



An ESP Approach to Analyze the Current Teaching Practices and Curriculum of Political Science in University in Karachi

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Abstract

The paper presented an in-depth view of current practices of English language teaching at the Department of Political Science of the University of Karachi (Pakistan). It specifically narrowed its vision down to teach specific English course to the students of political science at the said university. Three tools were employed to collect the data for this study to determine the appropriateness of the English curriculum that could have met with the needs of students. The study also analyzed the teaching strategies that were adopted to teach English to the students of political science. This step followed to overcome students' learning problems. The results led to suggest the designing of specific English curriculum for the students of political science that (curriculum) could bring clarity in teaching practices and methodologies adopted to teach English in connection with the particular norms of ESP practice and student need analysis.

Keywords: English curriculum for political science students; ESP approach; ESP course for political science students; political science students' need analysis; teaching practices at political science department

1. Introduction

The teachers and students are well aware of the importance of English in future. Teachers at the department of political science also realized the importance of English and believed that the students should study English as a compulsory subject. Moreover, the teachers recommended the students to adopt educational references that facilitate English language learning. The academic proficiency to use English is a decisive factor behind the success of students. Therefore, English is perceived necessary to qualify for the higher stages (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991).

The division of English is observed around the world into academic and occupational domains. The academic domain deals with the accomplishment of classroom-based activities. On the other hand, the occupational domain deals with the students in their professional phase. Therefore, the teaching and learning of English in field specific subjects requires a prospective revision. The English to teach for specific purposes is a newly devised step in the department of political science, University of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. The teaching of English, these days, faces many difficulties e.g., design of specific curriculum with its achievable objectives, techniques to teach specific English in political science and particular roles that are assigned to instructors and students both inside the classroom are the main difficulties in the way of English.

1.1 Research Questions

Q 1. What is the current teaching trend practiced to teach English in department of Political Science?

Q 2. How far the ESP curriculum of political science is found successful to achieve the desired objectives in learning and the instructions that are imparted to students through ESP lens?

Q 3. How far the adopted teaching techniques are useful to teach from the perspectives of ESP?

1.2 Importance of Study in the Field of Political Science

It is an attempt to highlight the practice of an ESP curriculum in one of the public sector universities of Pakistan. The study can prove beneficial to identify the current trends of English language teaching and learning at the department of political science within one of the renowned universities in Pakistan i.e., University of Karachi. The study is based on the visualization of progress that specific curriculum of English is required to achieve its desired goals in department of political science. The mode of instruction is also discussed from the perspectives of ESP.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Analysis of Lingual Needs of Political Science Students

Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998) state that the needs of students are absolute in characteristics. They used particular methodology (based on activities) focus on lingual skills (i.e., lexis, grammatical structures, register, genre specification, and discourse analysis). Richterich and Chancedrel (1980) recommended that analysis of needs in students does express their feelings towards teaching, learning and establishment. Their study, need-based analysis, administers the questionnaire and consulted teachers, who have been previously teaching the course at a university. Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998) stated that the students give more valuable data about the use and need of English in the classroom. The students were undergraduates and had two years to complete their course. However, they were able to give a list of important topics in the course of political science. This has been referred by Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998) about the students' needs that they learn from their past experiences and cultural background information in order to become the crucial part in design of a syllabus. The focus of political science syllabus is based on the topics that reflect the facts of overall affairs to an international front. It discusses many crucial areas that include description of member states to form a coalition group, the disputes of states on land and waters along with main geographical events. The examples that have been given to validate this statement are Greece and Macedonian states. The



events of elections that happened in Russia and the state of Croatia, the political structure of a particular country, internationally recognized organizations between member states are also made the part of political science syllabus. The organizations may include description on World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and many other international well renowned organizations. The topics on management of human resources and structural composition of enterprises have been discussed. The topics that have been identified to assist for the analysis of English language students are used to create a complete course of political science. The suitable content of political science to teach and learn is found from various different authentic resources. Therefore, the course needs to make different adaptations in the classroom. Yalden (1983) stated that the new trend to teach ESP course has focused to develop and use four language skills of English in a given field. Therefore, the functions of language are referred to different ways that students adopt and apply to learn the course. The analysis of students' needs has shown that they are varied in nature. Krashen (1981) believed that the most efficient way to learn is the communicative mode of teaching.

3. Features of the ESP Course Book on Political Science Introduced in the ESP Session

3.1 Research Based and Authentic Version of Content Selection

The selection of material, for a textbook, is developed with the collection of most reliable texts from the subject of political science. Precise version from the abundant source of texts was adapted. The texts have been taken purposefully as reading content. The content is taken from different lectures, conferences, seminars or even research-based articles with introduction of new trends in the field of political science. This has been in accordance with different beliefs of the students. The adapted authentic texts possess potential to instigate interests and counter exposure of different needs of the political science students. The ESP teacher explored the features of ESP like as:

The authenticity of texts does deal with different kind of genres and specialty. The special focus was maintained and processed through an authentic language with richness of terminology in these selected texts. The texts that had potential to instigate and hold various interests of students are given proper concern with respect to political science department. This had a valuable input of selection (ESP teacher, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

3.2 Approach of Developing Different Exercises and Tasks in ESP Book of Political Science

The reliable contents have been taken from many reliable sources. The sources of extracts are different textbooks, statistical reports, scientific articles, manifestos, billboards, newspapers, graphical information and workbooks. These supplementary documents have particular exercises. The focus is laid to develop comprehension and specific-subject terminology. The writing and speaking skills are focused to develop. The course aimed to drive students to think critically and even students are allowed to share their knowledge in the analysis of political discourse.

3.3 Verification of ESP Course

The content in the textbook was verified with its test in ESP session organized in department of political science at the University of Karachi.

3.4 Revision in the ESP Course

The units (that have been prepared) were taken for feedback from the students and teachers of the political science department. Subsequently, some texts were planned to revise and extend significantly. The exercises were revised before the approach of the book before copyright stakeholders. The ESP course was re-designed after its consultation with the experts and finally reviewed. The final copy of manuscript was published with a name "English Use for Political Scientists". It had one volume that tended to cover basic needs of bachelor and master level students at the University of Karachi.

3.5 Characteristics of an ESP Textbook

The textbook had following characteristics;

- The more attention was paid to the realistic texts that have been extracted from meaningful sources of information.
- Introductory texts were presented as summary of the entire chapter.
- Units of the book were designed for students to partially have knowledge about it. They can even add something more to it for their interest.
- The authenticity was made the foundation of lingual activities.
- The introduction and use of subject-specific terminology was maintained on consistent basis.
- The focus was not merely based to propagate Britain variety of English. Rather, the use of Pakistani English was ensured in many instances. The use of Pakistani English was made in political speeches and events that referred to Pakistani context.
- It was useful source for teachers and students in the context of ESP course teaching.
- The content was written in English language. The teachers were recommended to use translation guide as a form of scaffolding some specific vocabulary of political science.
- One section was allotted to assess students through both techniques.
- Supplementary materials were also provided for teaching that included brochures, workbooks, diaries, compact discs and pages of websites to ease search pattern for the students.
- The final brief section was given to instruct teachers for the preparation of materials.

The selection of units in a book was based on fact that politics in world is changing with the time. Therefore, the topics were selected with keen care and interests of students were claimed on priority basis. The book was divided into two main sections. The first section was general introductory part. The meaning and scope of political science was discussed. However, the second section dealt with world politics, the controversial issues and constitutional deadlocks.

4. Methodology Employed in the Study

The study observed two qualitative methods to collect the data of current teaching trends in practice to teach English at department of political science. It was followed by the practice of specific English curriculum in a five-day session organized under ESP principles. Finally, the teaching practices were visualized that could benefit the students of political science in future. Gillham (2000) stated that two qualitative methods give more accurate results than a single method. The students were, therefore, surveyed through interview protocols. On the other hand, the responses of an ESP teacher were taken qualitatively. The researcher tried to carry the study into three possible stages. The observance of current teaching trends and ESP curriculum was followed by a questionnaire fill up and interview to the ESP teacher and political science students.

4.1 Participants

The population selected for this study comprised of an ESP teacher who was interviewed for one session to teach specific English to the students of political science at University of Karachi, Pakistan. The ESP teacher had Master of Philosophy degree in English Language with an experience of around 10 years to teach ESP courses in sociology and anthropology departments. After those six students of political science department were selected to observe the ESP session. They experienced the learning of English for political science purposes in an organized session of ESP. The researcher observed a population with mixed abilities to practice English.

4.2 Sample Selection for Focus Group

The researcher tried to adopt a focus group strategy. It was because the researcher tried to look for the matter in all common interests with present sources and collective perspectives of students. The second issue that researcher confronted was the limited factor of time and available target group of individuals. The target group consisted of teachers and students of political science department. The last reason was to know about different factors that students needed to learn ESP course on political science. Kleiber (2004) claimed that the focus group of individuals was basic to discuss research objectives in detail.

5. Data Collection and Analysis

5.1 Current Curriculum of Political Science in Relation to Remedial English Unavailability of Proper ESP Course

The department of Political Science at the University of Karachi serves the students with various programs. The students are able to take admissions from bachelor to doctoral programs. Therefore, English specific English language was required to read and work. The authentic content of functional English course is not substantial enough to overcome the requirement of students and teachers. Therefore, specific English course was a need of the hour in the department. However, the previous schoolings did not help the students to prepare for specialized English in politics. Therefore, to understand particular political theories, they need to have command in Political English. The textbooks that are referred to the students of political science are typically composed to propagate political English. Therefore, the teachers and students feel an urge to have such an English course as can help them counter this issue. The ESP course in political science is a need. This course will try to organize the mindset of students for successful comprehension of different aspects in political science. If it is to refer the functional English course (taught to the students of political science in two semesters), it would fail to fetch the successful outcomes. Therefore, the decision was made by students and teachers with observation of ESP session in the department that they need specific English course to assist them in the understanding of political views. The general academic English course (that is taught to students) seemed vague and disconnected with the actual interest of political scientists. The tailor-based contents in preferable form of ESP texts can have logical progress and could ease transition from the level of learning to study English. This can fulfill the actually required concerns of political science department. The teacher (**Pol T1**) stressed a need of the time for students to understand the subject of political science in English. According to him:

The English is present requirement of time. The students cannot understand Political texts in English, or can pass their examinations successfully, if they cannot understand specific English used in political texts. Therefore, the specific English course that could guide to cater requirements of English in Political science is a demand . . . (Pol T-1, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

5.2 Determination of Initial Points/Stages of Text Composition

The introduction of texts begins with meaning, scope and relation of political science with other social science subjects. The progression of language is designed to continue through many levels. The four semesters in two years are utilized to develop general practical approach amongst the students. The critical thinking is not raised with the actual practical application of experiences. The proficiency rate to use English seemed to vary amongst the students of political science in different stages of course. However, the rate of success practicality seemed to fail. On the other hand, the texts of political science were rich in use of subject-particular vocabulary. Though, the vocabulary was written clearly with respect to its context of usage, still, the students urged a need of an extra English source to find denotative meanings of political contexts and terms at all levels. The textbooks suggested in a course that usually have longer introductory paragraphs than the suggested ESP book of political science and remedial English book. The introduction of each chapter was comprised of 1-2 pages on average. The student (**Pol St 2**) stated about this phenomenon that the researcher needed to agree on it:

The genuine texts are long. Though, some texts are short but difficult to have their interpretation. The texts that are short do lack proper clues to analyze its discourse. The lack of redundancy is a major issue. The objectives of course need to train us to analyze these kinds of texts in textbook of political science, especially two pages of written introductive passages... (Pol St-2, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

5.3 Analysis of the Current Curriculum of Political Science (Semester-1)

The curriculum of political science seems vast when it comes for its analysis. Therefore, the curriculum of first section is made the part to be analyzed and discussed in this study. The division of major courses that are offered in political science is divided into four sections. The course of remedial English is taught in the first semester of curriculum. The communicative and functional skills are also taught in this semester. It is for the students to learn the basics of general English communication. It tends to equip students with suitable skills to use them for correspondence. The other courses of this unit are basic knowledge of theories and principles about international relations, western political philosophies, public administration and research methodology. The three elective courses to opt in this semester are major issues of Muslim world (opt-I), social change and political development (opt-II) and globalization (opt-III). The reason behind teaching of this unit was the inculcation of basic knowledge about different political cultures and relations of renowned states around the world. The specific political culture of Pakistan is also focused and specifically represented in public administration. The techniques of research are briefly taught to the students in research methodology along with the remedial English course. Along with this, the elective courses (that have been given in this unit) served varied purposes. The course of major issues of the Muslim world covered different political controversies, constitutional deadlock, and foreign policies of Muslim states. Second optional course tends to discuss social phenomenon of changes in different states and specifically in Pakistan along with political developments. The third elective course covers different topics on globalization. The courses use typical political terminologies that aimed to help future political scientists about the application of theories in comprehension of the world politics. The critical skills in students are assumed to develop with remedial English that is made to learn in the same unit. This has been further assumed that remedial English can develop analyzing skills in students to analyze political texts composed in English. The major course demands that students need to have prior basic knowledge about different fields. The fields include economy, public administrative concepts, philosophy, contemporary version of historical events and law. This can provide a clear platform to understand political issues and events. The basic knowledge in philosophy is perceived to help students to interpret the events successfully. The objectives of the (semester-1) have been summed by the teacher (**Pol T2**). Teacher stated that:

The aim of first semester is to highlight endeavors and equip students about different suitable knowledge in politics. It even reinforces lingual competence and skills in students to understand politics. However, the assumptions are not fulfilled that is set under its principles. These sections need to have more clarifications. It is so that then the teachers can serve this curriculum for both purposes i.e., teaching and the learning... (Pol T-2, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019)

5.4 False Assumptions on Relative Prior Knowledge of the Content

The curriculum of first semester requires that students must have the basic knowledge of some related fields to understand the subject of political science more easily. However, it is a relative truth. Student (**Pol St 3**) went against this principle. According to the student:

The designer of curriculum assumes that the students must have basic prior content knowledge in different related fields, like, economics, law, international relations, philosophy. However, this can be relative. All students are not equal to counter the basic of all subjects in one year in least... (Pol St-3, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

The learning context in the Department of Political Science at the University of Karachi holds a great misconception i.e., the teachers have every bit of knowledge. However, the students are only the recipients in classrooms.

5.5 Lack of Formative Assessment

The method of formative assessments needs to be revisited. Brookhart (2008) states that the process of formative form of assessment is set on the measure of skills i.e., clear targets for learning, design specific-crafted activities that could help learners inside classrooms and outside with practical outcomes. The ESP teacher stated after the analysis of first semester in terms of assessment that:

The formative assessment is missing in the curriculum. It must be made the part of teaching. It is important for even learning process. The teachers did not find themselves competent enough to administer a fact that demands assessment on one side and the large number of students that exceeds day by day. It makes the great challenge for every student in terms of their weaknesses and desires. Further, teachers did not have even account to address the challenges of students in assessment... (ESP teacher, Department of Political Science, the University of Karachi, 2019).

The adequate references are missing that could suggest teachers for appropriate knowledge in politics.

6. Interviewing After the ESP Teaching Session of Course in Political Science Department at the University of Karachi

Interview protocol was employed by the researcher to access the small population. The questions in an interview focused on methods used by the teacher in teaching and performances of the students.

6.1 Activities Performed During the ESP Session

The **ESP teacher** summarized the activities that have been performed in ESP session. According to the ESP teacher:

It took for around four days to continue ESP session. The students were assumed for their responsibility during session. The teacher claimed to provide students with complete a list of political terminologies and meanings of different concepts. The concepts include, power, authoritarian regime, democracy, social contract and etc. The students in group were divided and asked to present each of the concepts through proper presentations (ESP teacher, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

On the other hand, the student (**Pol St 2**) remarked few activities of ESP session in an interview that is given after the conduct of ESP session at the University. The student stated:

Each of the students was even required to translate the different political texts into their own native languages. This activity gauged the command of students on English. In the presentation stage, teacher may intervene at any point to clarify misunderstanding. Even, they added information chunks in presentation. Rest of the others too notes (Pol St-2, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

6.2 Grading System to Assess the Students

The activities were followed by the grading system. The students were evaluated and marked from 20 points. In a comprehensive test, they were asked to explain political terms and concepts. The second question was the choice, either they had to write one essay or translate the given passage in their own native language. The teacher (**Pol T1**) after the evaluation of grading system stated about the qualitative enhancement of ESP course as:

Idea to enable student as responsible in own learning is valid; however, there must be a basis to achieve it. The central principle to help students become independent learner is an ability of teacher to observe performances of students in class with clear presentation of their weaknesses and positives. This project can work to encourage students with more remedial activities for learning their own deficiencies (Pol T-1, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

Another teacher (**Pol T3**) of political science, on drawing the features of the ESP project, remarked that:

Aim to teach ESP is not restricted to present abilities of students. They even needed more guidance in learning of tasks. With this kind of learning, students can learn different techniques to rely on different tasks. However, the ESP teacher overlooked basic foundations of ESP, it related to teach the political discipline with needs of students and how they identify their goals is a provoking query related to this (Pol T-3, Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, 2019).

7. Discussion

More concern was provided to the target group of individuals that have been taken from a department of a University in Karachi. The concern of questions was to know whether the students can learn ESP course effectively or not. Majority of the students admitted this fact that they were given presentations on different topics to present (in ESP teaching sessions of political science). The ESP teacher failed to provide guidelines to conduct research and make proper outline for them at the start. The teacher did not thoroughly guide them to develop their writing and listening skills. Training on the practice of academically patterned drafts was not given by the ESP teacher. It may include quoting, paraphrasing of paragraphs, acknowledgement of references and different sources. The students argued in the interviews that they faced a great challenge to explain the main political concepts orally. The ability to tackle the task orally was a problem for them to accomplish it. Students, who tried to give an attempt for essay write up, were also interviewed. According to these students, the majority of them gave their perception that they felt difficulty to write political based essays. However, they have been taught to write essays in second year but on the topics different from political issues. Therefore, to give an attempt for political essays seemed a real arduous task for them. The majority of students even perceive that the skills, taught by the ESP teacher in a session, can help them greatly to learn and acquire political essay writing skills. The knowledge for the students was an important factor to rise in specificity of subject. Students admitted their lacks in designing their research work. They proposed their deficiency to learn from the teachers at their department. According to the students, every teacher at the respective department of political sciences stands responsible for sparing less time for students. The large

number of students is difficult for them to tackle. Therefore, they hardly discuss problems that have been faced by students with proper feedback. The technological advancement has eased the teaching and learning processes. There are infinite e-sources available. They are specialized version of miscellaneous fields and procedures of methods, conferences and journals that are available online. The efforts of students are acknowledged. If students want to get their work published, they can do it with easiest methods available online.

8. Suggestions to Improve Teaching Techniques and Curriculum of English at University of Karachi

After a thorough analysis of the collected responses from students of political science department at the University of Karachi and of the ESP teacher, who conducted an ESP session in the department, led the researcher to suggest some provisions to teach and learn English course at the departments that deals with specific subjects. This can prove beneficial to use a specific variety of English in a second language learning context of Pakistan.

8.1 Awareness of Students of the Need of Time

Hutchinson and Waters (1991) claim that the awareness of the need is one of the unique aspects of ESP. It means that the instructor needs to pay proper attention towards actual learning requirements of the students. This will help teachers to explore different suitable methods to teach English. In addition, it can analyze various learning aims of students and comprehend their needs. In the context of this study (i.e. Department of Political Science at the University of Karachi) the questions in relation to ESP (that follows below) could be relevant to ask:

- a) What can be the various learning needs that student of political science might have to study in ESP domain?
- b) What can be the role of English teacher to help students for their fulfilment of needs?
- c) What are the contributive roles assigned to each student of political science to learn English in ESP domain?

These areas have two important dimensions. The needs of students are articulated. Therefore, the teachers are required to be well known about fundamental ESP practices. The analysis of needs is also required that could demonstrate the abilities of students to conduct professionally. Nature of activities and assigned tasks are important to learn ESP effectively to meet curriculum objectives. Basturkmen (2010) tends to identify different types of aspects that highlight the needs to be addressed. First is the analysis of the condition that targets group of individuals to use English for various purposes. So far, the students of political science are concerned, they need English to quote in the speeches of political figures, address political events, constitutional clauses, to define political terminologies and concerned acts. The second aspect that needs to be addressed is the knowledge and prior abilities in the target group of individuals. The third aspect is motivational status of learners. It tends to find different learning techniques that have been adopted by learners in need. Therefore, the ESP features in environment to teach and course assigned is all dependent on the teachers to tackle knowledge and skills of students.

8.2 The Needs and Wants of Students

It must be the ability of an ESP teacher to engage students in different tasks and prepare for the lessons that help them in comprehension of the subject. Therefore, the benefits of a course depend on the quality to cater the needs of students through analysis. The analysis of needs is done either through interviews or survey questionnaires. However, Day and Krzanowski (2011) stated that the lesson of an ESP plan may include similar elements of General English (GE). Therefore, the ESP teacher needs to have proper understanding of the following elements i.e. the character of group that has the ESP members with particular aims to design activities and classroom based tasks try to expect learning outcomes with the materials that should prove appropriate for their special account. In the present context, the students should be provided a training to improve their critical writing, thinking and reading skills for future. They might require to quote political speeches of any political figure as a source of reference to validate their answer, the statistical reports of different countries, political events, and constitutional outbreak. Therefore, the teachers, if they want to teach ESP to political science students at the University of Karachi, they need to design lessons that could realize learning outcomes of students. The writing skills must be focused more in comparison to other language skills. The analysis of political discourses, to generate their ideas on political visions of leaders, the accuracy of ideas in political time framework, and brainstorming must be visualized with current perspectives of politics in Pakistan. Many aspire to go for competitive examinations like CSS and PCS. Therefore, the teachers need to teach students about organization of an outline for political essays, selection of suitable terminologies to validate the political event in outline and paragraph writing. The skill to grab the attention of concerned audience to read their passage is a technique that must be made the part of an ESP course. The teachers need to discuss with students about their assigned roles in process of ESP knowledge and trainings. The students need to perform different skills for future. The teachers need to provide students with curriculum and overall content of specific English with its learning practices. This can help for consultation to enrich knowledge. Even students did not need to practice almost all aspects of ESP at one time. The task of ESP can be beneficial, if it is practiced with assigned roles in or outside of the classroom. They can utilize references, where they require in their practical stage. After the completion of tasks, the instructors must provide feedback to students for better performances. This can help improve the learning process.

8.3 The Inclusion of ESP Course in Different Departments of the University to Teach English as a Foreign Language

It is one of the ways to develop the practice of ESP teaching in academic institutes of Sindh. The module of ESP must be prepared to teach at different universities in Sindh. The respective teachers must be enrolled in master or doctoral studies. The courses must be exposed to main features of ESP. The teaching approaches need to be in congruence with the design of course. The main practices with its use of suitable materials must also be prepared for lessons and different tasks. The learners are capable to fulfill their needs, acquire suitable skills that could make them professionals in their careers.

9. Conclusion

English has gained a great significance in teaching context in Pakistan. The use of English has approached in almost all academic disciplines. Therefore, the importance of English must be recognized in various specialties. The implementation of English in specific still requires many aspects to be covered in present and for future. The results of this study have proved that the implementation of an ESP course to teach the students of political science department at their undergraduate level can bring positive changes, if it is practiced. The students in an organized ESP session have shown keen interest to welcome the specific course of ESP at department of political science in University of Karachi. The subject of political science is one of the important optional subjects in the renowned examinations of CSS and PCS to recruit graduates in federal and provincial bureaucracy. It comprises of 200 marks. Therefore, its selection to pass the bureaucratic examinations matters to a great extent. Therefore, the majority of political science students prefer to ESP for either bureaucrat recruitment exams or the lecturer positions. The students of political science at University of Karachi are now aware to acknowledge its importance in academic and professional domains.

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