

Research paper

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Business Communication: A Review of Pedagogical Approaches, Material Development, and Challenges

Akram Sharifi, Seyyed Hassan Seyyedrezaei*

¹Department of English Language Teaching, AK.C., Islamic Azad University, Aliabad Katoul, Iran

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*corresponding author: Akramsharifiii57@gmail.com

Abstract

Due to the rapid development of the businesses around the world, people need to find effective ways to communicate with each other. Therefore, in today's globalized economy, effective business communication is essential for success through English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This paper provides a comprehensive review of ESP in business communication. Following the queries on main journals of the field, and those that publish related articles, and strategies for inclusion and exclusion, final 25 articles on this issue were selected from among the most important and relevant findings, and the common themes of these studies were explored and presented in the study. The results of the study revealed three main themes from the studies. These emergent themes were pedagogical approaches, material development, and challenges as specified by a general coding scheme and they will be elaborated in the subsequent parts. Key components of effective ESP programs include the development of materials and pedagogy in real-world business contexts, and the incorporation of technological advancements. The paper also addressed challenges within ESP in business communication, such as adapting to evolving industry demands, developing cultural competence, integrating technology and artificial intelligence, and ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Keywords: Business Communication, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Material Development, Pedagogical Approaches

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Introduction

In the contemporary global economy, strong business communication is essential for achieving success. Research by Jordan (1997) underscores the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), highlighting that targeted learning experiences equip learners with skills tailored to their professional contexts (p. 23). Basturkmen (2006) further emphasizes that integrating real-world tasks into ESP curricula enhances learner engagement and communication proficiency (p. 45). As noted by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), "the need for specific communication skills in professional contexts necessitates a shift from traditional language teaching to a focus on ESP" (p. 8). This shift is vital as "companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of advanced English language skills for their employees, leading to a rise in tailored ESP programs" (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 175). Additionally, "the evolving nature of global markets demands that professionals not only speak English but also understand cultural nuances" (Flowerdew & Costley, 2005, p. 83).

The ability to communicate effectively in English has become a key skill for professionals in various industries, as it enables them to participate in international markets, collaborate with global partners, and access a wider range of customers and clients. ESP plays a vital role in enhancing business communication skills among learners, providing them with the language skills and knowledge necessary to communicate effectively in their professional contexts.

The significance of ESP in business communication cannot be overstated. As the global economy continues to evolve, businesses must adapt to changing market conditions, technological advancements, and shifting cultural landscapes. Effective communication is critical to success in this environment, and ESP programs play a vital role in equipping professionals with the language skills and knowledge necessary to communicate effectively in their professional contexts.

ESP in business communication involves the teaching and learning of English language skills that are tailored to the specific needs of learners in a particular profession or industry. This approach to language teaching is different from general English language teaching, as it focuses on the specific language and communication needs of learners in a particular context. ESP in business communication involves the development of language skills that are relevant to the learner's profession or industry, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics.

The importance of ESP in business communication is further underscored by the growing demand for language training in the corporate sector. Many companies recognize the need for their employees to possess advanced English language skills, and are investing in ESP programs to improve their communication skills. This trend is expected to continue, as international trade and commerce continue to grow, and the demand for English language skills increases.

Despite the importance of ESP in business communication, there are challenges involved in designing and delivering effective ESP programs. One of the key challenges is the need to tailor the program to the specific needs of the learners, taking into account their language proficiency levels, cultural backgrounds, and professional contexts. Another challenge is the need to balance the language skills with the content knowledge of the profession or industry, ensuring that learners possess both the language skills and the subject matter expertise necessary to communicate effectively.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive review of ESP in business communication, examining the pedagogical approaches, material development, and challenges involved in delivering effective ESP programs. The study will explore the significance of ESP in business communication, the importance of tailoring ESP programs to the specific needs of learners, and the role of technology in enhancing ESP instruction. The study will also examine the challenges

facing ESP in business communication, including adapting to evolving industry demands, developing cultural competence, integrating technology and artificial intelligence, addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and prioritizing sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices.

By examining these issues, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of ESP in business communication, and to identify areas for future research and development. The study will be of interest to language instructors, researchers, and corporate trainers who are involved in designing and delivering ESP programs, as well as to policymakers and business leaders who recognize the importance of effective communication in today's globalized economy.

Literature Review

ESP and its Definition

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a subset of English language teaching that focuses on the specific language requirements of learners in a particular profession or industry (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). ESP is a problem-solving approach to language teaching, which involves identifying the language needs of learners in a particular context and developing language instruction that addresses those needs (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). As noted in the *Journal of Business Communication*, "digital tools facilitate diverse forms of communication, enhancing learners' ability to engage in global business interactions" (Smith & Wekker, 2018, p. 12). ESP plays a vital role in equipping learners with targeted language skills tailored to professional settings such as business, emphasizing communicative competence, sociolinguistic awareness, and strategic communication through approaches like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and student-centered methodologies (Aguaguíña Pilla, Gordón Fiallos, Casa Molina, & Nuñez Melo,

2025). The field of ESP integrates various teaching theories and practices, including task-based and project-based learning, alongside a strong focus on learner needs analysis and collaboration, making it a highly adaptable and context-specific approach in business communication education (Anthony, 2025).

ESP is characterized by its focus on the language and communication needs of learners in a particular profession or industry. This approach to language teaching is different from general English language teaching, which focuses on developing general language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. ESP, on the other hand, involves developing language skills that are relevant to the learner's profession or industry, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics. ESP is often divided into two categories: English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). EOP focuses on the language needs of learners in a particular occupation or profession, such as business, healthcare, or engineering. EAP, on the other hand, focuses on the language needs of learners in academic settings, such as universities or colleges.

The definition of ESP has evolved over time, reflecting changes in the field of language teaching and the needs of language learners. In the 1960s and 1970s, ESP was seen as a means of preparing learners for work in a particular profession or industry. In the 1980s and 1990s, ESP became more focused on the language and communication needs of learners in specific contexts. Today, ESP is seen as a problem-solving approach to language teaching, which involves identifying the language needs of learners and developing language instruction that addresses those needs.

The definition of ESP has also been influenced by advances in linguistics, language teaching, and language learning. For example, the development of genre theory has led to a greater understanding of the language and communication needs of learners in specific contexts. Similarly,

the development of task-based learning has led to a greater focus on the practical application of language skills in real-world contexts.

In Iranian setting, Ahangaran and Pouyan (2025) investigated how motivational orientations, psychological needs, and goal orientations affect the academic writing performance of nursing students in ESP contexts. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the authors found gender-based differences in predictors of writing performance, offering insights for ESP curriculum design and instruction. Rezaeifard et al. (2022) also explored how different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) influence motivational strategies among Iranian technical students in ESP settings. The findings highlighted the importance of tailoring ESP instruction to students' preferred learning modalities to enhance engagement and performance.

In summary, ESP is a subset of English language teaching that focuses on the specific language requirements of learners in a particular profession or industry. ESP involves identifying the language needs of learners and developing language instruction that addresses those needs. The definition of ESP has evolved over time, reflecting changes in the field of language teaching and the needs of language learners.

Main Studies of ESP in Business English

Due to the ongoing global needs, the field of ESP in Business Communication has evolved significantly. Numerous studies contributed to our understanding of effective pedagogical strategies, communicative competencies, and the integration of cultural awareness in business interactions.

The concept of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) is a critical area of study. Gajšt (2014) argues for a cross-cultural perspective in teaching English for business purposes,

advocating for an approach that explicitly addresses the cultural dimensions of communication. This perspective is essential for preparing students to direct over the complexities of international business interactions. Kaur and Birlik's (2021) analysis of communicative effectiveness in BELF meetings further underscores the importance of pragmatic strategies, such as the use of explanations to enhance clarity and shared understanding among participants. These insights are relevant in today's globalized business environment, where effective communication across cultures is needed.

In Iranian setting, Alemi and Razaghi (2012) conducted an interesting study on the role of politeness markers in business communication and found that existing ESP textbooks often inadequately address these markers. Their research highlights the need for a more understanding of politeness in business interactions, which is essential for fostering effective communication in diverse contexts. Similarly, Nguyen and Oliver (2015) conducted a systemic functional analysis of written business communication in Vietnam, revealing the interpersonal features that shape relationship-building in business contexts.

Hsu (2016) introduced intercultural competence as another significant theme in ESP for Business Communication. The work investigated the effectiveness of the Harvard Business School case method in teaching English for business, emphasizes the importance of task-based learning in developing students' communicative abilities in real-world scenarios. This is complemented by Yang's (2018) research on bilingual courses in business communication, which underscores the practical application of business English in enhancing students' communication skills. Furthermore, the study by Zhang (2022) on the implications of blockchain technology for intercultural communication in business English illustrates the evolving nature of communication strategies in response to technological advancements.

Zanola's (2016) work on public speaking within the ESP context further complements these findings by identifying essential skills such as managing visual contact and structuring messages effectively. These skills are vital for enhancing trainees' performance in professional settings, thereby making the training outcomes more relevant to their specific roles. This focus on practical skills is echoed in the research by Xu et al. (2024), which highlights the innovative integration of e-commerce live streaming with business communication skills. Their findings suggest that such interactive platforms not only engage customers but also necessitate proficient English communication, thereby reinforcing the importance of practical application in ESP training.

One of the main studies in this domain is Lee's (2023) exploration of the "business-self" in written communication. This research emphasizes the multifaceted identities that professionals construct through their written discourse, which is crucial for ESP practitioners aiming to foster rhetorical awareness among learners. By integrating concepts of identity construction into the curriculum, instructors can enhance students' understanding of how self-representation impacts business communication. This aligns with the findings of Musdariah and Amansyah (2023), who investigated communicative strategies employed by lecturers in teaching Business English. Their exploratory case study revealed that effective teaching hinges on understanding the communicative dynamics within the classroom, which can significantly influence students' learning experiences.

The integration of digital tools in teaching Business English was introduced by Budinčić's (2023) exploration of advanced business English writing skills in digital environments. The study highlights the necessity of adapting teaching methodologies to incorporate online platforms, which can enhance the learning experience and improve writing competencies. Similarly, the innovative pedagogical model presented by Marzá and Fortanet-Gómez (2022) for teaching

product pitches emphasizes the importance of multimodal approaches in business communication, reflecting the contemporary demands of the business landscape.

Despite advances, ESP in business communication faces challenges including ensuring the alignment of teaching materials with rapidly changing professional genres and the need for continuous integration of research findings into pedagogy to effectively prepare learners for specific workplace communication tasks (Chan & McGrath, 2024).

Finally, the need for continuous curriculum development in response to stakeholder demands is evident in the studies by different studies (Xie & Chen, 2019; Setiawan, 2023). These studies advocated for aligning business English courses with real-world practices and the evolving needs of the market, ensuring that students are adequately prepared for the challenges they will face in their professional careers.

The studies reviewed here highlight the importance of a comprehensive approach to study ESP on Business English, one that is responsive to the needs of learners and the demands of the global market. Based on the cited gap, the following research questions are formulated:

What are the pedagogical approaches of ESP for Business Communication?

What is the material development process of ESP for Business Communication?

What are the main challenges of ESP for Business Communication?

Methodology

The current study reviewed the related literature on pedagogical approaches, material development, and challenges of ESP for Business Communication to come up with the main themes to address the gaps review the findings, and shed light on the future trends in the field

which are going to determine the themes in the field and provide some suggestions and recommendations in the field. Following the queries on main journals of the field, and those that publish related articles, and strategies for inclusion and exclusion, the main articles on this issue were selected from among the most important and relevant findings, and the common themes of these studies were explored and presented in the study.

Search Strategy

Based on keywording and mapping, the search was done on some main publications in the field. To do this, the main articles were selected from these databases through the advanced search engines of these main publications in the field of ESP using the following Keywording and mapping strategies of the study, in order to ensure the comprehensiveness of the search findings and through the options provided in their search engines:

- ESP for Business Communication
- pedagogical approaches
- material development
- challenges

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Due to the manageable number of studies in the field, the main articles were selected from among those papers published in the main journals in the field of ESP which investigated business communication. The articles were selected based on the quality of the journals, the novelty and comprehensive design of the article, their investigation of the issue as the main themes of the study, and also how they added to the findings of the study. These criteria were applied to the articles

based on the scrutinization and analysis of 75 articles by two researchers and the final 25 articles were included to be reviewed in the study. The PRISMA chart (Figure 1. originally adopted from Moher et al., 2009) represents processes for the creation of the report pool in this study.

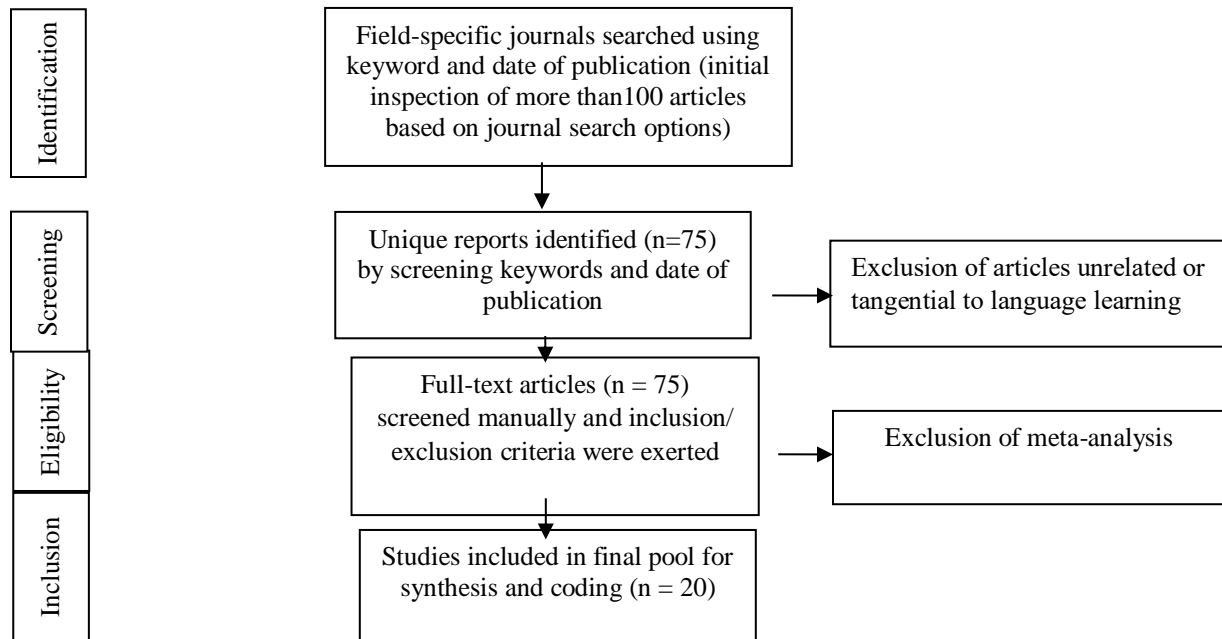


Figure 1. The PRISMA Chart of the processes for the creation of the report pool (originally adopted from Moher et al., 2009)

Coding

The final 30 articles selected for the review were coded by two coders through a categorization scheme that was developed based on the keywording (as the process of assigning keywords or key phrases to data to make it ready to analyze) and mapping strategies (the process of creating a structured representation of keywords related to a content area to organize keywords thematically), previously explained in the search strategy and Prisma Chart (Figure 1). Based on the coding of the two coders, the following emergent themes and conceptualizations of the issue were formulated: pedagogical approaches, material development, and challenges.

Results

Here, major themes regarding the field of ESP which investigated business communication are going to be presented and discussed through analysis of selected key papers. These emergent themes were pedagogical approaches, material development, and challenges as specified by a general coding scheme and they will be elaborated in the subsequent parts.

Pedagogical Considerations

The first main theme was related to the Pedagogical Considerations in the field which included some sub-themes like material development in ESP, authentic materials, digital tools and resources, and digital tools and resources which are presented in this section.

The review of the studies showed that integrating task-based learning and content-based instruction to promote practical communication skills is crucially important (Menggo, 2022; Irawan et al., 2022). Pedagogical considerations are critical in ESP course design, as they ensure that the language instruction is effective, engaging, and relevant to the learners' needs (Nunan, 1989).

The review showed that pedagogical considerations are important because they ensure that the language instruction is relevant, engaging, and effective. They also provide learners with the opportunity to develop their language skills in a more authentic and meaningful way. Pedagogical Approaches for ESP in Business Communication is the first pedagogical consideration which is elaborated on the following sub-section.

Pedagogical Approaches for ESP in Business Communication

Pedagogical approaches play a critical role in ESP instruction, as they influence the learning outcomes and experiences of learners. In ESP for business communication, pedagogical approaches should be tailored to the specific needs and goals of learners in the profession. There are several pedagogical considerations that instructors should take into account when designing an ESP course for business English, including:

Task-based learning: This involves using real-world tasks and activities to teach language skills, rather than relying on traditional language teaching methods (Nunan, 1989).
Content-based instruction: This involves using subject matter content to teach language skills, rather than using language as the primary focus (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).
Integration of language and content: This involves integrating language instruction with subject matter content, in order to provide learners with a more holistic learning experience (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).
Use of authentic materials: This involves using real-world materials, such as newspaper articles, videos, and podcasts, to teach language skills, rather than relying on fictional or contrived materials (Nunan, 1989).

Integrative Pedagogy and Collaborative Learning

Integrative pedagogy and collaborative learning are essential in ESP instruction for business communication (Menggo, 2022). This approach involves implementing pedagogical models that incorporate cross-discipline collaboration between language instructors and subject experts. By working together, language instructors and subject experts can create learning materials and activities that are relevant, useful, and meaningful to learners in the profession. This approach

enables learners to develop their language skills in a more contextualized way, as they are able to engage with real-world language and communication practices in the profession.

Implementing integrative pedagogy and collaborative learning in ESP instruction for business communication has several benefits (Menggo, 2022). Firstly, it enables learners to develop their language skills in a more authentic way, as they are able to engage with real-world language and communication practices in the profession. Secondly, it provides learners with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in the profession, as they are able to learn from subject experts. Finally, it enables instructors to create learning materials and activities that are tailored to the specific needs and goals of learners in the profession.

Technology-Enhanced Learning

Technology-enhanced learning is a critical component of ESP instruction for business communication, as it enables learners to develop their language skills in a more flexible and interactive way (Shalatska et al., 2023). Platforms like Moodle provide learners with the opportunity to engage with language learning activities and resources in a more autonomous way, as they are able to access learning materials and activities online. Technology-enhanced learning also enables instructors to create blended learning environments, which integrate online and face-to-face learning activities.

The use of technology-enhanced learning in ESP instruction for business communication has several benefits (Shalatska et al., 2023). Firstly, it enables learners to develop their language skills in a more flexible and interactive way, as they are able to access learning materials and activities online. Secondly, it provides learners with the opportunity to develop their autonomy and independence, as they are able to engage with language learning activities in a more self-directed

way. Finally, it enables instructors to create learning materials and activities that are tailored to the specific needs and goals of learners in the profession.

Evaluation and Assessment

Evaluation and assessment are critical components of ESP instruction for business communication, as they enable instructors to evaluate learner progression and course effectiveness (Tai et al., 2024). In ESP instruction, evaluation and assessment should be tailored to the specific needs and goals of learners in the profession. Authentic assessment methods, such as peer feedback and self-assessment tools, provide learners with the opportunity to evaluate their own language skills and knowledge in a more realistic way.

The use of authentic assessment methods in ESP instruction for business communication has several benefits (Tai et al., 2024). Firstly, it enables learners to evaluate their own language skills and knowledge in a more realistic way, as they are able to engage with real-world language and communication practices in the profession. Secondly, it provides instructors with a more accurate picture of learner progression and course effectiveness, as they are able to evaluate learner performance in a more authentic way. Finally, it enables instructors to create learning materials and activities that are tailored to the specific needs and goals of learners in the profession.

Material Development in ESP

Material development is a critical stage in ESP course design, as it involves the creation of learning materials that are relevant, useful, and meaningful to the learners. In ESP, material development involves the creation of materials that are tailored to the specific language needs of learners in a particular profession or industry.

Importance of Needs Analysis

The necessity of conducting thorough needs analysis to tailor courses and materials effectively for specific learner groups has been emphasized (Dou, 2023). Needs analysis is a crucial stage in ESP course design, as it enables instructors to identify the language needs of learners and develop language instruction that addresses those needs (Brindley, 1989). There are several types of needs analysis, including:

- * Learning needs analysis: This involves analyzing the learners' language proficiency levels, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles (Brindley, 1989).
- * Present situation analysis: This involves analyzing the language skills that learners already possess and the language skills that they need to acquire (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Needs analysis is important for several reasons. Firstly, it enables instructors to identify the specific language skills that learners need to acquire in order to communicate effectively in their profession or industry (Brindley, 1989). Secondly, it ensures that the language instruction is tailored to the learners' needs, rather than being based on a one-size-fits-all approach. Thirdly, needs analysis provides instructors with a clear understanding of the learners' language proficiency levels, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles, which can inform the development of ESP materials and pedagogy.

Authentic Materials

The studies showed that the value of authentic materials in teaching ESP cannot be overstated (Danilova & Pudlowski, 2006). Authentic materials provide learners with a realistic and engaging learning experience, as they are able to engage with real-world language in context. Examples of authentic materials that can be used in ESP material development include real job postings,

professional reports, and case studies. These materials enable learners to develop their language skills in a more contextualized way, as they are able to engage with the language and communication practices of the profession.

Digital Tools and Resources

According to the review, the integration of digital technologies and online platforms is critical in ESP material development, as it facilitates learning and provides learners with a more interactive and engaging experience (Rachmawati & Irawan, 2024). Digital tools and resources can include online language learning platforms, multimedia resources, and digital communication tools. These resources enable learners to develop their language skills in a more autonomous way, as they are able to access language learning resources and activities independently.

Incorporating technology-enhanced learning into ESP is another critical takeaway from the research. The effectiveness of digital tools and online platforms in fostering interactive and autonomous language acquisition cannot be overlooked. In Iran, with increasing internet penetration and smartphone usage, the integration of authentic materials—such as local business reports, job advertisements, and relevant case studies—can significantly bridge the language instruction-reality gap. Technologies like mobile apps and online collaboration tools support task-based learning that resonates with contemporary trends in ESP pedagogy, as noted by Hyland (2021).

Multimodal Learning Resource

The incorporation of multimodal sources is essential in ESP material development, as it leads to an enhanced understanding of business communication (Fortanet-Gómez & Edo-Marzá, 2022).

Multimodal learning resources include visual and auditory elements, such as images, videos, and podcasts. These resources enable learners to engage with language in a more interactive and engaging way, as they are able to engage with visual and auditory elements. The use of multimodal learning resources in ESP material development provides learners with a more realistic and engaging learning experience, as they are able to develop their language skills in a more contextualized way.

Challenges and Future Directions

The third main theme was related to challenges and future directions. The field of ESP in business communication is constantly evolving, and there are several challenges and future directions that need to be addressed.

Adapting to Evolving Industry Demands

The global business environment is dynamic and constantly changing, which influences language and communication requirements (Syarifuddin et al., 2022). ESP educators need to be aware of these changes and adapt their teaching methods and materials to meet the evolving needs of learners. This requires a deep understanding of the industry and its communication requirements, as well as the ability to design language instruction that is relevant and useful to learners.

To address this challenge, ESP educators can engage in ongoing professional development to stay current with industry trends and developments. This can involve attending conferences and workshops, participating in online courses and training programs, and networking with industry professionals to stay informed about changes in the field.

Continuous Professional Development for Educators

The necessity for ongoing training and professional development programs for ESP educators cannot be overstated (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015). ESP educators need to be proficient in using technology to enhance language instruction, as well as develop relevant pedagogical strategies to meet the evolving needs of learners. This requires ongoing training and professional development to stay current with best practices in language instruction and technology-enhanced learning.

ESP educators can engage in continuous professional development through various means, such as attending conferences and workshops, participating in online courses and training programs, and collaborating with colleagues to share best practices. This will enable them to stay current with industry trends and developments, as well as design language instruction that is relevant and useful to learners.

Cultural Nuances in Business Communication

Addressing the diverse cultural contexts of business communication is essential in ESP teaching (Ningtias, 2023). ESP educators need to be aware of the cultural nuances of business communication and design language instruction that takes into account these differences. This requires a deep understanding of the cultural contexts of business communication, as well as the ability to design language instruction that is sensitive to these differences.

ESP educators can address this challenge by engaging with learners from diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as collaborating with industry professionals to stay informed about cultural nuances in business communication. This will enable them to design language instruction that is relevant and useful to learners, as well as sensitive to the cultural nuances of business communication.

Discussion

The findings from this research underscore the pivotal role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the realm of business communication, particularly within the framework of tailored pedagogical approaches, material development, and the integration of digital tools. Given the dynamic nature of global business, it is imperative that ESP instruction remains adaptable to meet the evolving linguistic and communicative demands of professionals across various sectors, including in the Iranian context.

The study paid a significant focus on the literature employed in ESP for Business Communication and its pedagogical approaches. Regarding the pedagogical considerations manifested in this study, the findings are supported by Bekkaoui (2024), who emphasized the importance of collaborative curriculum development in business English classes of ESP that involves multiple stakeholders, including educators and industry representatives, to ensure that the content is aligned with market needs. Likewise, Yousafzai and Fareed (2019) argued that effective ESP teaching requires instructors to possess both language competence and pedagogical skills tailored to the specific needs of learners. To fulfill the needs of business English students, Lyu (2023) introduced the integration of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as a method that enhances student engagement and language acquisition. He also discussed the use of case studies to encourage students to analyze real-life scenarios, thereby fostering critical thinking and practical application of language skills.

The study also revealed that material development was another main theme that intersected with pedagogical approaches in business English field. This is advocated by Guo and Miao (2019), who emphasized the necessity of developing materials that reflect the specific language and communication skills required in business contexts, which support the need for a needs

analysis to inform material design. This is supported by Fitriani et al. (2024), who highlight that ESP should focus on developing communication skills pertinent to the workplace, such as negotiation and presentation skills. Moreover, the study by Zafarghandi et al. (2014) indicates a dissatisfaction among students regarding the inadequacy of existing ESP materials, suggesting that many courses do not adequately prepare students for practical application in their professional environments. Therefore, there is a need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of teaching materials to meet business needs of the students.

The third emergent theme of the review regarding the challenges stated that despite the developments in pedagogical strategies and material development, several challenges persist in the realm of ESP for business communication. Supporting this, Al-Roomy (2017) identified a lack of preparedness among ESP teachers, who often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach the subject. This is supported by the findings of Kamberi et al. (2019), who report that teachers perceive significant challenges in delivering ESP content due to insufficient training and resources. Additionally, Kurniawati and Malasari (2022) highlight the importance of addressing learners' specific needs through effective needs analysis, which is often overlooked in practice. The integration of cultural competence into ESP curricula is also a challenge, as Mebitil (2023) points out that traditional language learning approaches frequently fail to equip learners with the skills needed to navigate cultural differences in business contexts. Some researchers (e.g., Aguaguiña Pilla et al., 2025; Chan & McGrath, 2024) indicated that future directions need to emphasize fostering stronger links between ESP research and practice to support curriculum development, incorporating authentic workplace language use, and harnessing technology to personalize learning experiences in business communication contexts.

It is important to note that when comparing the findings across these studies, some important considerations were highlighted. First, there is a consensus on the necessity of aligning pedagogical approaches and material development with the specific needs of learners and the demands of the business environment. This is crucial for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of ESP instruction. Second, while innovative teaching methodologies such as TBLT and case studies show promise in engaging students, the successful implementation of these approaches is often hindered by challenges related to teacher preparedness and resource availability. Finally, the integration of cultural competence into ESP curricula remains a significant gap that educators must address to prepare students for the globalized business landscape.

Conclusion and Implications

The teaching of ESP for business communication is essential for preparing students to meet the complex demands of the global marketplace. Effective material development and innovative pedagogical strategies will help ensure that students acquire the necessary skills to engage confidently and competently in diverse professional environments (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Through continual assessment of educational needs and proactive alignment with industry demands, ESP can evolve to foster the development of skilled professionals ready to navigate an increasingly interconnected world (Syarifuddin et al., 2022). In today's fast-paced global economy, the ability to communicate effectively in English is a critical skill for business professionals (Nunan, 1989). By providing students with a comprehensive understanding of business communication principles, practices, and protocols, ESP instructors can empower them to succeed in a rapidly changing business landscape (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Moreover, by

incorporating authentic materials, digital technologies, and multicultural perspectives into the curriculum.

A significant implication of this study lies in the importance of needs analysis in ESP course design. By systematically identifying the distinct language and communication requirements of learners, educators can formulate targeted curricula that not only enhance linguistic proficiency but also bolster professional communication skills. This is particularly relevant in Iran, where diverse industries such as technology, oil, and textiles present unique language demands. A one-size-fits-all approach to teaching business English is insufficient; instead, courses must be customized to reflect the specific professional contexts and cultural backgrounds of Iranian learners. Studies like those by Dudley-Evans and St. John (2020) emphasize the need for tailored approaches in ESP pedagogy.

However, significant challenges persist in the field of ESP instruction for business communication. One notable issue is the need for continuous curriculum adaptation in response to shifting industry trends. In Iran, where the business landscape is rapidly changing, maintaining relevance through regular updates to curricula is essential. Additionally, fostering cultural competence must be prioritized, enabling ESP programs to incorporate cross-cultural training that prepares learners for global interactions. Addressing diversity and inclusion in teaching materials ensures that all learners, regardless of background, can access relevant and effective instruction.

The professional development of ESP educators is another pressing challenge. In the face of artificial intelligence and automation increasingly influencing business communication, educators must be well-equipped to employ AI-driven language learning tools effectively. Investing in ongoing training for Iranian educators to master these technologies is crucial for the advancement of ESP instruction.

Looking ahead, an interdisciplinary approach is recommended for ESP instruction. Collaboration between language instructors and industry professionals will guarantee that curricula remain relevant and attuned to the specific needs of businesses within Iran. Research into AI applications in ESP, along with an exploration of multimodal learning and the impact of digital communication platforms, will be vital in shaping the future of business communication training. In conclusion, by tackling these challenges and embracing the opportunities presented, ESP programs can adapt and evolve, equipping Iranian learners with the linguistic skills and cultural competence necessary for navigating today's complex global business environment.

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