

# Exploring Instructors' Conceptions about EGP Teacher Challenges for Becoming an ESP Instructor in Iran: A Qualitative Study

Masoomeh Estaji, Ph.D; Naghmeh Nazari, MA

## Abstract

Research has revealed that a majority of English for General Purposes (EGP) teachers lack the basic requirements of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Such teachers decide to stay in their comfort zone resisting change and restricting themselves to teaching general English (Alsolami, 2014). Hence, this study is an attempt to discover the EGP teacher challenges for becoming an ESP Teacher in Iran. To this end, a total of 20 EGP teachers, who were picked through convenience sampling, from different English institutes participated in the study. The study employed a questionnaire, originally developed by Alsolami (2014) entailing open-ended and close-ended questions, with the aim of exploring the obstacles preventing Iranian EGP teachers from becoming ESP practitioners such as lack of specialist knowledge, lack of training, lack of materials. The results of frequency count and descriptive statistics revealed that 90% of the EGP teachers (18 teachers) had never had any experience of specialized training for teaching ESP and only 10% of the participants had the experience of specialized training for teaching ESP. All in all, 20 factors, such as the lack of functional academic literacy and field knowledge, lack of suitable training, lack of course materials, and lack of ESP resources, were mentioned as elements which prevented the EGP teachers in Iran from becoming ESP practitioners. To overcome these barriers, they should consider the ESP teaching situation as a challenging and multi-dimensional field that requires their willingness and awareness. Furthermore, the findings of this study emphasize the significance and need for ESP teacher training courses. Pedagogical implications are provided and discussed in this study.

**Keywords:** ESP, EGP, ELT, TEFL, challenges, barriers

## 1. Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach for language instruction to the learners who highly need to develop their language competence to successfully perform real-life tasks in multiple contexts in order to obtain specific or professional purposes. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP is considered as an approach rather than a product, by which they mean ESP does not consist of a special kind of language, teaching material or methodology (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue, all courses are always based on a perceived need. Otherwise English would not find its way on to a school or university timetable. What distinguishes

Exploring Instructors' Conceptions about EGP Teacher Challenges for Becoming an  
ESP Instructor in Iran: A Qualitative Study  
*Masoomeh Estaji, Naghmeh Nazari*

ESP from EGP is not the existence of a need but rather an awareness of the need. As Mohseni Far (2008) maintains, ESP is a recognizable activity within the wider professional framework of ELT, with implications and comments for the design of syllabi and materials together with its presentation and assessment. On the other hand, EGP (English for General Purposes) refers to contexts such as schools whose needs cannot immediately be determined and specified. It is regarded as providing a broad foundation rather than a detailed and selective specification of goals like ESP. The definition of EGP is an unhelpful polarization, specifically because the meaning of general purposes is left ambiguous.

The teaching of ESP has, by and large, been regarded as a separate activity within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Since the 1960s, ESP has become an essential and innovative activity within the teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language (TEFL/TESL) (Howatt, 1984, as cited in Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). In Iran, it is being taught as a mandatory subject to university students due to the immediate needs of the learners and multifaceted significance of English at global level. Its development is seen in the increasing number of universities offering an MA degree in ESP and in the number of ESP courses offered for international students in English-speaking countries (Harding, 2007; Hyland, 2006; Orr, 2008, as cited in Lo, 2011). The advancement can also be observed from the publication of international journals (e.g., English for Specific Purposes and The Asian ESP Journal), allocated to identify the various aspects of ESP which are in need of development (Lo, 2011).

However, in Iran, instructors encounter a multitude of challenges in the instruction of ESP. In fact, they face several problems pertaining to students' learning, methodology, assessment and evaluation, and syllabus design and materials development. These problems are partly rooted in the dearth of well-established ESP teacher training centers that produce high quality ESP instructors and practitioners. In Iran, a vast majority of EGP teachers teach and run ESP courses who have received no professional training for the instruction of specialized courses. Hence, this study is intended to investigate the challenges that such EGP instructors deal with in the instruction of ESP courses.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **The Concept and Historical Development of ESP**

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) consists of teaching and learning the specific skills and language needed by particular learners for a specific purpose. There is a distinction between ESP and General English in that General English addresses a highly broad range of learners. Likewise, it contradicts with Business English, although there is a striking overlap between the two fields (Day & Krzanowski, 2011).

In following the historical background of ESP, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) discovered three main movements contributing to the emergence of all ESP: (1) the demands of a “brave new world,” (2) a revolution in linguistics, and (3) an increased focus on the learner. Regarding the first movement, since the end of the Second World War in 1945, English has become the accepted international language of technology and commerce; ergo it has created a new generation of learners who must learn English to satisfy the demands of the commercially interconnected modern world. As to the linguistic changes, the development of English courses tailored to specific needs and language demands shifted the focus away from analyzing the formal structures of language to investigating the ways in which language is actually used in real communication. Finally, new insights gained from educational psychology also contributed to the development of ESP. Instead of viewing learners as blank slates to be filled, learners were seen to have different needs and interests, differences which had a critical influence on their motivation and thereby resulted in the need for different approaches to achieve maximum effectiveness in their learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Widdowson (1983) argues that there are some distinctive features between ESP and EGP. For instance, in EGP the focus is on education whereas in ESP the focus is on training. Moreover, since the future needs of the students are impossible to predict in EGP, course content is more difficult to select. In contrast, since English is used in specific vocational contexts in ESP, selection of the appropriate content is easier (as cited in Mohseni Far, 2008). As Harmer contends (1983, p. 1), ESP is “...situations where the student has some specific reasons to learn a language.” Four years later, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 19) offered another definition which declares that ESP is: “An approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and methods are based on the learner’s reason for learning.” As Donesch (2012) has discovered "nowadays teachers are aware of the importance of needs analysis, and perhaps it is this that has been the greatest influence that the ESP approach has had on the teaching of general English".

In 1988, Strevens argued that “ESP is a particular case in the general category of special-purpose language teaching. The same principles apply no matter which language is being learnt and taught.” He explained this definition further by arguing that a definition of ESP should distinguish between absolute and variable characteristics.

The absolute characteristics are as follow:

- Designed to meet specified needs of the learners;
- Related to content, to specific disciplines, occupations and activities;
- Centered on the language appropriate to those activities, in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc; In contrast with “General English”.

Variable characteristics:

ESP may be, but is not necessarily:

- Restricted as to the language skills to be learned.
- Not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

A similar definition of ESP which discusses the absolute and variable characteristics is that of Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). This definition is a modified version of Strevens's definition in which both authors cooperated to offer the following variable characteristics:

- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be used for learners at secondary school level;
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students.
- Most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners. Although there are many definitions of ESP, one might conclude that there are two main common features that most researchers agree on. First, ESP is based on a particular context. Second, ESP is based on the learners' specific needs (Alsolami, 2014).

McDonough (1984) goes forward where she argues that the ESP practitioner needs to understand the professional requirements of the academic or the occupational fields. Accordingly, he should accommodate a variety of means and ways and adopt new ideas.

### **Discrepancies between ESP and EGP Instructors**

ESP is a teaching program in which the content for teaching and the predetermined aims of the course are specified to the particular needs of specific groups of learners, and it contradicts with

those English for General Purposes courses which have nothing to do with any specific scientific or nonscientific content and are purported to teach general language proficiency (Richards & Schmidt, 2013).

According to Day and Krzanowski (2011), the concern of General English teachers is selecting the materials and methodologies which are beneficial for a particular class (e.g. 'Is the approach or method I am using suitable for learners of this age, culture, level, first language(s) etc.?). This concern has also to do with ESP but one other factor should also be taken into account: Subject specific knowledge (of legal procedures, of engineering methods, of software programming etc.). The learners on an ESP course usually have more subject knowledge than the teacher. This additional factor is usually what makes ESP a difficult, but at the same time an exciting and challenging domain. However, there are three significant strategies open to ESP teachers whose knowledge of the specific subject is limited: Honesty and openness, preparation and confidence.

- Honesty and openness have to do with dealing with expectations effectively. ESP teachers do not need to show characteristics which they lack in real life about who they are. Being able to explain what they do and why, is a required skill for any specialist. Learning should be a shared process based on the teacher's competence in language and methodology and the learner's subject specialist.

- Secondly, preparation should involve learning as much about the learners' professional field as the teacher can research before the course.

- Last but not least, ESP teachers need to be confident in that they have the expertise that will help their learners, such as knowledge of how to make learning efficient, how to make language unfading, and how to inspire learners to perform efficiently. To put it simply, an ESP teacher with a broad knowledge of methodology but narrow subject knowledge might be more influential than a subject specialist with no knowledge of methodology (However, a subject specialist with a broad knowledge of methodology would be even better!).

All in all, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) prefer the term *ESP Practitioner* than ESP teacher and distinguish multiple roles for ESP practitioners such as a teacher, syllabus designer, course and materials developer, researcher, collaborator, and assessor and evaluator. In Iran, these issues and teacher's roles have been uninvestigated spots embedded in ESP teaching which require further attention and research in order to come up with practical solutions to these challenges and problems.

### **Relevant Studies on ESP and EGP Instruction**

A detailed analysis of the related literature reveals some of the issues involved in ESP courses and confronted by ESP instructors world-wide. In a case study of an ESP program for vocational high school students of Tourism conducted by Lo (2011), the effectiveness of an ESP program on 33 vocational high school students of tourism was examined. The results revealed that an ESP program characterized by (1) rich and a variety of multiple inputs, (2) need-based content, (3) practical use of English, and (4) meaningful tasks creates remarkable opportunities for learning, through both EGP and ESP. Not only can vocational high school students of tourism consolidate their knowledge and skills through learning ESP, but also they can increase their overall English proficiency. Most important if all, their motivation for learning English is increased.

In another study on “Change from a general English teacher to an ESP practitioner: Issues and challenges in Pakistan” carried out by Abdulaziz, Kazim Shah, Mahmood, and Fazel e Haq (2012), issues that a general English teacher in Pakistan face when he/she selects a comparatively more diverse and effort demanding job of ESP teaching were explored. Interviews were taken from ESP practitioners who had prior experience of general English teaching, and ESP classes were observed in order to verify the results of the interviews. More than 17 issues and challenges were discovered together with their solutions.

In 2014, another study was carried out by Asolami on barriers to teach English for Specific Purpose among EGP teachers. The Findings of the study indicated that the lack of functional academic literacy and field knowledge, the lack of suitable training, the lack of course materials, and the lack of ESP libraries were the main obstacles for teaching ESP. The goal of the study was to facilitate the ESP teaching and help general English teachers to cope with the emerging teaching situation by suggesting some recommendations that would be effective for overcoming those obstacles. Since there is a dearth of research on EGP teacher challenges for becoming an ESP Teacher in Iran, this study adds to the existing body of literature by examining EGP teachers’ challenges and obstacles for becoming an ESP teacher in Iran.

To this end, this study is an attempt to explore those challenges by addressing the following research questions.

- 1- To what extent are the EGP teachers in the English Language Institutes in Iran prepared to cope with an ESP teaching situation?

- 2- What are the main obstacles that prevent our General English teachers from becoming ESP practitioners?
- 3- What are the suggestions that need to be taken into consideration to overcome these obstacles?

### 3. Methodology

This study attempts to extend our understanding of ESP teaching and learning by describing and analyzing EGP teachers' perceptions and practices of ESP instruction regarding the problems that they commonly encounter and the strategies they employ for resolving the problems. This section provides a detailed description of the participants of the study, the instruments employed, data collection procedures, design, and data analysis of the study respectively.

#### 3.1 Participants and Research Setting

A total number of 20 EGP teachers from English institutes in Tehran participated in the study. They had all studied academically in English related fields having either a bachelor's or Master's degree in the field. They were both male and female instructors, teaching English in various institutions in Tehran. These institutes were selected since a large number of EGP and ESP teaching programs were run there. The teachers' levels of instruction varied considerably ranging from elementary to advanced levels. Likewise, their years of teaching experience ranged from 2 years to 18. Those having less than 2 years of experience were categorized as novice teachers. Those having between 2 years to 6 years were categorized as moderately experienced, and eventually those having more than 6 years of experience were categorized as highly experienced. The following table shows the demographic characteristics of the participants:

Table 1  
*Experience, Level of Education, and Gender Distribution of the Teacher Participants*

Demographic Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	8	40%
	Female	12	60%
Relevant Qualification	BA	10	50%
	MA	8	40%
	PhD	2	10%
Teaching Experience	Novice	4	20%
	Moderately	9	45%
	Experienced		

<b>Total</b>	Highly Experienced	7	35%
		20	100%

The sampling strategy employed in this study was purposeful random sampling in order to achieve “information-rich cases” (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Patton, 1990, p. 169). In particular, the main reasons for the selection of the teacher participants were enjoying various years of teaching EGP courses and their accessibility.

### **3.2 Instruments**

This study drew upon a questionnaire consisting of 13 close ended and open-ended items in three sections. In particular, the participants were supposed to complete a demographic section, a section on ESP challenges, along with a section on suggestions and recommendations for ESP and EGP teachers. It should be noted that the completion of the questionnaire took 20 minutes for the participants. A sample of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedures**

To attain the objectives of this study, primarily, a questionnaire has been distributed with the aim of exploring the obstacles that prevent our EGP teachers from becoming ESP practitioners such as lack of specialist knowledge, lack of training, lack of materials. Furthermore, it examined the teachers' preferences for the appropriate solutions that can overcome these barriers. The qualitative questions of the study complemented the data collected in the quantitative section and provided the EGP teachers the opportunity to express their instructional problems and solution strategies.

### **3.4 Design**

This study is a qualitative descriptive analysis of the challenges that EGP teachers face in ESP classrooms. Harwell (2011) stated that “qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants” (p. 148).

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

This study, which was a qualitative type of research, attempted to examine the EFL teachers’ perceptions regarding the main problems and solutions involved in the ESP classrooms. In this study, the data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and descriptive statistics for the quantitative data in addition to content analysis for the qualitative data of the questionnaire.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

For data analysis, descriptive procedures were considered appropriate to examine the instructors' perspectives as for the ESP instructional problems and solutions and to answer the research questions of the study. The first and second research questions of the study centered around the degree of preparation of EGP instructors for teaching ESP and the main obstacles preventing our General English teachers from becoming ESP practitioners respectively. Based on the analysis of the data, the following results were obtained.

Regarding item number 8 in the questionnaire which aimed to explore whether the EGP teachers had ever had any specialized training for teaching ESP, it was revealed that 90% of the EGP teachers (18 teachers) had never had any experience of specialized training for teaching ESP and only 10% of the participants (2 teachers) had the experience of specialized training for teaching ESP. Figure 1 displays the proportion of instructors who had experienced specialized training for the instruction of ESP courses.



**Figure 1.** EFL Instructors Experiencing ESP Teacher Training

Concerning the ESP instructors' challenges section in the questionnaire and the extent to which the EGP teachers consider themselves prepared to become an ESP teacher in the future, the following results were obtained. Based on the results, 70% of the participants (14 teachers) were not willing to become an ESP teacher in the future and only 30% (6 teachers) were enthusiastic about becoming an ESP teacher in the future. Among the main reasons for not being willing to become an ESP teacher, one could refer to lack of content knowledge, lack of confidence for teaching in those classes since ESP students are far more knowledgeable in their subject specialism, lack of interest to study about other disciplines in addition to the fear of not being able to manage

large classes with mixed English abilities. The ability to handle a class with mixed abilities and high expectations was mentioned by 65% of the participants (13 teachers) as the most preventive factor that makes EGP teachers quite reluctant to take ESP classes and become ESP teachers. In a similar vein, financial considerations were also maintained by 65% of those 14 teachers who were reluctant to become an ESP teacher. One of the participant's responses in this regard is as follows:

*I'm not into becoming an ESP teacher in the future since I cannot afford it. I mean attempting to become an ESP teacher requires an amount of money plus time to attend those training sessions for ESP teaching. Personally, I'm a very busy man and I don't think I will have time to attend those classes in addition to the required money. Instead I will work as an EGP teacher and make a fortune in my life. Furthermore, I believe attending ESP teaching training sessions is a waste of time since it causes a lot of stress for the teacher that could perfectly be used for teaching EFL classes.*

In contrast, those teachers (30%) who maintained that they were quite willing to become ESP teachers in the future, the most important reason which was argued by 84% (5 out of 6 teachers) of them was professional development. Other reasons such as willingness to even superficially familiarize oneself with different disciplines in addition to gaining the opportunity to experience different students with differing needs and learning from their subject specialism were also mentioned by those willing EGP teachers. Furthermore, according to their sayings "variety is the spice of life", 34% of the teachers (2 teachers) intended to experience a variety of classes with differential needs.

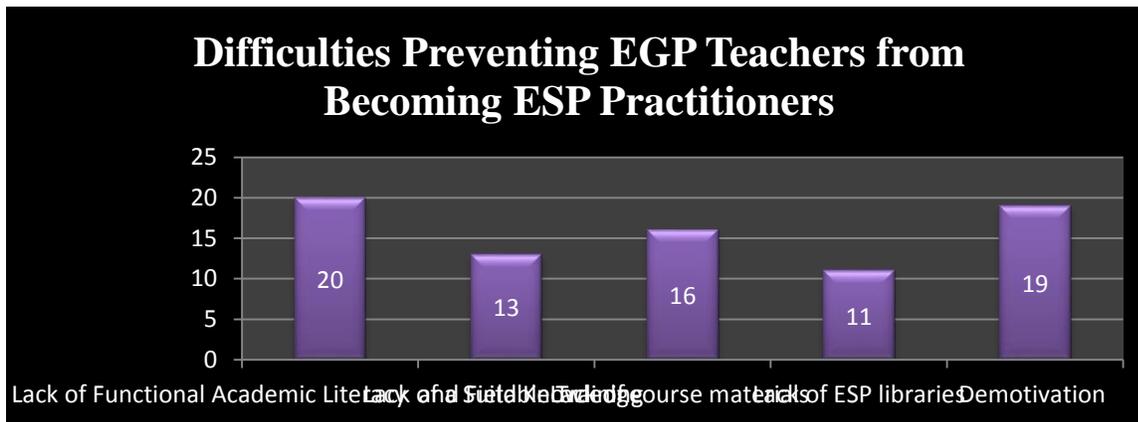
Regarding the next question in the questionnaire (item number 10), the EGP teachers were asked whether they were prepared to cope with an ESP teaching situation and why. Out of 20 teachers, 15 (75%) were of the opinion that a General English teacher is not prepared at all to cope with an ESP teaching situation. Only 5 teachers (25%) had the idea that the General English teacher is prepared to cope with an ESP teaching situation. Among those who believed an EGP teacher is not prepared to cope with an ESP situation, reasons such as lack of the specialized knowledge of the field such as familiarity with some semi-technical terms, lack of knowledge of methodology and materials, were among the most important ones which were mentioned. For instance, one of the participants responded as follows:

*I don't think a General English teacher would be able to cope with the ESP teaching situation simply because s/he has not been trained to do so. Also, I believe being an ESP teacher requires some qualifications which EGP teachers lack. In fact, there is a gap between an EGP teacher and an ESP teacher that could be bridged with some training classes for EGP teachers and preparing them to handle the ESP classes in all its aspects.*

In contrast, those 25% of the teachers, who believed that the General English teacher is prepared to cope with an ESP teaching situation, brought reasons such as using technology like the Internet and online dictionaries and asking the students themselves to carry out the activities would all facilitate the process of ESP teaching and help the General English teacher to cope with such a situation quite easily. Likewise, having self-confidence was a key factor that was maintained by all those 25% teachers that believed the EGP teacher could easily handle an ESP teaching situation. Below is one of the participant's responses on the aforementioned question:

*To me, a General English teacher can easily handle an ESP teaching situation. Since all you need is confidence and the cognizance that nobody is perfect and sometimes a teacher can learn from his students. If I myself am offered an ESP class, I will wholeheartedly accept it since I know I'm gonna learn a lot of new things with and from my students. Also with the Internet everything is ready for a teacher as to the content knowledge and the definition of technical terms.*

With respect to the next question in the questionnaire, which asked about whether the teachers knew what difficulties prevented the General English teachers from becoming an ESP practitioner, more than one option was selected by the EGP teachers. The following chart (figure 2) shows the frequency of the responses by the EGP teachers.



**Figure 2.** EFL Instructors' Difficulties in Becoming ESP Practitioners

As is seen in the chart, 20 teachers out of 20 selected lack of functional academic literacy and lack of filed knowledge as the preemptive factors. Functional Academic Literacy requires mastering the cognitively complex, difficult and relatively unimpeded or context-reduced language of the academic classroom (Collier, 1992, as cited in Alsolami, 2014). Likewise, 13 out of 20 selected lack of a suitable training as the inhibitory factor. In addition, 16 teachers believed that lack of

course materials were the factors that prevented the EGP teachers from becoming ESP practitioners. Furthermore, 11 of them believed that lack of ESP materials causes the EGP teachers to have difficulties in becoming ESP practitioners. Finally, 19 teachers out of 20 considered demotivation as the inhibitory factor.

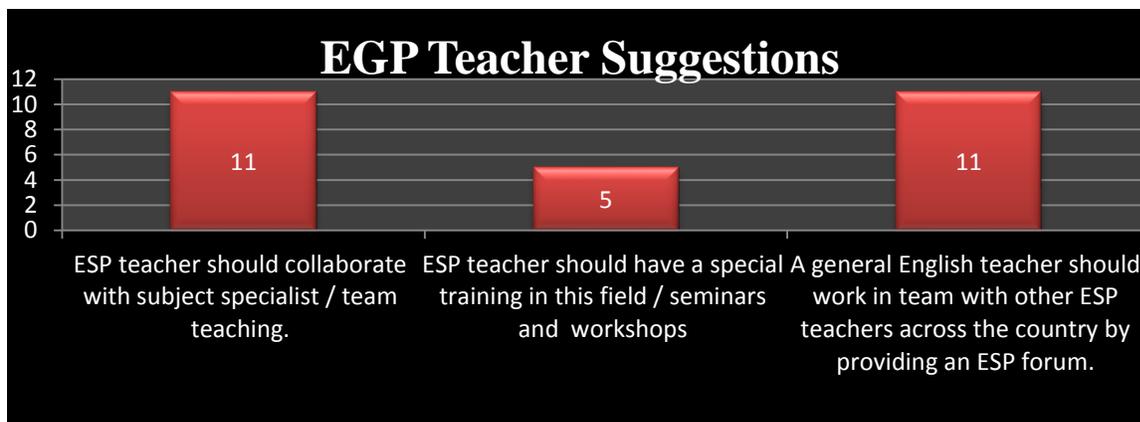
Regarding the next question in the questionnaire which asked the teachers whether EFL teachers of ESP should have a specialized knowledge depending on their learners' field of study and why, the following findings were obtained. Eighty five percent of the participants (17 teachers) were of the opinion that EFL teachers of ESP should have a specialized knowledge depending on their learners' field of study. Only 15% (3 teachers) had the contrary idea. Among those teachers who believed that EFL teachers of ESP should have a specialized knowledge depending on their learners' field of study, one of the responses is presented as follows:

*Personally I think a teacher's identity is characterized by his knowledge of the subject he is supposed to teach. Lacking the specialized knowledge of the field of study of the learners, a teacher will not be able to handle such a class and his students will not rely on him. Building trust between a teacher and his students is the most important factor that will contribute to effective teaching.*

In addition, some other factors, such as the basic requirements and qualifications for ESP teaching along with the self-confidence of the teacher which is built only through having subject specialist knowledge even a superficial one, were among the reasons which were maintained. Another sample of a participant's response is provided as follows:

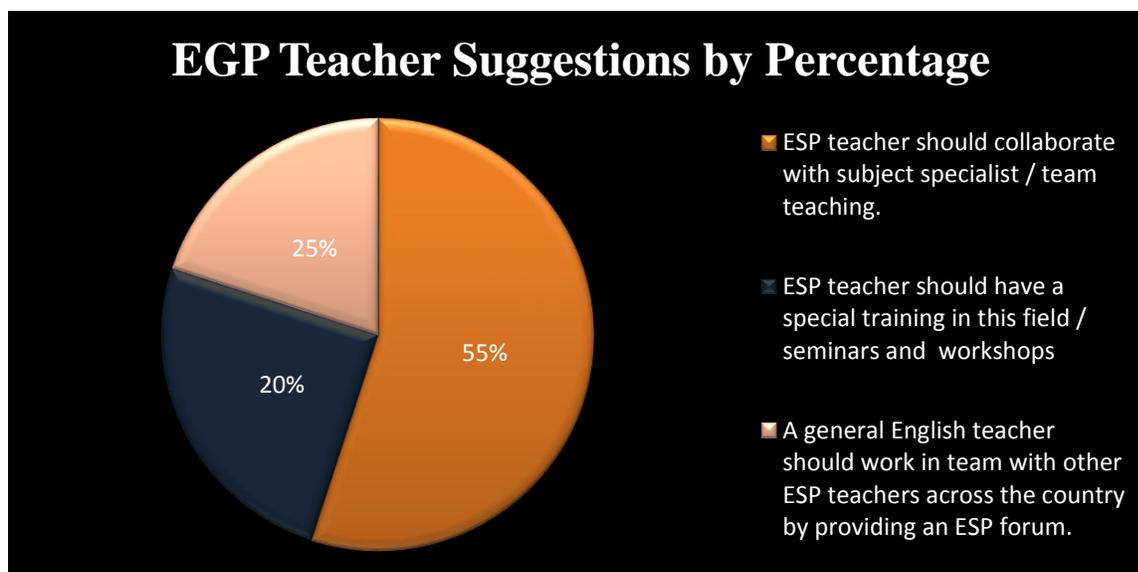
*When it is said that an EFL teacher of ESP should have the specialized knowledge of the field of his learners, it does not mean that he should be an expert in the field. It just refers to the fact that the ESP teacher needs to have common-core knowledge of the field plus making sure that his students have grasped the meanings of technical terms which he can check through specialized dictionaries.*

Considering research question 3, the suggestion section of the questionnaire asked the teachers on the multiple choice recommendations which they considered more effective for overcoming the challenges of becoming an ESP teacher. Figure 3 reveals the selected response of the EGP teacher participants.



**Figure 3.** EFL Instructors' Suggestions for Dealing with Challenges of Becoming ESP Practitioners

As is seen in the above figure, 11 teachers out of 20 believed that ESP teacher should collaborate with subject specialists (team teaching). Likewise, 5 teachers believed that ESP teachers should have a special training in this field by attending seminars and workshops. In addition, 4 teachers were of the opinion that a general English teacher should work in teams with other ESP teachers across the country by providing an ESP forum. Below is also a chart on the percentages of the responses in the suggestions section of the questionnaire.



**Figure 4.** EFL Instructors' Suggestions by percentage

The above chart provides us information on the fact that 55% of the teachers believed that ESP teacher should collaborate with subject specialist. Besides, 25% are of the opinion that ESP teachers should have a special training in this field. Finally, 20% have the view that a general

English teacher should work in teams with other ESP teachers across the country by providing an ESP forum.

The findings of the study are in compliance with those of Alsolami (2014). In Aslolami's study, 70% of the teachers considered ESP teacher collaboration with subject specialist as the most effective factor overcoming the challenges of becoming an ESP teacher. The findings of the study are also in line with those of Abdulaziz, Shah, Mahmood, and Fazel e Haq (2012) which showed that 66 % of the ESP practitioners in Pakistan are not formally trained for ESP teaching, whereas the remaining lot either studied ESP as a subject in their post-graduate degree courses, diplomas or certificates, or got their training through HEC teacher training program. Similarly, the findings of the study concur with those of Alsolami (2014), in which 80% of the teachers believed that EFL teachers of ESP should have a specialized knowledge depending on their learners' field of study.

## **5. Conclusions and Implications**

This study provided some insightful information about the main obstacles and preemptive factors that impede the EGP teachers in Iran from becoming ESP practitioners. It also shaded light on their perceptions toward teaching ESP, their needs and their suggestions to cope with the obstacles. According to the results of the questionnaire a majority of EGP teachers have not been trained for ESP teaching situations. Likewise, a majority of them did not like to become ESP teachers in the future due to factors such as lack of content knowledge, lack of confidence for teaching in those classes since ESP students are far more knowledgeable in their subject specialism, lack of interest to study about other disciplines in addition to the fear of not being able to manage large classes with mixed English abilities. In a similar vein, the barriers that prevented the EGP teachers in Iran from becoming ESP practitioners are lack of functional academic literacy and field knowledge, lack of suitable training, lack of course materials, and lack of ESP libraries. To overcome these barriers, they should consider the ESP teaching situation as a challenging and multi-dimensional field that requires their willingness and awareness.

It should be noted that the ESP teachers are not expected to be mere specialists in the students' professional fields. They should collaborate with subject specialists or enjoy team teaching. By the same token, ESP teachers can develop their competence in students' particular professions through attending seminars and workshops related to those professions. Another solution that can assist in overcoming the lack of subject knowledge is the use of the Internet which provides a broad range of content knowledge. All in all, we can refer to the complex role of the ESP

teachers as providers of materials, syllabus designers, mentor, collaborator, researcher, and assessor and evaluator. Moreover, a professional ESP instructor should be not only an expert in the field but also in English pedagogy. Therefore, as a solution, we can have recourses to team teaching which is a collaborative activity centering on the language knowledge and content knowledge of the ESP and EGP instructors.

The findings of this study are worthwhile in that they offer three pedagogical and practical implications. First, some courses for ESP teaching should be designed by materials developers and course designers with the aim of educating EGP teachers for ESP teaching situations. Second, seminars and workshops should be offered for EGP teachers on different fields of study by different institutions. Last but not least, teacher trainers in Teacher Training Courses should inform teachers that in order to become an ESP teacher, teachers are not expected to be fully competent in the students' subject specialism. A partial competence about the whole profession and having a general view over the field would suffice.

Future researchers can carry out a study on EGP teacher challenges to become an ESP teacher by using triangulation methods. That is, the study can be conducted through having interviews besides distributing questionnaires. Likewise, a similar study can be carried out on a broader scale, adding more participants. Finally, a study can be carried out by selecting highly experienced and less experienced teachers and comparing their perspectives and perceptions.

## References

- Abdulaziz, M., Kazim Shah, S., Mahmood, R., & Fazal y Haq, H. M. (2012). Change from a general English teacher to an ESP practitioner: issues and challenges in Pakistan. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(1), 434-465.
- Alsolami, E. (2014). Barriers to teaching English for Specific Purpose among EGP teachers in the ELL. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 42(15), 1-23.
- Collier, V.P. (1992). A synthesis of studies examining long-term language minority student data on academic achievement. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 16(1-2), 187-212.
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1992.10162633>
- Day, J., & Krzanowski, M. (2011). *Teaching English for specific purposes: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Donesch, E. (2012). English for specific purposes: What does it mean and why is it different from teaching general English? *The Journal for ESL Teachers and Learners*. 1(1). 9-14.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge university press.

- Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. (2003). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and Applications* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Harding, K. (2007). *English for Specific Purposes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harmer, J. (1983). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Harwell, M. (2011). Research design in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. In C. Conrad, & R. Serlin (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook for research in education: Pursuing ideas as the keystone of exemplary inquiry* (2nd ed., pp. 147-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Howatt, A. P. R. (1984). *A history of English language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learner-centered approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2006). *English for academic purposes: An advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.
- Lo, Y. H. G. (2011). ESP versus EGP: A case study of an ESP program for vocational high school students of Tourism. *Taiwan International ESP Journal*, 3(2), 71-100.
- McDonough, J. (1984). *ESP in perspective: A practical guide*. Taylor & Francis.
- Mohseni Far, M. (2008). On the relationship between ESP & EGP: A general perspective. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 7(1), 1-11.
- Orr, T. (2008). Next generation English for specific purposes (NextGen ESP). In L. Huang, & L. Li (Eds.), *English Education and English for Specific Purposes* (pp. 1-6). Shih Chien University, Taipei: Crane Publishing Co., Ltd.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2013). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Stevens, P. (1988). ESP after twenty years: A re-appraisal. In M. Tickoo (Ed.), *ESP: State of the art* (pp. 1-13). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Widdowson H. G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. Oxford: Oxford University Publications.

## Appendix

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire aims to investigate the barriers to Teaching ESP among EGP Teachers. Your thoughtful responses are highly appreciated. Please note that the information will be kept confidential and will be used for academic research purposes.

1. Gender: Female Male

2. Years of experience as an English language teacher (Tick ONE)

0-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14-	15-16	18-20	21+
-----	-----	-----	-----	------	-------	--------	-------	-------	-----

3. Highest relevant qualification (Tick ONE) Majoring in .....

Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Other
-------------	---------	------------	----------	-----------	-------

4. Type of institution you teach English in most often (Tick ONE)

Private	State	Other
---------	-------	-------

5. Current level of instruction (Tick ONE)

Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Upper-intermediate	Advanced
------------	------------------	--------------	--------------------	----------

6. The age of the learners you teach most often (Tick ONE)

12 or younger	13-19	20-25	26+
---------------	-------	-------	-----

7. How would you describe your work as an English language teacher? (Tick ONE)

I teach English full-time	I teach English part-time

E-mail: .....

---

8- Have you ever had any specialized training for teaching ESP?

Yes /No

---

### B- ESP Challenges

9- Do you consider becoming an ESP teacher in the future? Please justify your answer?

10- Is the General English teacher prepared to cope with an ESP teaching situation? Why?

11- In your view, what are the difficulties that hinder the General English teachers from becoming an ESP practitioner? **"You can select more than one answer if needed"**

- A- Lack of Functional Academic Literacy and Field Knowledge
- B- Lack of a Suitable Training
- C-lack of course materials
- D- Lack of ESP libraries
- E-Demotivation

12-Should EFL teachers of ESP have a specialized knowledge depending on their learners field of study? Why? Please elaborate.

### **C-Suggestions**

13- Which of these recommendations do you consider more effective for overcoming the challenges of becoming an ESP teacher?

- a- ESP teacher should collaborate with subject specialist / team teaching.
- b- ESP teacher should have a special training in this field / seminars and workshops
- c- A general English teacher should work in team with other ESP teachers across the country by providing an ESP forum.

**Thank you very much for your cooperation.**