



Implementation of ESP in Secondary Education Curricula: Challenges and Opportunities - A Literature Review

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Abstrak

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) merupakan pendekatan dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang berfokus pada kebutuhan spesifik pembelajar dalam konteks profesional dan akademik. Implementasi ESP di kurikulum pendidikan menengah dapat memberikan keuntungan signifikan dalam mempersiapkan siswa menghadapi tuntutan komunikasi yang spesifik di masa depan. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan dan peluang dalam implementasi ESP di kurikulum pendidikan menengah melalui tinjauan literatur yang komprehensif. Literatur yang direview dipilih berdasarkan kriteria tanggal publikasi, relevansi, jenis penelitian, dan sumber terpercaya. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai basis data akademik seperti Scientific research, Science Direct, Wiley Online library, Google Scholar, Internet TESL Journal, Open edition journals and etc. Proses analisis data melibatkan koding tematik dan sintesis informasi dari artikel yang dipilih. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa implementasi ESP menghadapi tantangan utama seperti kekurangan guru yang terlatih, keterbatasan sumber daya pendidikan, dan resistensi terhadap perubahan kurikulum. Namun, ada peluang besar yang dapat dimanfaatkan, termasuk pemanfaatan teknologi digital, kolaborasi internasional, dan integrasi ESP dengan kurikulum nasional. Untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, diperlukan program pelatihan guru yang berkelanjutan, pengembangan materi pembelajaran berbasis teknologi, dan pendekatan inklusif dalam perencanaan kurikulum. Kolaborasi internasional juga dapat memberikan pengalaman praktis yang berharga bagi siswa dan guru. Implementasi ESP di pendidikan menengah memiliki potensi besar untuk meningkatkan kompetensi bahasa Inggris siswa dalam konteks spesifik. Penelitian lebih lanjut diperlukan untuk mengembangkan program pelatihan guru yang efektif, materi pembelajaran inovatif, dan strategi implementasi kurikulum yang adaptif.

Kata Kunci: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), pendidikan menengah, kurikulum, tantangan, peluang, literatur review.

Abstract

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to English language teaching that focuses on the specific needs of learners in professional and academic contexts. The implementation of ESP in the secondary education curriculum can provide significant advantages in preparing students for specific communication demands in the future. This article aims to explore the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of ESP in secondary education curriculum through a comprehensive literature review. The reviewed literature was selected based on the criteria of publication date, relevance, research type, and reliable source. Data were collected from various academic databases such as Scientific research, Science Direct, Wiley Online library, Google Scholar, Internet TESL Journal, Open edition journals and etc. The data analysis process involved thematic coding and synthesizing information from the selected articles. The findings show that ESP implementation faces major challenges such as a shortage of trained teachers, limited educational resources, and resistance to curriculum change. However, there are great opportunities that can be exploited, including the utilization of digital technology, international collaboration, and the integration of ESP with the national curriculum. Overcoming these challenges requires continuous teacher training programs, development of technology-based learning materials, and inclusive approaches in curriculum planning. International collaboration can also provide valuable practical experience for students and teachers. The implementation of ESP in secondary education has great potential to improve students' English

competence in specific contexts. Further research is needed to develop effective teacher training programs, innovative learning materials, and adaptive curriculum implementation strategies.

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), secondary education, curriculum, challenges, opportunities, literature review.*

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged as a significant branch in the field of English language teaching, driven by its importance in addressing the specific linguistic and communicative needs of learners in various professional and academic domains. Unlike general English teaching, ESP focuses more narrowly on the language and skills required for specific contexts, such as business, engineering, or medical fields (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The emphasis is on practical application, where the language taught is immediately relevant to the learners' specific purposes.

The increasing globalization of economies and the interconnectivity of the world demand a workforce proficient in English, especially within specific professional contexts. Secondary education is a crucial stage where foundational skills are solidified, and the inclusion of ESP at this level can significantly enhance students' future career readiness and academic success (Anthony, 2018). As industries become more specialized, the need for tailored language instruction that prepares students for these specific fields has become urgent (Brunton, 2009). This urgency is underscored by the growing demand for employees who possess not only general English proficiency but also the specific language skills relevant to their professional domains (Hyland, 2006).

Despite its potential, the implementation of ESP in secondary education faces several challenges. One significant issue is the lack of teachers trained in ESP methodologies. Most educators possess qualifications in general English teaching but lack the specialized skills required for ESP (Basturkmen, 2010). This gap in teacher training creates a barrier to the effective delivery of ESP programs. Additionally, there is often a shortage of tailored educational resources that align with the specific needs of ESP programs, which can hinder the effective delivery of the curriculum (Smoak, 2003).

Resistance to curriculum change also poses a considerable challenge. Schools and

educational institutions may be hesitant to deviate from established general English programs due to uncertainties about the effectiveness and practicality of ESP (Johns, 2013). This resistance can be compounded by the additional time and effort required to develop and implement new ESP courses. Furthermore, there is often a lack of empirical evidence supporting the benefits of ESP at the secondary education level, making it difficult to advocate for its widespread adoption (Belcher, 2009).

Several approaches can be considered to address these challenges:

1. **Professional Development for Teachers:** Offering specialized training programs to equip teachers with ESP-specific methodologies and skills.
2. **Development of Tailored Resources:** Creating and providing access to high-quality, context-specific educational materials.
3. **Pilot Programs and Case Studies:** Implementing small-scale pilot programs to demonstrate the effectiveness of ESP and gather data for broader application.
4. **Curriculum Integration:** Gradually integrating ESP elements into existing curricula to ease the transition and reduce resistance.

Among these alternatives, the most feasible solution appears to be the comprehensive professional development for teachers combined with the development of tailored resources. By equipping teachers with the necessary skills and providing them with high-quality materials, the implementation of ESP can be more effectively realized (Azwar et al, 2023). This approach not only addresses the immediate need for trained educators but also ensures that the resources align with the specific requirements of different professional contexts (Hyland, 2006). Additionally, conducting pilot programs can provide valuable insights and empirical evidence to support the broader adoption of ESP in secondary education (Basturkmen, 2010).

In conclusion, while the implementation of ESP in secondary education presents several challenges, the opportunities it offers for

enhancing students' language skills and preparing them for future success are immense. Addressing the barriers to ESP implementation requires concerted efforts in teacher training, resource development, and curriculum innovation. As the demand for specialized English skills continues to grow, the role of ESP in secondary education will become increasingly crucial. This research aims to contribute to the understanding and development of effective ESP implementation strategies, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes and workforce readiness.

Method

A. Literature Selection Criteria

To ensure the quality and relevance of the literature reviewed, several selection criteria were applied:

- 1) Date of Publication: Selected articles to ensure relevance to current practice and theory.
- 2) Relevance: Articles should focus on the implementation of ESP in the context of secondary education.
- 3) Type of Research: Includes empirical studies, literature reviews, and theoretical articles that offer insights into the challenges and opportunities in ESP implementation.
- 4) Reliable Sources: Only articles published in international journals indexed in databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and others.

B. Data Sources

The data for this literature review was collected from various academic databases, including:

- 1) Scientific research
- 2) Science Direct
- 3) Wiley Online library
- 4) Google Scholar
- 5) Internet TESL Journal
- 6) Open edition journals and etc.

Searches were also conducted through university libraries that have access to indexed international journals.

C. Data Collection Procedure

- 1) Keyword Identification: The keywords used in the search included "English for Specific Purposes (ESP)", "secondary education curriculum", "ESP implementation", "ESP challenges", and "ESP opportunities".

- 2) Literature Search: The search was conducted using a combination of keywords in the above-mentioned databases.
- 3) Initial Selection: Articles that emerged from the initial search were screened based on title and abstract to determine relevance to the topic.
- 4) Second Selection: Articles that passed the initial selection were then read in full to ensure compliance with the selection criteria.

D. Data Analysis Process

- 1) Categorization: Selected articles were categorized based on key themes, such as challenges in ESP implementation, existing opportunities, and models and best practices from different countries.
- 2) Thematic Coding: Data from the selected articles were analyzed using the thematic coding method to identify key themes and patterns.
- 3) Data Synthesis: The coded data were then synthesized to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities in ESP implementation in secondary education.
- 4) Validation: Findings from the data analysis were validated through triangulation of data sources and consultation with experts in the field of ESP and secondary education.

Result and Discussion

A. Analysis of Findings

From the literature review that has been conducted, several key findings can be identified:

- a) Lack of Trained Teachers: Many studies show that the lack of specialized training for teachers in ESP teaching is a significant obstacle in the implementation of ESP in secondary education. Teachers who do not have adequate knowledge and skills in ESP tend to struggle in structuring and teaching relevant and effective materials (Basturkmen, 2010; Gatehouse, 2001). This lack of expertise can lead to a generalist approach to language teaching, which fails to meet the specific needs of

students preparing for particular professional fields (Richards, 2015).

- b) **Limited Resources:** Limitations in the availability of ESP-specific educational resources are also a major obstacle. Textbooks, learning materials, and teaching aids specifically designed for ESP are often not available in many secondary schools, especially in developing countries (Ferguson, 2013). This scarcity of resources can hinder the ability of teachers to provide targeted instruction and can affect students' engagement and learning outcomes (Tomlinson, 2011).
- c) **Resistance to Curriculum Change:** Resistance on the part of schools and teachers to curriculum change is also a significant challenge. Many teachers and administrators are comfortable with the existing curriculum and are reluctant to adopt the changes needed to integrate ESP (Johns, 2013). This resistance can be attributed to various factors, including a lack of understanding of the benefits of ESP, perceived increased workload, and insufficient institutional support (Fullan, 2007).

B. Interpretation of Findings

These findings suggest that the implementation of ESP in secondary education requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach:

- a) **Teacher Training:** To address the shortage of trained teachers, there needs to be an ongoing and specific training program for ESP. This training should cover not only theoretical aspects but also concrete teaching practices relevant to the secondary education context. Such programs should include workshops, online courses, and peer mentoring to ensure continuous professional development (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Additionally, collaboration with universities and professional organizations can provide teachers with the latest insights and best practices in ESP education (Flowerdew, 2013).
- b) **Resource Development:** Limited educational resources can be addressed by utilizing digital technology and

developing more flexible and widely accessible learning materials. The use of online platforms and open resources can help fill this gap. Educational technology such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), mobile applications, and interactive multimedia resources can provide diverse and engaging materials tailored to different ESP needs (Efendi, R., et al 2024). Collaborative efforts between educators, publishers, and technology developers are essential to create high-quality, accessible content (Reinders & White, 2010).

- c) **Curriculum Change:** To overcome resistance to curriculum change, there needs to be an inclusive and participatory approach to planning and implementing curriculum change. Involving teachers and administrators in this process can help increase their acceptance and commitment to change. Effective change management strategies, including clear communication of the benefits of ESP, providing sufficient training and resources, and fostering a supportive institutional culture, are crucial (Fullan, 2007). Case studies of successful ESP implementation in other schools can serve as models and provide practical guidance (Nur, R., & Joaria, S. 2021).

C. Implications for Research and Practice

Based on these findings and interpretations, several implications for future research and practice in the implementation of ESP in secondary education can be identified:

- a) **Teacher Training Programs:** Further research is needed to develop effective teacher training programs for ESP in secondary education. Studies on the effectiveness of different training methods and their impact on the quality of ESP teaching can provide valuable insights. Research should focus on identifying the key competencies required for ESP teachers and the best approaches to develop these skills (Graves, 2000).
- b) **Learning Material Development:** The development of innovative and technology-based learning materials should be a priority. Research on the

use of technology in ESP teaching and its impact on student learning can help in designing more effective teaching strategies. Investigating the effectiveness of various digital tools and resources, such as gamified learning, virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI)-powered language tutors, can contribute to more engaging and personalized ESP instruction (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017).

- c) **Curriculum Implementation Strategies:** Studies on successful curriculum implementation strategies in various contexts can provide practical guidance for schools looking to adopt ESP. Analysis of cases from different countries can help identify best practices and necessary adaptations according to local conditions. Comparative studies can highlight how different educational systems address similar challenges and what factors contribute to successful ESP integration (Nation & Macalister, 2010).
- d) **Policy and Institutional Support:** Research should also explore the role of policy and institutional support in the successful implementation of ESP programs. Understanding the impact of educational policies, funding mechanisms, and administrative support can help in creating a conducive environment for ESP adoption (Crawford, 2002). Advocacy for policy changes that promote ESP and allocate resources for teacher training and material development is essential.

D. Recommendations

Taking into account these findings and interpretations, this literature review provides a solid basis for formulating practical recommendations for the development and implementation of ESP in secondary education. Key recommendations include:

- a) **Develop and Implement Comprehensive Teacher Training Programs:** Establish ongoing professional development

opportunities for teachers focusing on ESP methodologies and best practices (Gonzalez-Lloret, M., & Ortega, L. 2014).

- b) **Invest in the Development of ESP-specific Educational Resources:** Utilize digital technologies to create and distribute high-quality, accessible learning materials.
- c) **Foster Inclusive and Participatory Curriculum Development:** Engage teachers and administrators in the process of integrating ESP into the curriculum to ensure their buy-in and commitment.
- d) **Conduct Further Research on ESP Implementation:** Investigate the effectiveness of different training programs, learning materials, and curriculum strategies to provide evidence-based guidance for schools.
- e) **Advocate for Policy and Institutional Support:** Promote policies and institutional frameworks that support the development and implementation of ESP programs in secondary education.

Conclusion

The implementation of ESP in secondary education is a complex but highly beneficial endeavor. Addressing the main challenges requires targeted efforts in teacher training, resource development, and inclusive curriculum planning. Leveraging technological advancements and adapting best practices from other countries can further enhance the effectiveness of ESP programs. Future research should focus on developing and evaluating innovative training programs, technological tools, and curriculum strategies to provide evidence-based guidance for ESP implementation. By addressing these areas, educational institutions can better prepare students for the specific linguistic and communicative demands of their future professional fields, ultimately contributing to their success in an increasingly globalized world (Canale, M., & Swain, M., 1980)

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