Challenges and Prospects of ESP from Moroccan ELT Teachers’ Perspectives

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Abstract

This paper is about raising the quality of ESP in Moroccan engineering schools. Actually, ESP in Morocco faces lot of pedagogical challenges that impede the teaching of ESP courses. These challenges should be tackled in order to move this field forward and help engineering students achieve their objectives and meet their needs adopting present situation analysis and target situation analysis. Having said this, the ultimate objectives of this paper is to explore the ESP teachers’ perspective on English for engineering and how they meet Moroccan engineering students’ needs. Also, to seek for the challenges that they face so as to come up with practical steps that can be followed in order to meet Moroccan engineering students needs. To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher opted for the qualitative method using the semi-structured interview as a qualitative research instrument. The population of this study is Moroccan ESP teachers who teach in different engineering schools in Morocco. After gathering the data using the semi-structured interview as data collection, the researcher opted for thematic analysis as the most appropriate data analysis techniques. The results revealed that Moroccan ESP teachers face many challenges such as heterogeneous groups, students’ motivation, individual differences, resources, and training.

Keywords: ESP; Needs Analysis; Job market
Introduction

After the independence, the situation of teaching foreign languages in Morocco tended to correspond to another reality. Not only the teaching of English kept but other foreign languages introduced as well. Nowadays, with the increase of English as a language of business, other foreign languages started to disappear and English remained, after the French, the only foreign language taught. Since 2000, Moroccan education system has introduced to a new reform that focused on practical issues in addition to pedagogical and institutional one. Its main goal is to link between what is introduced to students in the classroom to the job market. The king Mohamed VI on the 60th anniversary of Revolution of King and People raises this issue of the importance of education in general and languages in specific to the job market. His majesty put it as follow: Moroccans have no choice but to learn and master foreign languages. They should deepen their knowledge base, boost their skills and be competent enough to work in Morocco’s new professions and areas of employment. This signifies that there is a shortage of qualified workers in the job marked especially in car industry, call centers, in the aeronautic industry and in other areas. In the same vein, the Moroccan Ex Minister of higher education Lahcen Daoudi proclaims about the importance of English in modern era especially when he gave various speeches to students of engineering explaining to them the crucial role that English language plays in the job market. In one of his speeches, he stressed that English is the world language for scientific research and for employment.

Recently, especially in the academic year 2018-2019, there has been a thorny debate about the importance of languages in the market place and how to bridge the gap between Moroccan education system and job market. The High Commissioner for Planning has recently proved that there is a great gap between education and the market place and this is because of the high rate of unemployment. In addition to that, the head of the Advisory Mission of International Monetary and Fund stressed on training graduates to meet the needs of the job the market. Hence, this research is meant to highlight the importance of English in relation to the job market in the modern era as well as to contribute in the realm of education in general and ESP in particular.
The field of ESP is in great need of research that will bestow ELT in Moroccan education. Up to now, in the Moroccan context, little research has been conducted in the field of ESP excluding some articles written by Mohamed Ouakrim, Zaki Abdelatif, Moha Ennaji, Hassan Bouzidi to name but only a few which are not research based. The fundamental motive behind undertaking this research is tight to the development of ELT in Morocco in general and ESP in particular. The way ESP has been taught in Moroccan engineering schools need more reflections and improvement. Ali Serhani who is an Associate Director of GESPER Services confessed that Moroccan engineering schools fail to train their engineering students in languages skills and soft skills. Having said this, this paper is meant to explore a field work research and question ELT teachers who teach in various engineering schools in Morocco so as to find out the challenges they face and suggest alternative solutions for the ESP development in Morocco.

1. English for Specific Purposes in Morocco

Morocco is a multilingual country which is comprised of many languages like Tamazight, Arabic, French, Spanish and English. Arabic is the first language of Morocco simply because it is the language of instruction. Tamzight is spoken in different regions in Morocco, like Tamazight in the middle of Atlass, Tachalhit in the region of Souss, and Tarifit in north east of Morocco. French is used as the second language in Morocco. Spanish and English have different status but they are considered as foreign languages, however, the status of French is debatable and it triggers a lot of reflections. The Moroccan educational system has gone through hot debates about what language to teach in higher education. Yet, with this great demand of English nationally and internationally, strategic vision 2015-2030 recommends the mastery of Arabic Tamazight as the two official languages in addition to French and English. The main objective is to establish a balanced multilingualism. Still, the status of English in Morocco in general and ESP in particular needs more reinforcement especially with rise of globalization, the technological revolution, economy, and scientific research. Sadiqi (1990) claims that there are many private business schools which teach English to serve the needs of secretarial training, commerce and computer science (cited in El karfa, 2006, p. 105).
Generally, Morocco is characterized by EGP instead of ESP. However, many Moroccan applied linguists and educationalists including (Ouakrim 1994, Zaki 1996 Enajji, 1990) agreed on the implementation of ESP at the tertiary level (cited in El karfa 2006,p. 106). Similarly, Enajji (1990), advocates that

“officials in higher education are invited to revise the aims and goals of teaching English in Moroccan universities to make compatible with the needs and facts of the Moroccan society, by introducing for example a course in English for specific purposes in faculties of letters designed for students who may choose a career in the administration or the private sector”(41-42).

Moreover, Ouakrime (1997:15) argues that teaching ESP requires the intensive and extensive reading about students’ specialization. In this regard, he states that “the students and their potential employers are given the opportunity to voice their own views in the matter”. As a matter of fact, ESP needs analysis aims to voice students’ needs and job market need in order to highlight the widely needed linguistic skills in the market place and therefore to bridge the gap between the needs of students and employers. Thereafter, teaching in ESP classrooms requires different approaches and claims so that the teaching of ESP should be efficient and functional. Likewise, the role of the teacher in ESP classroom is enormously important. Ennaji (1997)highlights that “The ESP teacher should have solid training in ESP teaching methodology, the production of teaching materials and in the principles of science, also, he must be aware of the rapid changes that science and technology undergo”(p.20). Most importantly, ESP in Morocco faces many pedagogical problems. Ennaji (1997:21) explains that

Most ESP teachers lack any serious and formal training in ESP, the time allotted to ESP is rather insufficient, ESP classes suffer from overcrowding, especially in the public institutions, opportunities to practice English outside classes are scarce even later on when students become employed, most of the students think their problem lies in vocabulary, whereas in reality they have more difficulty with reading comprehension, grammar and writing, fifth, although students of private institutes spend a lot of time speaking and listening in class, there is no evaluation of the oral skills, as exams are only written. The opposite is the case in public universities where exams are oral only.

Additionally, Abou abdelkader (2000) implies the improvement of ESP in Morocco. ESP courses is built on the expectations of the learner, authenticity of materials, development of study skills, the teaching of genre that equips the learner in various genres included in a
specific field. The language needs of the individuals in ESP classroom are very fundamental. Zaki (1996) describes the potent of students needs in relation to the socio-economic tendencies. In the same line of argument, Zaki (1996) deems that no theory exists that does all this or any of it with high degrees of certainty because language needs of the individual changes and they are neither stable nor constant nor static. He points out that the needs of a user of a foreign language in Morocco are not stable throughout his career life. Furthermore, Zaki (1996:8) claims that “innovation touches on both material and immaterial domains of socio-economic and cultural activities and occurs with and/or without access to new knowledge and information”. In the same vein, Mellouk (2000:20) recommends that there should be a reconsideration of the type of English that is taught in Moroccan engineering schools. He proposes that the teaching of ELT in Morocco should be more specific, for instance, English for science and technology should be taught in EST. Some teachers in some engineering schools encounter some pedagogical problems like the lack of formal training in ESP, and lack ESP materials and ignoring the needs of students. In this respect, Ennaji (1997) highlights that in the ESP class the needs of the students must be taken into account, and the ESP teacher ought to know and specify their needs. As far as the role of ESP teacher is concerned, Ennaji (1997:20) claims that “the teacher should have solid training in ESP teaching methodology, the production of teaching materials and in the principles of science”. Besides, in Moroccan engineering schools, the amount of time allotted to English class is very limited; it often varies between one hour and a half or two hours per week. Also, English is not introduced in all departments and there is a lack of language departments in some engineering schools. As a matter of fact, to achieve the goals and objectives set at the beginning, Ennaji (1997:21) recommends that textbook writers and syllabus designers must specify and classify the different uses and skills of English that are needed by different learners. Likewise, designing a syllabus or writing a textbook, one should specify (i) the objectives of the teaching, (ii) the particularity of the option, (iii) the materials to be used, (iv) the methodology of teaching, and (v) the learners’ needs.

Furthermore, Bennkadour (2013) in his research that was conducted among ENSAM student proves through a quasi-experiment study that PBL (Problem-Based Learning) is more effective than conventional instruction for EFL engineering students, especially in helping them to improving their communication skills. He also added that as a methodology, the results show that students have been active learners, showing high motivation. As a teaching
method, PBL is one of the appropriate teaching methods that ESP teachers have to adopt in their teaching simply because it enhances students’ soft skills mainly problem solving skills. In so doing, P.B.L has contributes to a better development among ENSAM students.

2. Statement of the problem

The teaching of ESP in general and English of engineering in particular in Morocco faces some pedagogical challenges. Actually, ESP courses put the learner at the centre of language teaching, in the sense that putting their needs always comes first. Some engineering schools fail to set predetermined goals that are always defined at the beginning of each academic year. This leads to the failure of providing the necessary knowledge and skills that are widely needed in the job market. To acquire the basic knowledge of both English language and ESP in which they are specialized. There exist also a gap between students’ knowledge in ESP and the requirement needed from job market. For example, to succeed in a job interview in Morocco, a candidate will often get by with an intermediate knowledge of English and good communicative abilities (British council, 2016). Furthermore, the teaching of EFL in ESP context does not meet the requirements of an ESP course at the level of teaching methods, teaching materials, assessment and time allotted to ESP course. Therefore, it is important to note that ESP in Morocco needs reflection and reform at the pedagogical level.

3. Research Question and Objectives

This research strives to answer the following research question in order to meet the objectives set.
What are the ESP teachers’ perspectives on English course and its prospect in the job market? This study aims to find out the main pedagogical problems Moroccan ESP teachers face in their teaching process in order to enhance the quality of teaching of ESP in Moroccan engineering schools.

4. Research design and Research instrument

This method of research involves non numerical data; the researcher investigates people’s opinion and relationship of individuals. Also, it helps the researcher to interpret the reality of a particular thing in which it links to the results of quantitative data. Mack et al (2005) defined qualitative research as a scientific way to understand a given research problem from the
perspectives of the local population it involves. It is effective in obtaining culturally specific information about opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.

What characterizes qualitative research is that the researcher interprets and analyses data obtained through open ended questions either in a questionnaire or an in-depth interview. There are three main types of interviews that could be used: structured interview, unstructured interview, and or semi-structured interview. The researcher asks questions that trigger people’s opinions and or experiences. In this study, the researcher explores Moroccan ESP teachers’ experiences, challenges, of teaching ESP and its prospects to the job market.

To answer the research question, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The semi-structured interview is used to collect data from ESP teachers’ respondents on their perception and attitudes concerning the language and communication aspects of engineers’ profile. Cohen et al. (2007) explains that the semi-structured interview allows for a more in-depth discussion based on direct verbal interaction between individuals. The semi-structured interview has allowed capturing further information that could not be reached otherwise in this context, to collect data on Moroccan ESP teachers; face to face interview would be the convenient technique for this study. The main objective of using semi-structured interview is to have in-depth information and experiences from different stakeholders. Cohen, et al. (2007) summarizes the important characteristics of semi-structured interview as follow: The interviewer and respondents engage in formal interview. The interviewer develops and uses an interview guide. This is a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in particular order. The interviewer follows the guide, but is able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when he/she feels this is appropriate.

The semi-structured interview was used to elicit data on teachers’ opinions on how ESP course should be designed and implemented. More precisely, it aims to elicit information from this sample population on their professional experiences, training, and teachers’ training programs. It focuses on teachers’ perception of the needs of students and the job market for teaching English in institutions of engineering. It also concentrates on teachers’ opinions on different aspects and components of ESP courses, namely the objectives, content, methodology of teaching, teaching materials, assessment, evaluation and teachers’ training. It also aims to elicit data on the challenges they encounter in teaching English for specific
purposes and English for engineering at engineering higher education institutions in Morocco. The semi-structured interview has been formulated in the form of a guiding list of questions. These questions have been organized in three main themes: Linguistic competence, Training, and language in use.

5. Findings of the Interview

Question 1: How long have you been teaching English in your institution and have you ever taught ESP to your students?

This question aims at eliciting information from teachers about the teaching experience of teaching English in the above mentioned schools and whether they have taught any ESP course to their students i.e. whether they have taught English for engineering or English for General Purposes. Teachers’ teaching experience varies from one teacher to another. The data collected reveals that teachers’ professional experience is characterized by diversity in terms of years of experience and the types of English (ESP/EGP) they have taught. One teacher had taught at ENSAM for more than 15 years, another one has taught at the same school since 2005. Another teacher has been teaching for more than three years at EMI and another teacher at ENIM has been teaching for more than 5 years. One teacher has just started teaching there and another one has just worked at ENIM. It is worth noting that it was not easy to meet as many ESP teachers as possible especially those who have enough experience in the engineering schools (table 5 summarizes the teachers teaching experience and their status).

Concerning the teaching of ESP, four teachers revealed that they had been teaching EGP instead of ESP. One of them justified this with reference to the level of students and the lack of placement tests. He stated: “I can’t teach courses like English for engineering or business English especially in the first year. At ENSAM students in the first year study courses related to grammar and general writing. At first, they have to master the grammatical courses then in the three remaining years they are going to study courses related to business English and English for engineering”

It is worth mentioning that this respondent stated at ENSAM students are not introduced to ESP courses in the first and second year, this is because of the low level of students. In the same vein, another respondent from ENSA Oujda said: “We try to set up a department
called the humanities. We want to include the humanities to students like the one at the faculty. In the first two years they are going to study grammar, paragraph writing, spoken English, culture... when it comes to the engineering cycle ESP is more enhanced: academic writing, building vocabulary, listening for authentic language, speaking presentations, professional communication, cover letter, interviews...” This teacher who has just been recruited as full timer, is willing to structure the teaching of English at this school. As he stated, he thinks that because of the low level of students, they cannot teach ESP courses in the first years that is he is willing to teach EGP and EAP courses in the first two years and then in the last two years, he will equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge they will need in the job market. Similarly, another teacher from ENSAM stated that he has taught business English to third year students and English for engineering to fourth year students. This implies that he is aware of ESP and he is familiar with the way ESP should be taught. Another respondent from ENSAM stated that he has taught English for business and English for engineering. He said: Yes, I taught English for engineering, English for business communication and general English”. This respondent shows that he has enough experience in the teaching of ESP in general and English for engineering in particular. Another respondent from EMI stated that he has taught English for business and English for engineering for three years. He said: “In EMI, English is taught only for three semesters so I teach them public speaking in the first year, English for engineering in the second semester and business English in the third semester. In S3 I also try to introduce extra courses like preparation for the TOEIC. All the courses and the skills taught are based on students’ needs analysis. Every semester at the beginning either I design a questionnaire or I open informal discussion about what courses and skills they like to study and I suggest the course content and we open discussion whether the courses are relevant to their expectation or not. Of course they accept what I offer to them and they suggest some extra activities and courses and even the way they prefer to study.” This respondent demonstrated that he has taught ESP courses during the three semesters and he takes into account students’ needs before designing teaching materials.

In the same line of argument, another teacher at EMI who has been teaching at this school for two years said: “In the first year I teach them general English and in the third year I teach them some courses related to business and research”. This means that this teacher focuses a lot on general English rather than ESP. He also said that “students’ level is very low and I
Maybe this teacher is not aware of students’ needs as well as the teaching of ESP namely English for engineering. Hence, the teaching of ESP is vital because that will rise students’ motivation and have positive attitude toward the course. Another respondent from IAV who has been teaching ESP since 1978 demonstrated great awareness of teaching ESP especially in teachers’ teaching method, teachers’ materials, and needs analysis. He said: “Yes, I have taught various courses related to engineering, business and research”. Another teacher from ENIM stated that he had taught English at this school for one year but he had never taught ESP. He said “I have taught English in ENIM for one year, but I have never taught any ESP course”. This clearly stated that this respondent have never been taught in ESP course and focused on EGP courses than ESP.

In reaction to this question, generally some respondents had taught ESP courses and others had not. For those who had not taught ESP, they justify their answers to students’ low level. According to the literature, to ESP courses, students should have an intermediate level.

Question 2 have you ever attended any ESP training and what is its importance?

Generally, the respondents stated that they had never taken any teaching training in ESP. However, some respondents like the one from EMI, ENSA, and ENSAM, they revealed that they participated in an ESP study day that was held at ENSA, Oujda in 2016. In this event, there was a mixture of some presentations and workshops. The workshops were animated by some US teachers who teach at the American Language Center ALC, Oujda. The presenters and workshop animators are professors and PhD candidates. The presentations were related to teaching English for engineering, business English, and needs analysis. Also, there are others who said they took courses on ESP and needs analysis at the master program. A respondent from ENSAM stated that: “the training in general entitles the teachers to get insights into the theoretical underpinnings of ESP, its history and the hallmark research studies carried out in the field. It will equally equip the practitioners with tools and hands-on tips that are likely to enlighten their methodological and pedagogical practices.” Another teacher respondent from IAV pinpoints the importance of training on ESP. He considered training as a prerequisite before starting to teach ESP. He took semester training in Morocco, two summer terms in US and one summer course in UK. Attending ESP trainings improve the quality of teaching and learning and can help students with the skills and content
needed for their professional development success at the national and international levels. The needed skills and content that will help them in their professional domain nationally and internationally.

Another respondent from EMI highlighted the importance of training in ESP. He stated that training is very crucial for a better ESP course. Though he never had any training, he had studied a module in the master program which introduced them to needs analysis and ESP course design. Taking courses on ESP is very helpful because it would help every ESP teacher get to know how to cope with students who are specialized in different domains. Such training would help teachers cope with the different needs of different generations of students, which are professional and employability-oriented in nature. He stated that: “The courses I took in the master program were very pertinent and fruitful because that helped me know how to design courses based on students’ needs also, how to put the learner at the center and provide them with the necessary equipments (skills and content) they need in the market place.”

The reaction of the respondents to this question implies that ESP training is a prerequisite for the promotion of the quality of teaching and learning in an ESP classroom. However, these responses reveal that in Morocco ESP training is not a main stream tradition and that in Morocco generally ESP teachers have never attended any in-service training before they took the indulge teaching ESP courses. There are some engineering schools which recruit PhD holders in linguistics or Applied Linguistics. Yet, it is not enough because teaching ESP requires some mastery of teaching methodology, teaching materials, teaching strategies, needs analysis…etc

To sum up, training in ESP is a sin aqua none so that students can be equipped with the employability skills. Training ESP teachers is very important for the quality of education

Theme 2: Needs Analysis and ESP Teaching

1. To what extent is English important for students’ professional career and how do you meet your students’ needs?

All the interviewees revealed that English is important for engineers training and future professional integration and success. For example one teacher respondent from EMI said “in
This era, many English speaking countries come to invest in Morocco, so it is very sure that he mastery of English and some workplace skills have to be given much interest in the ESP classroom. This teacher is aware of the importance of English in the market place. He also thinks that job market is in great need of engineers who are technically knowledgeable in their field as well as mastering English language.

In the same vein, another ESP teacher from ENSAM said: “In today’s globalized world, the powerful position of the English language as a lingua franca and a medium-par excellence for coping with the fast-growing pace of the sectors of technology and commerce is simply uncontested”. This respondent highlights the importance of English in the modern globalized era where English is used in different domains. This respondent added that “It is largely documented that the graduates employability chances greatly increases with the mastery of the basic linguistic and communication skills”. Obviously, some teachers are aware of the importance of communication skills in the market place. Along the same line of reasoning, Mellouk (2018) points out that in this modern era, employers are in immense need of engineers who are qualified enough not only in their technical domain but also communication skills in English (personal communication). Likewise, another ESP teacher pointed out that “for many students, English has no importance at all for their professional careers if they work in Morocco.” This implies that some engineering fields do not need English in the job market at all like civil engineering. In fact a civil engineer in Morocco may not need English; yet, the mastery of the English would pave the way for better professional life. He added Engineers in all fields need this language in one way or another; mostly it is an added value. Regarding needs analysis, a teacher respondent from ENSAM said: I rely on various sources especially which belong to different mainstreams and tracks and who comes from heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds, these ranges from both print and electronic to teacher-devised documents that include a variety of activities, skills and project-based assignments. This teacher focuses on selecting appropriate teaching materials to meet students’ needs. Designing teaching materials is the most difficult and the most challenging step in ESP because teaching materials need to be tailored to meet the specific needs of specific groups of learners. Another ESP teacher who teaches in EMI clarified the importance of meeting students’ needs especially at the level of content and skills that they will need in the job market. Based on his humble experience he said that he adopts and adapts some textbooks that students prefer to work on. He said “At the beginning of every semester I share
the textbook with my students and I ask them to reflect on it. If they like it I adopt it if not I suggest another alternative. One semester I wanted to teach them English for business and I had a copy of the text book in a form of PDF, I shared the content of the text book some students expressed their dislike toward some units. In this case I opened a discussion on what courses do they prefer to study then I suggested other extra courses related to business. He added “So as not to have a clash between my perceived need and students’ need I try to compromise and I never impose on them what to study and what not study”. This teacher seems to be aware of the basic principles of ESP. He conducts needs analysis and he designs courses based on students’ needs. According to him, the courses he took in the master program helped him to teach ESP. All in all, the respondents clearly demonstrated the great importance of English for students’ professional life and also how needs analysis is a very wise step that all ESP teachers should conduct before designing any teaching materials in order to meet their needs and job market needs.

2. To what extent are the four skills and 21st century skills important for students’ professional life?

The objective of this question was to collect data from teachers on their opinion concerning the importance of soft skills in the market place. In reaction to this question, respondents think that the job market requires the mastery of language skills and 21st century skills. ESP Teachers are aware of these skills and aware that in Morocco, some companies still rely on French as the language of the job market. All the interviewees strongly think that engineering students need the mastery of the four language skills and soft skills for their integration in the job market for their professional development success.

One teacher from ENSAM identified the importance of writing, reading, speaking and listening in the job the market. He said: “Engineers will absolutely need how to write business emails, reports, CVs, Cover letter, and memos. This teacher is aware of the importance of writing in the market place and he also highlighted the importance of speaking skills, he said: “students have to be introduced to debate, open discussion in the classroom about issues related to engineering, culture and economy.”
Drawing on this response, it is worth noting that debates and discussion help students develop their speaking skill. They also allow students to become knowledgeable in different areas. This implies that in this modern era, engineers should receive multidisciplinary training in different areas like engineering, business, culture...etc. Hence, being technically knowledgeable is not enough anymore.

Public speaking skills are also important for engineers to deliver presentations and cope with stress and anxiety. Moreover, teaching 21st century skills imply that, problem solving and leadership skills should be considered to enable engineers to solve immediate problems that might arise and also be able to react according to situations. This interviewee highlighted the importance of the four language skills and the 21st century skills in students’ professional life. Similarly, another interviewee from ENSA clarified that language skills are of paramount importance. He said: “Language skills are the basics of an engineer, but leadership, intercultural communication competence, critical thinking, and the mostly needed skills, thus, these core skills are resorted to students’ professional life”. This response shows that these skills are of dire importance in the market place and that ESP teachers need to instill them in engineering students.

In the same vein, another interviewee from ENSAM revealed that “the development of linguistic and communicative proficiencies remain the ultimate objective of any foreign language teaching program”. This respondent states that students should be fluent and accurate in the English language. The objective of any ESP course is to help the learner achieve a certain degree of proficiency in English. Sometimes, ESP teachers should spend more time developing one skill over another like speaking and listening skills. The findings obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire indicated that employers and students put speaking, listening and writing as the most important language skills. Therefore, it is very important to devote more time to develop these skills than the others. The same interviewee highlighted that “Speaking and writing seem to be more dominant in the world of work today and this may require more efforts from both teachers and students. Still, it is almost impossible to disassociate skills from each other as they are intricately interdependent and require a coherent and consistent methodology to ensure that all students regardless of their specific linguistic needs and social cultural background are catered for” This response
reveals that the teacher is aware of the importance of speaking and writing skills in the socio-economic sector.

Another interviewee from ENSAM revealed that speaking and listening skills for engineering students as they foster their communication skill and help them integrate in the job market easily. This teacher highlighted the importance of speaking and listening skills are very crucial for engineering students. Also, these skills can make an engineer excel in his professional life.

Moreover, another interviewee from EMI stated that critical thinking skill, problem solving skills, speaking and writing skills are highly critical in the industry sector. He stated his opinion as follow: “in this modern era engineering students have no choice but to foster their speaking and writing skill simply because, at work they will surely need to write emails in English, sometimes business report in English, indulge in discussions, present a project solve problems and uses his critical thinking skills. In My class in addition to what I said earlier concerning the courses I teach, I focus on delivering presentations in class, and improve students’ writing skills especially through writing reports (business and academic) in general, CVs Cover letter, and Email”. In reaction to this question, this respondent thinks that training students on job oriented skills would help them integrate in the job market and achieve their prospects through professional development. The aforementioned skills would certainly motivate them and help them to attain their objectives. The problem that Moroccan higher institutions face especially in engineering schools is the shortage of teaching materials necessary for future engineers to compete on the job market.

Likewise, another respondent from IAV stated in Morocco English is important for their academic purposes and not for jobs. He said “it is important for those who have to attend and participate in professional seminars, conferences and workshops develop listening and some speaking skills” this response shows that students at IAV would need English only for academic purposes. Maybe students who are specialized in agriculture, veterinary, agronomy, and topography do not use English in the market place, because all the firms which recruit engineers in the above mentioned domains do not take into consideration the mastery of English for recruitment. Yet, at the academic level especially for research, students are in dire need of English especially how to write academic articles, Abstracts, how to present an
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Academic paper in conferences…etc. Therefore, the mastery of English becomes a necessity either for workplace or for academic purposes.

Furthermore, another respondent from ENSAM clearly showed that in this globalized world language skills are not enough yet, mastering the 21st century skills becomes a necessity. He said “The language skills as well as soft skills are importantly inseparable as we want to have students who can compete for the 21st century skills, for the linguistic aspects it is not enough in this digital world”. This respondent admits that the twenty first century skills are vital especially in this competitive world. Being linguistically competent is not enough in this globalized world. Moroccan engineering students have to be aware of the main soft skills that job market is in massive need. Therefore, ESP teachers have no choice but to help their engineering students improve their language skills and soft skills. This would undoubtedly give them the chance to have a place in the job market.

As a result, the findings of this question show that all respondents show great demand of developing students’ language skills and soft skills because of their great importance in the socio-economic sector. Therefore, engineering students have to be introduced to skills and content and will pave way for a better place in the socio-economic sector.

ESP Course Development

1. What are the challenges you encounter while teaching ESP classes?

The objective of this question was to collect information from respondents’ teachers on their opinion concerning the constraints they encounter while teaching ESP. This question is based on the assumption that effective teaching of ESP and EGP may be hindered by the existence of different constraints. Different constraints may come into play to hinder ESP teaching, namely those related to students’ level, teaching materials, assessment procedure, lack of placement test, classroom activities, teachers’ training etc. In the Moroccan context, many challenges that ESP teacher face at the academic, institutional and professional level have been documented in the review of the literature. These constraints may differ from one institution to another, from one classroom to another, from one teacher to another, and from one group of students to another. This question helped to collect rich and important data from teachers who served as respondents for the purpose of this study. For example, one ESP
A teacher from ESAM revealed that the most challenging aspects of an ESP course is the teaching of terminology that is at the heart and the core of their field of specialization. He said: “in terms of terminology, teachers are not familiar with them”. This respondent shows that teachers find it difficult to teach vocabulary used in the domain of engineering because it is different from what they have been exposed to in their mainstream education. To avoid the anxiety of teaching specific technical vocabulary, teachers usually resort to EGP. They are more or less familiar with it. This implies that boosting students’ professional integration and success requires teachers training on ESP in order to be well equipped to effectively teach ESP courses which are by definition based on learners’ learning and professional needs. This entails that students should be engaged in reading paraphrasing, summarizing, authentic texts and debate and discuss the content of these texts in peer work, group work, and class discussion, as well as students’ class patterns of communication through presentation, and multimedia group projects etc. In this way, teachers can motivate students and help them assume responsibility for their learning. Along with this line of reasoning, Pastae (2009) presented the importance of internet in boosting students’ vocabulary in their domain, especially through the use of some activities such as the use of technical articles published in news papers, journals, and magazines. The teaching of vocabulary can be taught implicitly and explicitly. According to Wanpen, Sonkoontod and Nonkukhetkhong (2012) the most suitable learning strategy is a meta-cognitive strategy like English language media, skipping or passing new word, testing oneself with word test, and continuing to study word over time. In addition to that, other ways of teaching terminology is through pictures, videos, texts…etc. Another respondent from ENSAM pointed out three main challenges that he faces in ESP class which are as follow: First, the complexity and technicality of majors and disciplines, second, the time shortage allotted to the teaching of English. Third, it is the language difficulties students exhibit after joining the college, the majority need a massive remedial work before they become able to study in ESP. This teacher revealed that the time allotted to ESP courses, two hours a week is not enough for it does not allow to cover all the content in a very short period of time. Elkandoussi (2017) found that the time allotted to English in ESTM is unsatisfactory and this has laid students to be poorly constructed in English. Hence, the time devoted to English in all engineering schools must be reconsidered. Stakeholders and decision makers should join efforts to reconsider the time allotted to ESP course to improve the effectiveness and the quality of teaching and learning of this course.
Students’ level is also another constraint and a real challenge that teachers encounter at the engineering schools. Aberdeen (2015) found that the hindrance that ESP teachers encounter is students’ low level of English in all the four skills of the language, meeting students’ needs, and teachers’ involvement in needs analysis and ESP course design. This indicates that placement test should be considered to overcome this problem. Before indulging in any ESP course, the ESP teacher has to test students’ level beforehand so as to classify them and/or at least to design materials accordingly.

Another ESP teacher from ENSAM highlighted the problem of students’ motivation, and heterogeneous levels as constraints factors. Again, Motivation is one of the common challenges that ESP teachers face especially among engineering students. Sometimes, motivation is linked to other variables and one of the main factors is teaching materials. If the teaching materials do not meet students’ needs, obviously their motivation will be low. In this context, Kaosar (2014) points out that “it can be assumed that students will be more interested in topics and texts related to their work or study areas. If students are more motivated, then learning is more likely to occur (cited in Elkandoussi, 2017). Motivation is then one of crucial constrains ESP teachers encounter in their teaching process. Motivation also plays a vital role in students’ achievement. In the context of this shift, engineering students are generally instrumentally motivated. Though it plays a vital role for students’ achievement and in the literature students most of the time are instrumentally motivated. Boosting students’ motivation is tightly bound to conducting needs analysis. It is the key to help the learner learn what he/she wishes to improve at the level of skills and content. If teachers are not well trained ESP and needs analysis, they would not successfully meet students’ objectives and they will feel demotivated to learn.

Another interviewee from IAV clearly showed that “The challenges include limited time, poor scheduling, lack of motivation of students but the most critical challenge is the actual importance which the curriculum and school budgets dedicate to the course. At the level of rhetoric and discourse, everyone seems to agree English is important, but when it comes to translating this consensus into policies and budgets, the consensus dissipates and the course avers to be the least of all priorities”. This respondent stated that the budget assigned to
English is not enough and there should be more financial support. He also highlighted that the English courses in engineering students are neglected.

Similarly, another interviewee from ENSAM showed that “there is a range number of streams and paths, lack of official guidelines and coherent methodology, the shortage in qualified professors, and the lack of teacher training.” This respondent highlighted three main areas of constraints; they are the diversity of specialization, lack of flexibility and well engagement pedagogies, lack of ESP guidelines, and teachers who are not trained on ESP training. Engineering Institutions resort to part time teachers who are not qualified enough to teach ESP. For instance, the EMI School has two full time teachers and more than eight streams; the same thing applies to ENIM and ENSA in Oujda: only one permanent teacher and more than five part time teachers teach all ESP courses. Hence, it is important to note that the hiring policy for part time teachers is the responsibility of the head of the department. The hiring policy goes to all engineering schools. In this respect, Elkandoussi (2017) demonstrated that the policy of recruiting full timers and part time teachers at EST in Meknes, which seemingly applies to all other engineering schools. He stated that “full-time ESP teachers are generally more aware of their students' needs and how to cater for them than their counterparts, because this type of teaching entails, at least, some basic knowledge of the students' specialization” (p, 29). This implies that the need to recruit as many permanent teachers as possible, who have solid background in ESP and needs analysis and qualified enough to give ESP courses their own pedagogy identified based on needs analysis and flexible innovative pedagogies.

Engineering higher education institutions do not have official guidelines for ESP courses. Moreover, the module degree programs do not have course description based on needs analysis and ESP principles and implications. Some of them do not have official textbook and module course book to guide their practice. They do have individual practices and experiences, which do not fit in a common objectives and mission. Sometimes, there is absence of coordination between and within institutions with respect to ESP. Moreover, coordination and collaboration between these institutions and other stakeholders in the job market is not yet an institutionalized practice.
In this respect, another respondent from ENSA demonstrated that “the main challenges he faces are summarized as follow: students’ motivation, targeting the majority of them, level difference, learning styles and learning strategies”. Again students’ motivation and heterogeneous groups are one of the impediments for ESP teaching. Motivation and students’ level are really a serious problem that ESP teachers face in teaching engineering students. This implies that taking an entrance exam in English would be important to improve the ESP teaching at these institutions.

Another interviewee from EMI stated that “motivation, meeting students’ needs, the time allotted to English, students’ level, institutional needs, school budget and shortage of full timers are the main challenges I face”. This demonstrated that some part time teachers feel demotivated because of lower communication. In this regard, some teachers complain about the lack of moral or financial motivation, and that the teachers are simply left up to fend for themselves. Teachers are demotivation would negatively influence their efforts to meet students’ needs. Designing teaching and implementing activities that could help students achieve their objectives require extensive work on the part of teachers. Hence, this reality constrains teachers’ efforts to meet students’ needs and expectations.

2. What do you suggest to improve the teaching of ESP course at the level of teaching Methodologies, materials, training etc?

The aim of this question was to elicit information from teachers’ respondents on their suggestions concerning how they think teaching ESP teaching at their institutions can be improved. All the interviewees provide their suggestions to improve the teaching of ESP in general and English for engineering in particular especially at the level of teaching methodologies, teaching materials, training, content, needs analysis...etc. This question helped to collect rich data in this respect.

To begin with, one ESP teacher from ENSA highlighted that the two most effective ways to improve the teaching of ESP are: teacher development and action research. This entails that teachers should reflect on their teaching so as to identify their weaknesses good practices in order to introduce the necessary changes with respect to all the aspects and components of the ESP course they teach. To this end, action research and effective practices are well
recommended to improve one’s teaching practices to solve pedagogical problems that they might face during the teaching process. This implies that ESP teachers should conduct action research as a prerequisite for their reflective teaching and their professional development. In this vein, Olga (2010) argues that reflective teaching can be applied to teaching ESP, the purpose of developing both teachers and students’ knowledge and professional skills. Thus, action research and reflective teaching have become more important for successful design and implementation of ESP course as well as for teachers professional development. He added “through training, reflective teaching, seminars one should be developed. Also, reflective teaching is very feasible in the sense that one best way to fulfilling this is through publishing articles, books, reports...”. This respondent states that there is no in-service training for ESP teachers. Attending is a good chance for teachers to exchange and share experience and good practices in different issues related to the teaching of ESP in general and English for engineering in particular. These seminars, conferences and workshops constitute important chance for particular teachers’ professional development and such event on ESP in Morocco is limited. Teachers are aware of the challenges encountering their training and professional development and that if they listen to each other, they can contribute to the of ESP teachers professional development. More importantly, it implies that teachers and stakeholders can provide ample suggestion to cope with the constraints and improve the quality of teaching and learning in ESP classroom.

Furthermore, another respondent from ENSAM stated that “they should include some scientific subject based topics in ESP course; the teaching materials should make a balance between the four skills; in-service training, and last but not least, forging corporation and exchange programs among universities in Morocco. This response suggests that forging corporation and exchanging programs could help ESP teachers exchange their expertise and ideas. Also, collaboration with content teachers raises teachers’ awareness and understanding toward the field of engineering. Hence, team-teaching is considered as an appropriate strategy that bridges the gap and builds up communication and corporation between language teachers and subject teachers. It is also considered as the most effective way to promote ESP teaching. Another ESP teacher at IAV stated that “The ministry should recruit graduates with good credentials, preferably with dual majors, language and literature or culture. And offer them special education in the major of socio-cultural, economic and epistemological issues, basic
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Science and technology in addition to a solid component in adult education and foreign language teaching and discourse analysis”. This respondent highlights the great demand of candidates who have solid background not only in ESP but also, in other disciplines like culture and literature. But they should be trained in pedagogy in order to teach ESP courses appropriately and effectively.

Moreover, another ESP teacher from ENSAM suggested that “the role of ESP teacher is to motivate students through structural learning methods, opt for authentic content, give enough space to students to express themselves and involve them in the learning process”. Another vital element in ESP is engaging students’ in the learning process which is in fact one of the characteristics of ESP. In ESP, the learner comes to class with certain background and knowledge which should be taken into consideration before designing courses. Also, He/she comes to class with certain objectives and goals to attain. For example, while designing the materials, students should express themselves and suggest what to study and what not to study. Therefore, this would help students study courses that are relevant to their needs and that will meet the socio-economic needs. The practical teaching methods can be used in the ESP classroom are: Project Based Learning, Task Based Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, Content Based Approach, and ICT…etc. These teaching methods could help to involves learning by doing.

Another ESP teacher from ENSAM highlighted that “Training becomes a must in ESP. placement test to classify students based on their level; design clear syllabi that fit each discipline and skills should be developed based on the disciplines and based on the job market need”. This response shows the importance of training for the improvement of ESP course. Also, ESP teachers should design syllabi that meet the needs of each discipline in order to teach them courses relevant to their field of interest. This would motivate them to learn and would provide them with the necessary skills and content that meet job market needs.

Another respondent from EMI suggested that “It is high time that Moroccan ESP teachers (full timers and part timers) have to create an association for Moroccan ESP teachers so as to share, exchange and organize annual meetings to exchange and share recent innovations
in ESP. The ministry of higher education must recruit full timers than part timers and they must be trained in ESP or at least they should have enough knowledge in needs analysis, ESP, and intercultural communication. Also, they have to be eclectic in their teaching methods and uses up to date teaching methods. Last but not least, students have to be taught English from S1 to S6. This respondent highlighted creating an association for Moroccan ESP teachers is a priority. Also, ESP teachers should be trained in ESP and needs analysis before indulging in the teaching process. Moreover, ESP teachers should use up-to-date teaching methods, techniques, and strategies. For the time devoted to ESP course, decision makers should reconsider the time allotted to ESP classes and ESP courses should be introduced from semester one to semester six.

Moreover, another ESP teacher from ENSA stated that “More conferences and seminars on ESP are highly recommended, more training in how to teach ESP course in a world context is needed, and more ESP textbooks are urgently needed to meet the needs of Moroccan engineering students”. This entails that this respondent suggested practical steps for the quality of teaching ESP courses at the level of materials design and training. He also highlighted the importance of organizing annual meetings so that teachers can communicate and address issues related to ESP in general and English for engineering in particular.

Another interviewee from EMI suggested the following: For the development in ESP especially in English for engineering, meeting students’ needs is very fundamental, in the sense that ESP teachers have to teach content and skills needed in job market. As far as teaching methodology is concerned, bottom up approach is ultimately the best method for meeting students’ needs and all the activities would be students centered. Also, team teaching is a vital strategy that must be put into practice. At the level of evaluation, ESP teachers have to come up with new alternatives in this era especially the use of technology or other alternatives like project work, presentations...

This teacher suggested important practical suggestions that could be implemented in ESP classroom. This also implies that close collaboration between English language teachers and content teachers for better teaching and understanding of ESP courses in general and English for engineering in particular. Soltani and Shafaei (2013) found that computer engineering
students who were taught through team teaching gained more vocabulary than those who did not. Therefore, team teaching is an adequate technique and immediate and possible solutions for the improvement of ESP.

All in all, this the results of this question indicate that Moroccan ESP teachers have provided ample solutions and alternatives for the improvement of ESP courses in Moroccan engineering institutions.

To summarize, the objective of the teachers’ interview was to collect data on their opinions about the teaching of ESP in general and English for engineering in particular. The results of the teachers’ interview revealed that all the interviewees state the importance of English as one of the employability skills in the socio-economic sector in Morocco. Generally, ESP teachers have never had any training in ESP and needs analysis. Furthermore, teachers opt for the teaching of EGP because of students’ level, different streams, teaching materials, assessment procedures and lack of training. For the alternative solutions, the respondents highlighted the need of: action research, teacher development, classifying students based on their levels, more time should be devoted to ESP courses, organize annual events and recruit permanent teachers.

**Discussion**

The interview conducted among Moroccan ESP teachers indicates that English is an important language skill that should be given its due concern in ESP courses because they firmly believe that it will undertake French in the near future. In this modern time, the mastery of English language skills is a prerequisite. In addition to the language skills, it is important to note that soft skills are also highly recommended in the socio-economic sector such as problem solving, critical thinking and leadership.

The first question in the teachers’ interview was meant to get more insight into the importance of the teaching ESP among engineering students. In fact, the data gathered from teachers’ interview vary from one to another and there are some who have taught ESP courses and others who never did. This is probably due to many factors such as their poor knowledge in engineering, lack of training, lack of motivation, too much preparation, students’ linguistics differences…etc. All those who opt for teaching EGP instead of ESP firmly believe that it is
easy to teach and it is not time and energy consuming. Also, ELT teachers with the background of EGP keep doing the same thing and follow the same track. Involving high school teachers is not an appropriate alternative and it will not achieve good results. As far training is concerned, it is one of the influential factors in the teaching of ESP. All respondents have never had any formal training.

Furthermore, All ESP teachers expressed their strong belief toward the importance of English in the marketplace among engineering students. They believe that nowadays, the industry sector is in immense need of very qualified engineers who are technically knowledgeable and communicatively competent in English. However, employers suffer from engineering candidates whose language skills do not meet the general guidelines. In addition, some ESP teachers do not demystify between ESP and EGP in terms of teaching methodology and teaching objectives. Moreover, Teacher expressed that the time allotted to English is not enough and it is hard to cover the course content in two hours a week. It is impossible to teach students the skills in a very efficient way unless students triple their efforts outside of the class and do personal works.

Furthermore, another challenge is the lack of collaboration between administration, decision makers, researchers, specialists and academics. The way ESP is taught in one class is totally different from another. Thus, the main challenges ESP teachers face are students motivation, heterogeneous groups, learning style, learning strategies, time allotted to English, institutional needs, school budget, shortage of full time teachers, lack of official guidelines, lack of official training, and technicality of disciplines.

To overcome the above mentioned problems, ESP teachers suggest that immediate steps should be taken such as hiring full time teachers who should be trained in ESP and needs analysis. ESP teachers should also reflect on their teaching practices, and they should conduct action research whenever there is an emerging problem. ESP teachers should organize annual seminars, workshops and conferences. They also recommend involving students in ESP course design.
Conclusion

Moroccan ESP teachers firmly believe that Moroccan engineering students have to be trained effectively in ESP especially in language and soft skills that industry sector is in immense need. This cannot be put into practice unless they are well trained in ESP at the level of teaching methods, teaching strategies, and in needs analysis. Nevertheless, the teaching of ESP in Morocco faces lot of challenges like collaboration, training, students’ heterogeneous groups…etc. Therefore, Moroccan engineering schools have to train their engineers in skills and content that industry is in dire need and so as not to have a clash between industry and academia. Also, engineers who possess the above mentioned skills and knowledge are the first to be employed and surely industry sector will give priority to those who are very skillful in the above mentioned skills.

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