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## **ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES COURSE DESIGN PARAMETERS FOR CHEMISTRY-BIOLOGY STUDENTS**

*This article describes some parameters that should be taken into consideration during designing English for Specific Purposes course for combined major programme 6B015002 'Chemistry and Biology' at Suleyman Demirel University. English for Specific Purposes courses focus on specific field or discipline, such as engineering, law, management, marketing, accounting, medicine or science in our case. English for Specific Purpose teaching requires real life learning situations which might be achieved with the help of appropriate course that is designed after considering parameters that detect whether the course should be intensive or extensive, assessed or non-assessed, common-core or specific, homogeneous or heterogeneous, fixed or flexible, or deal with immediate or delayed needs and finally identify the role of English for Specific Purposes teachers. After studying all parameters of course design listed above everything is put in a nutshell as a result of the case study of English for Specific Purposes course on chemistry-biology specialty at Suleyman Demirel University.*

*Keywords: Course Design, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Need Analysis (NA).*

### **Introduction**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course design became one of the most distinguished areas of English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching since the early 1960s. ESP courses emphasizes on a professional field or discipline, such as law, medicine, marketing, engineering, science and etc. Course design is a series of activities that help to design course or learning proceedings. According to Hutchinson and Waters [1] course design is the approach to language learning, which is based on learners need analysis. While Munby [2] defines ESP courses as essentials by prior analysis of the language and communication needs of the learners. The aim of this article is to investigate the parameters that should be

taken into account in developing the ESP course and many ESP teachers are confused in defining whether the course should be intensive or extensive, assessed or non-assessed, common-core or specific, homogeneous or heterogeneous, fixed or flexible, or deal with immediate or delayed needs and finally identify the role of ESP teachers.

Dudley – Evans and St John differentiate ESP course between absolute and variable features. Absolute ESP features are to design the course which would respond to the needs of the learners; to apply the fundamental methodology and activities that totally suit to the special discipline; and to focus on the language, abilities, competencies, discussions and methods applicable to these activities. While variable course features that ESP might be structured to the special disciplines; ESP may apply different generic methodology taken from General English course in practicing special teaching situations; ESP is developed more for grown-up learners; ESP is mostly generated for students with intermediate level and above; and most ESP courses are supposed to possess fundamental knowledge of the language system, however there is no doubt, this course could be used with low level students either [3].

After conducting Need Analysis (NA) the next step is to design the course according the collected data. The word ‘Course’ refers to a class that lasts for a term or one academic year. A course is usually conducted by one or two professors and considered as an individual subject. At the same time, students are graded after completion of the course. However, program is another term which is used for degree. For example, Introduction to Biology would be a course, while Bachelor of Science in Biology would be regarded as a program. At the same time, there are some countries that use words a little differently. The word ‘course’ is used to describe the completion of university degree, and the word ‘unit’ or ‘module’ would refer to an academic course. Courses are short-termed in most institutions worldwide, lasting between several weeks to several terms. They can either be presented as ‘compulsory’ components or ‘elective’. An elective course is one selected by learners from optional courses in a curriculum; whereas compulsory course (sometimes called ‘core courses’ or ‘general education courses’) is required which students have to take. Core courses are assumed crucial for an academic degree, and elective courses are more specialized [4].

### **Materials and Methods**

NA is conducted to identify students’ needs, wants, lacks, their expectations, target situations and features of the actual or present situation. However, designing of appropriate course which includes all essential study skills is one of the most important duties in teaching English for specific purposes (ESP). Course design is the process and methodology of generating qualified learning atmosphere for

learners. The emphasis of course design is to join educational experiences for students in specific and supportive atmosphere for intellectual growth. There are a lot of authentic and constructed sources and materials and for teachers, and for learners. 21st digitalization century gives opportunities to access all materials online but most of them cannot properly choose materials they need and even teachers face a great challenge in selecting appropriate resources. Inappropriate chosen material may lead to low students' competencies and level of English. According to Dudley-Evans and Maggie St John [3] in course designing there are some parameters we have to consider that are illustrated in figure1 given below.

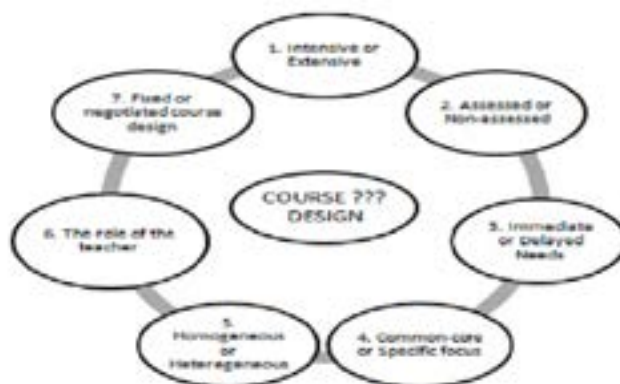


Figure 1 – Course design parameters

The first point is to detect whether the course should be intensive or extensive. The main aim of intensive course is to cope with important language needs within a very little period of time. On the contrary, extensive courses are held every week, at least once per week. The basic purpose of extensive courses is to fulfill a long-term, continuous language acquisition. During intensive English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course the time of the learners is dedicated only to the ESP course whereas, an extensive course engages only a limited portion of students' schedule. Most ESP courses are run intensively so they are able to prepare learners with necessary language and language skills in specific study area or to train company staff for specific workforce tasks. However, at universities ESP courses are offered with other content courses in parallel. The pros of obtaining intensive ESP courses are obvious. Students are focused on acquiring English intensively. They have a lot of time to deal with various activities, assignments and tasks. For example, learners can spend much time and effort in language

learning, preparing presentations or writing reports. The absence of other distractions can mean that intensive course is more effective in terms of time availability for studying English and practicing different language skills such as reading, writing, listening, speaking and 21st century skills like communication, presentation, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. In contrast, there are some cons with intensive courses, too. Students' motivation and interest may decline because of the absence of correlation with core subjects. Learners do not apply the learnt materials in professional sphere, and the learning process seems artificial. Enthusiasm and passion is progressed when the learning procedure is more related to students' disciplines and experienced directly during the main course area. In our case we have extensive ESP course which has its own benefits and drawbacks. For instance, the advantages of ESP course that can be conducted in cooperation with the subject course, related to its topics, and applied to learners' experiences and needs. As soon as ESP added to the programme and it becomes a part of the schedule where learners are assessed, then the rank of ESP as an individual subject is raised, thereby make learners tick to learn in a thorough manner. However, the main disadvantage of the extensive course is the potential lack of continuity between classes, particularly if the classes are infrequent [5]. If there are only 3 credits (lessons) a week how can learners achieve a certain level of proficiency. Furthermore, they are distracted with other subjects and not fully concentrated on ESP course. The choice between intensive and extensive courses is set by circumstances within the institution. However, it might be able to incorporate some intensive elements into extensive course.

The second issue is to find out if the course should be assessed or non-assessed. Since the intensive ESP focuses on rapid language learning, this course is more effective and convenient for mutual learners or staff who are responsible for their learning process and progress. These courses are not usually concerned with testing or evaluating learners' proficiency so they are hardly assessed. At the same time, extensive ESP course is mostly conducted at universities for learners who might not understand the necessities and seriousness of the learning process. Hence, for these learners ESP should be compulsory or at least elective course where learners' performance is assessed along with other subjects at the end of each term and academic year. It is extremely important that both students and other departments take ESP course into serious consideration so it significantly increases its status. On the other hand, it also brings accountabilities, duties, and responsibilities for English language teaching process.

The third step is to identify whether the ESP course should deal with immediate or with delayed needs. Immediate needs stand for those that students have during the course time, while delayed refer to those needs that will become

more beneficial later. ESP is divided into two fundamental types: English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) [1]. Further sub-divisions of EOP are sometimes made into business English, professional English (e.g. English for engineers, lawyers, doctors) and vocational English (e.g. English for tourism, nursing, and aviation). According to Dudley-Evans the absolute characteristics of ESP are:

1 ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of the learners.

2 ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the specialism it serves.

3 It is centered not only on the language (grammar, lexis, register), but also the skills, discourse and genres appropriate to those activities [6].

Most of ESP or EAP courses are set in the first or second years of learning curriculum and aimed to delayed needs such as presentation skills, producing academic pieces of writings or oral communication in their future professional fields, which cannot be fully used in accordance with their profession. The actual needs of EOP become more pressing in later years of the course when learners have real practicum or maybe once they have to write dissertations and defend them in their final year. So, does it make sense to include such components of EAP or EOP course beforehand? We believe it would be more significant to add EAP and EOP components in the final years when students comprehend the importance of the course rather than in the first or second years, or at least guaranteeing that the course continues until the final year. There is a definite point for conducting a short intensive course on academic language and include presentation and writing skills in the last year, especially when these skills are so appropriate. Students always seem to be more enthusiastic by a course that prepare them for oral and written communication and meet their professional needs. Additionally, there is a rational sequence in handling such a course in the last academic yeas particularly where there is a possibility of integrating the course that also prepares students more specifically for professional sphere.

The next question is to know if materials and course should be common-core or specific to learners' study. The key issue in ESP program designing is how specific course materials are compiled regarding to focus group of learners. A distinguish is made between courses that are 'broad angled' which are schemed for a more generic set of students and those that are 'restrict angled' which are created for a very specifically aimed set of students. For instance, course called English for Science can be considered as 'broad angled' since they are for classes focused on wide academic skills which cover many subfields including Formal Sciences, Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, or Natural Sciences. Meanwhile, the course titled English for Chemistry or English for

Biology is considered as 'restrict angled' as they refer to courses that are more special purposed. Furthermore, the courses can be even more specific. For example, chemistry often distinguishes between two areas, scientific chemistry or pedagogical chemistry, and course could be developed for just one of these sub-areas: English for Scientific Chemistry or English for Pedagogical Chemistry. Some ESP courses are developed for disciplines or occupations as wide focused and some for specialties within them. Wide focused course may concentrate on a range of target events, such as professional skills, or variety of genres. However, it does not indicate that skills are taught in a general or frivolous way. Skills are going to be very detailed, and some specific content might be involved. The benefit of wide focus is that it allows us to deal with variety of skills even if actual need is only one need. The wide focused course gives opportunities to shift from specifically oriented English to normal, generic focused English to ease the tension in learning process. In contrast, insufficient time for varieties of activities may lead to some distractions and difficulties in comprehending the materials. Narrow focused course concentrates only on a few target genres, for example just on listening skills, or just on reading and writing skills. The choice of a wide-or narrow-angled course design can be based on categorizing learners into groups. For example, if there are 60 students enter the university, divide them according to their language levels and choose between wide or narrow angled English for future chemistry-biology learners according to their needs and preferences after determination of Need Analysis.

The fifth point is to learn whether the group taking the course is homogeneous or heterogeneous. Homogeneous group is made up of students from the same learning background such as one specialty or profession. However, heterogeneous group of learners are from different specialties, professions, or levels. There is no problem in conducting General English to heterogeneous learners, since the content is generic, but it is difficult with professionally oriented classes. In contrast, it is available to present more specific work with homogenous group. We expect that learners would find highly specific course very motivating for the reason that they are designed to be obviously applicable and appropriate to the learners' needs. Most of the learners feel themselves passionate when ESP course is helpful in understanding lectures of main subjects and they are able to acquire and produce all gained language skills in their writing assignments, reports, presentations, and seminars. However, it would be wrong to think that only specific materials have to be selected for homogenous group. It is sometimes can be alter between some common-core and some specific materials. The first challenge is to group students according to their homogeneity so they have the same interests in learning ESP. Another issue is the level of language. It might happen that students come



from the same specialties or professions but it may be very difficult to ensure that groups are also homogeneous in their levels. It is very common process in General English when students are divided according to their language levels. However, in ESP courses homogeneity in the learners' specific purposes is more prioritized.

The next step is to understand what the teacher's role. The issue of ESP teachers' role is very significant and a controversial one (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Swales, 1988; Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1993). Dudley -Evans and St. John [3] defines teacher as a provider of input and activities since teachers control the class, introduce about language skills, divide into groups or pairs. However, there are some ESP teachers who are facilitators or consultants who manage their input but not control. They do not make any decisions about the course design on their own and constantly negotiate with learners what materials, topics, skills and activities they want to be included in their curriculum. Teacher-facilitator even may ask learners to help with fetching materials for using in class. This is all because of the deficiency of content comprehension in specific area. Nevertheless, teacher-facilitator assists practicing the greater knowledge of the language.

A course is as 'an integrated series of teaching-learning experiences, whose ultimate aim is to lead the learners to a particular state of knowledge' [1]. Designing ESP curriculum is a process of collecting the data to prepare effective assignments and tasks, creating appropriate setting for ESP learners to achieve their goals [7]. Consequently, needs, wants, preferences, and expectations of learners play an essential role in course designing, which means that ESP is not a teacher-centred but a learner-centred approach. Furthermore, two teacher roles mentioned above are at opposite sides from a teacher who is total controller or dictator to one as a total facilitator or consultant. However, there is no harm in applying traditional methods with some elements of teacher-centred activities in teaching ESP. There is no doubt that the good ESP teacher will feel which role to perform. The key roles of ESP practitioners are as follows: a teacher, a course designer, materials provider, a collaborator, a researcher, and an evaluator. Therefore, ESP teachers' work involves much more functions than teaching.

The last issue is to determine whether the course design has to be developed by the language teacher after counseling with affiliation, or it has to be followed by learners' discussion and agreement during the course. In other words, the point is to comprehend if the course design should be fixed or flexible negotiated. A fixed course design is set out beforehand and this type of course is usually constant. A flexible and negotiated course design allows altering something in the course based on the learners' comments [8]. Most of the scheduled and assessed ESP and EAP courses in the curriculum program should have the same materials. Therefore, this will lead to a necessity for fixed course design. However, the flexible negotiated

syllabus is important if the lecturers or institutions take into account learners' opinion and involve them in decision making about their learning process and in assessing own progress. These two types of the courses are opposite of the continuum. At the same time, two courses can be joined in one. For instance, a course may follow fixed design with some flexible negotiated course elements such as topics and activities that learners suggest themselves.

### Results

After studying all parameters of course design listed above we decided to put everything in a nutshell as a result of the case study of ESP course on chemistry-biology specialty at Suleyman Demirel University (SDU) that is shown in the table 1 beneath.

Table 1 – ESP course for chemistry-biology students at SDU

INTENSIVE COURSE	EXTENSIVE COURSE
---	2017-2018 academic year: 6 credits of elective ESP courses are added to the curriculum in the 1st and 2nd terms equally; 2018-2019 academic year: the amount of ESP lessons reduced from 6 credits to 3 for two semesters equally; 2019-2020 academic year: elective ESP course is fell off significantly, only 3 credits in the 2nd term.
ASSESSED COURSE	NON-ASSESSED COURSE
ESP course is assessed along with other subjects at the end of the term. That is why chemistry-biology students take ESP course seriously.	---
COURSE with IMMEDIATE NEEDS	COURSE with DELAYED NEEDS
ESP courses are designed in accordance with present learning needs of chemistry-biology students so they can understand their main subjects, lectures in English, make presentations and answer in seminars	Professionally-oriented English (EOP) should be conducted in the final years when students comprehend the importance of the course and it might become beneficial to acquire presentation and writing skills to complete the dissertation and be ready to defend it.

COMMON-CORE COURSE	SPECIFIC COURSE
For NIS, BIL, or specialized schools it is suggested to alternate ESP with EAP components. In order to meet high leveled learners' distinct needs the materials of ESP course should contain both academic and professional English components and create English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) course.	ESP course can be stressed on terminology, discourse and be specific to the subject of study for those students who graduated ordinary schools where lessons and materials presented in Kazakh or Russian languages and terminologies are not known in English
HOMOGENEOUS COURSE	HETEREGENEOUS COURSE
Homogeneity of SDU students highly appreciated. Students come from the same chemistry-biology background and even more they are purposefully divided according to their language levels.	---
<b>ESP TEACHERS' ROLE at SDU</b>	
ESP teachers at SDU value and motivate their students to become involved, interested, independent, qualified, and confident learners in the professional sphere. The aim of teachers to provide a learning environment that will support learners to achieve high results in both study and career aspirations. Consequently, needs, wants, preferences, and expectations of learners play an essential role in course designing, which means that ESP is not a teacher-centred but a learner-centred approach. The key roles of ESP practitioners are as a teacher, a course designer, material provider, a collaborator, a researcher, and an evaluator. Therefore, ESP teachers' work involves much more effort than only teaching	
FIXED COURSE DESIGN	FLEXIBLE COURSE DESIGN
---	Major chemistry-biology program is a quite new specialty at SDU which is launched only 3 years ago. Therefore it is based on flexible course design to find out more information and preferences of learners. Learners' opinions, needs, and wants are taken into account and at the same time they are involved in decision making about learning topics, process, and activities through need analysis.

## Conclusion

During the course designing ESP practitioners should be cognizant of strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of institutional and learners expectations. Sometimes, the course design might be implemented in advance and revised during or after the course has been conducted. However, there is a course design that is accomplished while the course and negotiated with students and might be altered in accordance to the learners' needs and feedbacks. To sum up, ESP teacher has to be experienced in both teaching and supplying the suitable range of available materials.

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*Д. К. Райханова, Г. М. Касымова*

**Химия-биология факультетінің студенттеріне бағытталған арнайы мақсаттарға арналған ағылшын тілі курсының жобалау параметрлері**

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*Д. К. Райханова, Г. М. Касымова*

**Параметры проектирования курса профессионального английского языка для студентов химии и биологии**

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*Арнайы мақсаттарға арналған ағылшын тілі курстары инженерия, юриспруденция, менеджмент, маркетинг немесе біздің жағдайда ғылым сияқты нақты салаға немесе пәнге шоғырланады. Бұл мақалада Сулейман Демирел университетінің 6В015002 «Химия және биология» біріктірілген мамандығының негізгі бағдарламасы үшін арнайы мақсаттарға арналған ағылшын тілі элективті курсының әзірлеу кезінде ескерілуі тиіс кейбір параметрлер сипатталады. Бұл параметрлер курс қарқынды немесе кең, бааланатын немесе бааланбайтын, жалпы немесе нақты, біртекті немесе гетерогенді, тіркелген немесе икемді болуы тиіс пе, тікелей немесе кейінге қалдырылған қажеттіліктермен жұмыс істеу және, саралап келгенде, арнайы мақсаттарға арналған ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің ролін анықтау үшін қарастырылады.*

*Кілтті сөздер: курс даярлау, арнайы мақсаттарға арналған ағылшын тілі, курс параметрлері*

*В данной статье описываются некоторые параметры, которые следует учитывать при разработке курса профессионального английского языка для комбинированной программы 6В015002 «Химия и биология» в Университете Сулеймана Демиреля. Курсы профессионального английского языка фокусируются на конкретной области или дисциплине, такой как инженерия, юриспруденция, менеджмент, маркетинг или наука в нашем случае. Обучение профессионального английского языка требует реальных ситуаций обучения, которые могут быть достигнуты с*

*помощью соответствующего курса, который будет разработан после определения таких параметров, как должен ли курс быть интенсивным или обширным, оцениваемым или не оцениваемым, общим или конкретным, однородным или гетерогенным, фиксированным или гибким, или иметь дело с непосредственными или отсроченными потребностями и, наконец, определить роль учителей профессионального языка.*

*Ключевые слова: проектирование курса, профессиональный английский язык, параметры курса.*

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