that in ESP programs, time constraints are very crucial. Time must be utilized wisely and in an efficient way. It is also mentioned in students and instructors' views here that passing only 70-100 hours in ESP classrooms would be insufficient and no expectations should be made on the basis of these limited hours of teaching.

3) Lack of requirements from English instructors:

It is not specified in the educational curriculum what is expected from an instructor to do in English for Specific Purposes. It reminds me of a meaningful expression that "when the speaker does not know what she says, what the poor hearer would understand." Here exists the same problem i.e. when the instructor does not know what is required from her to do; what the poor learner could do and understand.

3) Classes are too crowded and this will decrease the quality of teaching and learning.

4) In these crowded classes, the process of getting feedback and evaluation seems to be very difficult. These obstacles are also mentioned by Labassi (2010).

5) The most important challenge for ESP courses here is that students have lost their motivation. As McDonough (2007) states, motivation is what moves us to act, in this context to learn English, to learn to teach English, or to teach it. According to McDonough (2007) this deceptively simple statement reveals, however, the four elements it involves:

- The reasons why we want to learn
- The strength of our desire to learn
- The kind of person we are, and
- The task and our estimation of what it requires of us.

Instructors believe that they are suffering from demotivated students, especially in ESP courses. When students do not know how this ESP will be helpful in future, there is no motivation for learning it. Although English for psychology for a very limited portion of students is useful in their future job, it does not encompass all.

The most interesting fact that one of the instructors mentioned was that performance of students in English like any other field follows this rule:

*Performance = Ability \* Motivation*

He emphasizes that all the students are able to handle English in ESP classrooms but the important fact in their failure is that they

(most of them) do not want to learn (lack of motivation). The difference between "what one can do" and "what one will do" lies in the above mentioned factors:

"What one can do" = her ability to learn

"What one will do" = her motivation to learn.

In his viewpoint, students are somehow coming to university as if university was a hobby to entertain them for about four years or more because they have nothing more to do. However, this phenomenon has psychological and social dimensions and here is not the room to discuss these matters. However, if our students were self-motivated, the teaching and learning English would be facilitated. Although to facilitate their English learning in ESP courses, some pre-requisite or general English courses are included in the psychology curriculum but they are satisfying neither students nor instructors.

Another important point in his views was that we take students as input and an after four years we submit some not-qualified products to society. Getting a degree (B.A, even M.A.) from university has become the purpose for them, they are obliged to be present in ESP courses like any other courses, but how I (as an instructor) view them is as they are money-maker individuals for us. Having no students means having no money. That is the problem!

Cultural limitations also inhibit instructors to know their students better and lack of appropriate interaction between instructors and students has led to their alienation from each other, in this way neither do the students know what is expected from them nor do instructors know them as they are supposed, they do not know what students require. As mentioned before, it is the deficit of the educational system in our country which is ill; as a result, the subsystems like universities cannot be flawless.



## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

It is inherited in the nature of ESP that both students and instructors should know where they are and where they are going to in order to achieve their goals. Also, process-oriented approach towards ESP has offered an opportunity to ask if the previous and current courses have been successful; if "Yes", how it can be improved and if "No", what the obstacles are and how they can be removed.

Analysis of the interviews with ESP instructors and students of both disciplines revealed that there were some points of concern that were shared between the interviewees. These points can be listed as follows:

- 1) Lack of appropriate infrastructure,
- 2) Lack of motivation,
- 3) Crowded classes, and
- 4) Lack of educational facilities.

Regarding the three features considered by Cater (1983) as common to ESP courses, authentic material, purpose-related situations, and self-direction, almost all ESP courses in Iran do not make advantage of the first two features; the third feature mentioned by Cater is completely lacking and the third feature "self-direction" is related to the concept of motivation which was discussed in the previous section. In this study, both students and instructors complained about lack of motivation on the part of students mainly and on the part of instructors partially. As McDonough (2007) states, motivation is what moves us to act and it reveals that lack of motivation in this situation has resulted in less achievement. And contrary to what Tsao (2011) points out "...ESP is more effective in increasing students' learning motivation because it relates to their fields of study and caters to their needs." Here we are faced with a major problem and it is lack of motivation in our students and this is mainly related to the point that they think these ESP classes are useless since they cannot make use of

what they learn. Also, lacking the above mentioned features led the researcher to coin another term for ESP courses when we are dealing with some reluctant students who do not feel English as necessary or useful as curriculum designers; or for those who feel the necessity of English for specific or academic purposes but as a result of many obstacles in teaching and learning situation in Iran, they are unwilling to attend ESP courses. Instead of ESP, we can make use of EMP: English for Major-related Purposes, which in contrast to ESP as an essential and optional course for those who are in need of English to enhance their occupational, academic (EAP), or economical needs. Here EMP is an obligatory course for all the students, whether they like or dislike it; they are enforced to pass this course in one way or another to get a tertiary education degree. However, if the authorities at the top realize the importance of ESP related issues and the importance of students' and instructors' views and attitudes in this regard, the way of progress and development would be wider and broader and the amount of achievement would increase.

As Hayati (2008) asserts the absolute characteristics of ESP are as follows:

- 1) ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of the learner.
- 2) ESP uses the underlying methodology and activities of the profession or discipline concerned.
- 3) ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register, etc.), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

Regarding the first characteristic asserted by Hayati, the most important matter is that in Iran no accurate and comprehensive needs analysis has been done in the current decade to know what the real needs of learners are and how they can be satisfied. This leads to unawareness of the second and third characteristics including

methodology and even the materials or the skills required in ESP courses.

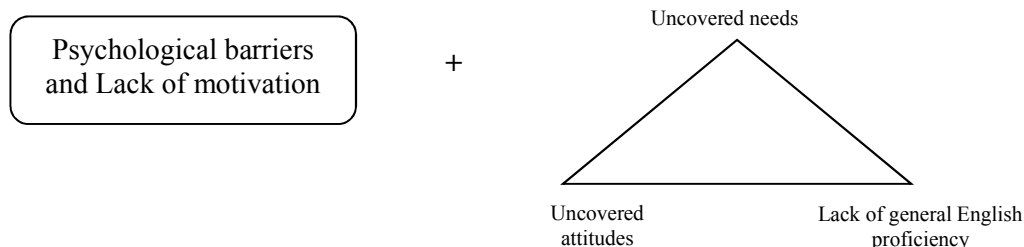
Furthermore, Holme and Chalauisaeng (2006) have suggested Participatory Appraisal (PA) as one of the working approaches to ESP. They 'hypothesised that PA promised a set of techniques that would enhance the development of a learner-centered classroom, create a more positive attitude to language learning, positively affect motivation, and help learners achieve greater self-direction to improve their reading.' As stated earlier, and in line with what Levine (2003) and Brown (2007) state in second language learning; this study reveals the importance of considering learners' attitudes and beliefs and it seems necessary for ESP as an approach to teaching language, to take students' attitudes and beliefs into consideration. It will help both instructors and language designers to carefully consider the students' beliefs and make use of them in the process of designing courses and teaching. The results of this study are also in line with what Schumann (1998) states in that learners' metacognitive knowledge and beliefs have been found to have a pervasive influence on their academic learning, thinking, reasoning and problem solving and this finding also has been mentioned by Kardash and Scholes (1996). Based on the above mentioned statements, it can easily be concluded that learning a second/foreign language especially English for Specific Purposes will be facilitated if learners have positive attitudes and motivation. Although having positive attitudes builds the stem of motivation construct; here in Iran, one of the main reasons why students eschew ESP classes is lack of positive attitudes towards ESP.

Regarding the word "purposes" as a key word in "English for Specific Purposes", the results of this study show many students have not any ideas in where they are now and where they are going to in ESP classes,

i.e. the future picture of their status is vague and the "so what" question is highlighted in their minds as attending ESP courses. They have not a clear picture of an ESP course and some students have got some expectations of an ESP course which are not directly related to an ESP course, e.g. some want to be capable of communication in English using psychology or law terminology and texts while they are not able to do so. Related to what Peacock (2001) asserts, the results of the interview and data gathered through this study also show that psychology students are lacking in self-confidence and motivation, and this might be the main reason why their achievement in ESP courses are much less than expected. Furthermore, having weak foundation of English is the basis for lack of self confidence in English classrooms. The results also show inappropriate infrastructure for English teaching in all the educational levels in Iran is another cause of students' difficulty, disabilities and problems.

Although Munby (1987) believes that earlier neglect of the learner in needs analysis has become much less prevalent; here in Iran we see in some majors students' voice is not heard yet. It has been the essential part of ESP courses that learners are the goal-setters and ESP practitioners' job is to illuminate the way how learners come up to that goal. This is the learner who decides what to learn and her role as co-opting learner as well as her ideas would determine the ESP course way. But here learners' voice is not considered and the same as traditional methods of language teaching, teachers are the authority of the classroom and are the best-knower of what learners need and require. On this very spot, the challenging results of this study can be summarized in the following way:

According to Holmes and Celani (2006), the autonomy of practice may account for the sustainability of the ESP project.



However, a major challenge that we face in psychology and law ESP courses is the restrictions and limitations that both instructors and students are faced with; most of the times lack of flexibility in time allocation, methodology, materials, and cultural issues simply inhibit getting the aims. Furthermore, Holmes and Celani (2006) believe that the existence of a committed mass of ESP professionals is not enough. In their views, sustainability requires the existence of a “natural hub” which functions as a point of contact and exchange. Lack of such an integrated and updated educational system especially for ESP courses, in Iran, has led to some kind of anarchy in the realm of ESP; that is why our ESP courses are not as successful as expected.

As mentioned before, and according to Swiggum and Slette (1997) lack of appropriate general English proficiency in psychology and law students has made fundamental problems for the tertiary students in our context, and this could be solved by changing the foundations of educational system in our country. Only then we can think of active and interactive ESP courses, when our students are not suppressed by lack of general English and when they do know why they attend ESP courses and they eagerly want to make use of ESP courses in future.

In an ESP context, Pariseau and Kezim (2007) argue that “In an active, collaborative, or cooperative learning environment teaching effectiveness increases as the teacher becomes a facilitator and coach rather than a lecturer.”

While active and collaborative learning environment is a good prospect, achieving this situation is something difficult. Such a context is in need of strong infrastructure and an integrated educational system as well as knowledgeable experts. Such an environment in reality is a very far-flung goal to achieve and at the same time it needs much time and energy. This requirement puts any educational system in a dilemma. In such a situation, we have to stop for a moment and take a look back to what has been done and try to resolve the obstacles. Regarding ESP instructors, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 158) also describe ESP teachers as “reluctant dwellers in a strange and uncharted land”, a land that Belcher (2006) says is, for many ESP teachers, intimidating. However, Belcher did not specify how ESP could be an intimidating for teachers in different contexts. In Iran, since rigid frameworks have limited instructors (from time allocation to their interaction with their students and from materials development to the method of teaching), a sense of anarchy has cast shadow on ESP courses where instructors are not free to choose materials, to interact with their students efficiently and to select the methodology for their teaching, they are to consider the obligations imposed on them and this puts them in an intimidating situation. To set them free from this dampening situation, major changes must be applied to this educational system and policies. Furthermore, students in ESP classes are not like patients and instructors are not like doctors who only prescribe some medicine

to cure those patients, instructors are dealing with human beings with their own ideas, attitudes, and psychological, social and cultural differences; all of these factors contribute in how learners learn.

Regarding teachers' facilitating role, here we encounter the same problem and this is also the feature mentioned by Pariseau and Kezim (2007) and Hutchinson and Waters previously. In addition to the fact that students must drive the car of ESP to the destination in that they must decide what they want and where they go; ESP practitioners are like the engine of that car which gets the primary energy from students but unfortunately some practitioners are not aware of the aims of ESP courses and in our Iranian context, this role of students and instructors has been mixed up. On the other hand, teaching is a thinking activity (Richards, 1998; Richards, 2002) in which teachers make decisions based on a complex, practically oriented, personalized and context sensitive network of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs (Borg, 2003). But it seems that in Iran, ESP practitioners' creativity is suppressed by many educational and social constraints.

Moreover, Belcher (2006) and Dudley-Evans (1998) state that in ESP the teachers no longer play the role of "primary knower." In fact, ESP has always prided itself on its learner-centered approaches to curriculum design and materials development (Belcher, 2004). But, in our tertiary education, this is the instructor who decides on the methodology and materials, although learner-centered approaches like ESP give the primary role of decision making to learners, in this context students' voice is ignored. However, in post-method era, we come to the fact that usually after exerting different methods of teaching language (whether it be learner or teacher centered); similar results are achieved in spite of pompous claims they made beforehand; then it is logical to ask what

learner/teacher centeredness means in real sense of word in ESP. As Wu and Badger (2009) point out "ESP teachers, subject specialist teachers and students are all potential sources of information about the subject specialism and its language". To my mind, ESP is a mutual process of taking and giving information in which the teacher is not the only knower, and even an instructor can benefit from her learners' specialized knowledge in that field and students as well, (according to Nassaji, 2004; Read, 2000; Haastrup & Henriksen, 2000, vocabularies in different fields of science mean differently), can take advantage of the instructor's knowledge in English. This shared knowledge and mutual interaction would facilitate learning process and make a close relationship between instructors and students, which in its own turn would enhance the students' achievement and instructors' satisfaction. However due to lack of this close interaction, both ESP instructors and students are faced with problems.

Besides, Tsui (2005) asserts that teachers do not consider all the possible alternative ways of proceeding but choose a strategy that they can use to deal with such situations. This is something highly mentioned by ESP students in this study that ESP practitioners almost always make use of monotonous style of teaching which includes only reading the texts and translating them without paying any attention to students' interests, styles of learning, and attitudes. Furthermore, ESP has long been noted as paying "scant attention to how people learn, focusing instead on the question of what people learn" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 2). But in my point of view, both factors must be regarded as important. Both individual differences and how the input is put to work would determine how a learner would learn and it is the instructor's art to think and find a solution to better results.

Furthermore, Basturkmen (2006) asserts that ESP aims to enable learners to use English in the academic settings, professional settings, and workplaces. But here in the current situation, students get much less than this aim due to above mentioned obstacles. Further, Kern (1995) suggests that student beliefs about language learning originate from their second language learning experiences, particularly in secondary school, this claim is also verified in his context; students generally do not like attending ESP courses and they obviously and frankly asserted that if these courses were optional, they would not take them. Moreover, our students generally have negative views towards English learning and it is rooted in their bad experiences they have had in high schools and secondary schools.

Samimy and Lee (1997) point out that their students had many incorrect beliefs about how foreign languages are learned and that this was detrimental to their learning, whereas in this context most students did know what they want from ESP courses. Peacock (2001) finds out that trainees' beliefs about language learning are different from ESL teachers' beliefs and these beliefs changed very little over 3 years of study of TESL methodology. Contrary to Peacock' findings, students and instructors have similar attitudes towards ESP courses except for some ordinary issues, but the main obstacle here is the matter of rigid frameworks. Surprisingly, the imposed methodology is the shoes which one (a learner or instructor) must wear and must walk with, and it is the real situation of "THE BOOT IS ON THE OTHER FOOT". Furthermore Peacock asserts it is important for programme instructors to consider changing negative beliefs of learners. However, the important point is that changing some one's beliefs specially in the field of language learning requires many prerequisites including

changes in the infrastructures, and thereby the authorities manners. The change in the design and methodology of ESP courses is observable only if the authorities' thinking style towards ESP will change.

However Peacock (2001) asserts that the third-year trainees' beliefs did not match those of experienced ESL teachers in the university, here both students and instructors mainly complain about lack of motivation in students to learn English for specific purposes. A positive atmosphere makes teaching and learning more pleasant both for the instructors and the learner and supports the students in their work. Creating a positive learning atmosphere is closely linked with motivation, an important and a necessary part of students' work that affects their future success or failure (Popescu, 2012). In my viewpoint, orchestrating a positive learning atmosphere is an art, but how artfully our instructors could make such an environment with the help of students is under question. Due to many social and cultural problems; even instructors have lost their desire to be as creative as possible. Popescu (2012) asserts that generally the students are highly motivated as they are able to apply what they learn during their English classes to their main field of study, whether it be computer science, electronics and telecom munications, mechanics or chemistry. While this is an accurate finding; in Iran ESP courses, there is no room to put to work the learned materials and this could be one of the obstacles which hinders having motivated learners.

Dornyei and Csizer (1998), for example, in a survey of Hungarian teachers of English, proposed a taxonomy of factors by which teachers could motivate their learners. They cited factors such as developing a relationship with learners, building learners' self-confidence and autonomy, personalizing the learning process, and increasing learners' goal-

orientation. These all fall into the intrinsic side of motivation. In addition to what Dornyei and Csizer mention, I think instructors themselves must be motivated so that classrooms become as active and live as possible. And for sure, many attempts must be made in our context to increase both students' and instructors' motivation and resolving the above-mentioned problems including poor infrastructure, large and crowded classes, applying learned materials in real situations, and limited time.

This paper is not to take the sword of ignorance to attack whatever attempt has been made in ESP programmes in tertiary education in social sciences in Iran universities, rather it is to take a step afterwards to say "ok" we have done some, but is there anything left to do to enhance the quality of our ESP courses? Or can something better be done? The answer is "YES", and then we must ask how we as curriculum designers, instructors and practitioners can improve the quality of these courses. Moreover, this paper calls for a new comprehensive and learner-centred revolution in Iran's tertiary level ESP courses mainly in psychology and law as representative majors of social sciences. In line with what Liton (2012) asserts that ESP course curriculum should be redesigned and reshuffled in keeping with the learners' specific need because the contents of existing ESP syllabus are not appropriate so far as the Business Studies is concerned; here in Iran also, we have to look at the issue of ESP through more accurate spectacles and redefine our understanding of ESP, expectations, and our methods; the requirement of which is to carefully considering students' needs as Bouzidi (2009) asserts (also mentioned by Liaghat & Latif, 2013; Northcott & Brown, 2006) and based on this detailed needs analysis, one can redesign the materials, courses and instructions. This urgent need

would be realized if similar studies would be done in other fields and majors of social sciences, and this was the limitation of this study not to consider many other universities and majors. These kinds of studies, i.e. investigating students' and instructors' attitudes and challenges in ESP courses have got a pathological perspective to effectively find weaknesses and strengths of the ESP programmes, i.e. after applying ESP programmes, ESP practitioners must go and see if the programs' aims and goals have been met or not and if not; they are required to find the reasons and causes of the failures. They will be of particular importance to help enhance the ESP courses quality so that both students and instructors take full advantage of their time allocated to these courses. Paying attention to students' needs, beliefs and attitudes is the essential part of ESP courses which must take place before and during the course, based on which the whole methodology of teaching can vary from one set of students to others and from one semester to another; however, this seems that in our universities many things have remained intact during the years.

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