

# Pedagogical Competence of General English Teachers in Teaching English for Medical Purposes in the KSA: Myth or Reality

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## Abstract

This study investigates the gap between General English Teachers' (GETs) assumed ability to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and their mismatched qualifications in Saudi Arabia. It explores the underdevelopment of the EMP sector, where GETs often lack proper training and resources. The research employs a qualitative case study approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys. The participants include three medical professors (MPs), five experienced EMP teachers (EMP Ts), and twenty-one GETs. The focus is on uncovering the pedagogical needs for GETs to teach EMP effectively. The findings reveal a significant discrepancy between assumed competence, preparedness and actual performance of GETs. This highlights the need for professional development programs focusing on the pedagogy of ESP and EMP, along with curriculum and instructional design, to equip GETs with the necessary skills and knowledge for successful EMP instruction. The findings also highlight the need for curriculum revision and improved needs assessment. By identifying these needs, the research aims to contribute to improved EMP teaching in Saudi Arabia. This study will assist policymakers and educators in creating a more effective system, for preparing future healthcare professionals with the essential English language skills required for success.

**Keywords:** EMP teaching, Pedagogical needs, Professional development, Needs Analysis

## 1. Introduction

The demand for specialized language programs has increased since the 1960s (Ram fez, 2015). Teachers, language teaching providers, and applied linguists worldwide began to use needs analysis techniques to develop appropriate language teaching materials for different ESP programs (Richards, 2002). Gradually, learners' needs analysis in various areas of ESP became an integral part of designing any new ESP program. As a branch of ESP, EMP is no exception. Needs analysis (NA) assesses the communicative needs of the learners and their methods of achieving the teaching goals. It aims to gather information about the learners' needs, define the target situation and outline the learning environment for learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Otilia, 2020; Song, P. 2020; Park, E. J. 2021; Mao, F., & Zhou, J., 2024, Blecher, 2006). Present Situation Analysis (PSA), as suggested by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), is one of the new models of NA in ESP. PSA is a process of knowing what students recognize at the initiation of the course, their paleness and strengths, insight, English language skills, and awareness of the subject (Hyland, 2008; Robinson, 1991).

The growing demand for specialized English language skills across professions has resulted in a global surge in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs. Within the ESP domain, English for Medical Purposes (EMP) is crucial in equipping medical students with the communication skills necessary for success in their field, Rizzo, & Nathanson (2008); Khan et al. (2020). In Saudi Arabia, with its expanding medical education sector (Bin Abdulrahman, 2022), the need for qualified EMP instructors is particularly urgent. However, a gap exists between the assumed ability of General English Teachers (GETs) to deliver EMP courses and the reality of their training and qualifications (Alsharif, 2018). This research investigates this gap, exploring the pedagogical competence of GETs in teaching EMP within the KSA context. By shedding light on the specific needs of GETs to become effective EMP instructors, this study aims to contribute to developing targeted professional development programs and ultimately, enhance the quality of EMP instruction in Saudi Arabia.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The focus on ESP, particularly EMP in Saudi Arabia, has increased in parallel with the growth of 28 public and nine private medical schools (Bin Abdulrahman, 2022). Medical students are required to take only two English courses in the first year and the majority of English language instructor are not adequately trained to teach ESP and EMP. Several studies have explored EMP from various perspectives; however, few have addressed the pedagogical aspects of EMP teachers in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, English language instructors still struggle with medical terminology, specialized language in medical context, and a lack of knowledge context in the curriculum when teaching ESP (Khan, 2020). Consequently, EMP instruction has been neglected by faculty, educational administrators, and policymakers in Saudi Arabian medical schools. This study examines the gap between the current state of EMP instruction and the efforts of authorities to address the issue in medical schools. Although some studies have addressed the linguistic challenges of ESP and the translation of medical

terms (Kuzio, 2019), the current research aims to identify the pedagogical needs of EMP teachers as the first step in designing a development training course.

According to Hyland (2006), PSA assesses students' abilities and motivations prior to course entry, examining what they can do, what they want to achieve, and their aptitudes, aspirations, and familiarity with specialized subjects. It also investigates the learning deficiencies and prior knowledge of students as well.

(Elgindi & Hoque, 2022) report that ESP teachers in KSA find pedagogical challenges when they are recruited to teach EMP. (Bayram & Canaran, 2020) posit that most GETs lack motivation. They do not have the passion for teaching ESP topics due to the lack of both content and pedagogical knowledge (Hekmati et al., 2021) claims that medical students are not convinced with the present EMP curriculum, texts and the teaching and assessment methods. (Alsharif, 2018) states that ESP teachers in KSA face obstacles teaching ESP as they lack ESP teaching skills and knowledge, course development skills. (Mulyadi et al., 2020) conclude in their study that the ESP instructors failed to achieve the pedagogical content knowledge, as they are unfamiliar with ESP topics and methodologies of teaching ESP.

The scarcity of ESP practitioners in the KSA is attributed to a lack of understanding regarding the challenges that hinder GETs from teaching ESP courses or participating in ESP teacher training. According to Alsomali (2014), most GETs lack the basic pedagogical and academic requirements for teaching ESP; hence, they decide to remain in their comfort zones and restrict themselves to teaching general English (Alsomali, 2014). A mention of the fact that no university or college offer any mainstream courses on ESP or EMP attached to the department of English. There are no ESP/EMP courses for English language training in any of these higher education institutions. Unfortunately, there is no study conducted about this research gap in the KSA, the websites of King Abdulaziz university (KAU), Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University (IAU) (and King Saud university (KSU). Therefore, this attitude and practice of the EMP teachers lead them to a low-performance failure student in ESP courses delivered in the medical colleges of the KSA. This scenario is reflected in Blecher's (2006) investigation, which stated that ESP instructors may feel ill-prepared to teach learners in highly technical fields such as engineering or air traffic control, which can be unfamiliar and intimidating.

Needs assessment, a significant component of ESP, has not been systematically implemented in Saudi Arabia; rather, it has typically relied on teachers' intuitions (Kiran, 2013). Therefore, the current study investigates the situation of ESP and, in particular, EMP in Saudi context and it presents the pedagogical needs required for EMP teachers through the lens of the experienced EMP teachers, deans of medical colleges and general English teachers (GETs). This, accordingly, will be the first step in creating a training course for GETs to teach EMP. It is obvious that there is a huge research gap in the field of ESP and EMP.

### *1.2 The Statement of the Problem*

The researchers of this study believe that there is a lack of clear understanding of the real needs of the ESP learners at the medical colleges of the KSA; and that the GETs teaching medical English are not well-equipped with appropriate professional and pedagogical training to conduct needs assessment of the English learners; that they are not competent in delivering the ESP/EMP syllabuses effectively; and that they are not experienced in designing appropriate modules of teaching-learning ESP/EMP at medical schools of the KSA. Furthermore, a few studies have examined the implementation of English language syllabi in medical colleges. The current article aims to fill this research gap, which needs the immediate attention of the policymakers, material designers, EMP teachers, and GETs.

### *1.3 Research Questions*

1. How familiar are GETs with the pedagogical practice in EMP?
2. What are the pedagogical needs of GETs to be successful EMP teachers?

### *1.4 Research Objectives*

1. To uncover the knowledge of GETs in terms of EMP and ESP pedagogy.
2. To explore the pedagogical needs of GETs to teach EMP.

### *1.5 Literature Review*

This study begins with a comprehensive review of the literature on Needs Analysis (NA) within the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). This section will explore the various methods and frameworks employed in conducting NA, and Present Situation Analysis (PSA) (Hyland, 2008). Robson (2011), in his exploration of real-world research practices, highlights the importance of understanding learner needs not just in the present context, but also in anticipating future needs. This concept is particularly relevant when designing ESP programs, as it ensures the program equips learners with the skills, they will need throughout their professional careers. Furthermore, the review will examine the advantages and disadvantages of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) as a branch of ESP, paying particular attention to the current state of EMP instruction in Saudi Arabia. Stevick (1980) argues ESP materials and methodologies should be tailored specifically to the communication needs of learners in the target situation, a principle that holds for EMP programs. In addition, the research will delve into existing studies on ESP pedagogy from various geographical contexts. This global perspective on ESP teaching methodologies will provide valuable insights into effective practices for EMP instruction. A few studies on the areas of NA and PSA in Middle Eastern countries such as Alsharif (2018); Bayram & Canaran (2020); Hekmati, et al. (2021); Elgindi & Hoque (2022); Mashrah, (2024).

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) A needs analysis study needs to be conducted to explore skills, texts, linguistic forms, and communicative practices (Hyland, 2005). This is not the case only in ESP, but it is an important aspect of reaching specificity that is crucial in the teaching approach. To develop and prepare courses for a specific group of students engaged independently with the community, the target discursive practices should be described along with their knowledge, needs, and how they learn better.

Theoretically, (PSA) assesses strengths and weaknesses in language skills and learning experiences. (Smith, J, &Johnson, 2017) highlight the importance of considering the PSA in language teaching and its potential to enhance curriculum relevance and learner engagement. Moreover, Garcia, A. & Lee, H, (2018) claimed that a thorough understanding of the present situation significantly contributes to the effectiveness of ESL instruction.

Understanding the students' needs helps syllabus designers choose the proper materials and techniques to be employed in the learning and teaching process. (Yundayani, 2018). The researchers noticed that many curricula have been designed without proper attention to the student's needs. (Sysoyev, 2000; (Elgindi & Hoque, 2022) claimed that some teachers do not pay attention to learners' interests and ignore them as a source of essential needs (cited by Shaalan,2022) Moreover, Macalister,2019 wrote in his book

“Needs analysis makes sure that a course will be relevant and satisfying to the learners. This is such a basic requirement that it is worth giving careful thought to needs analysis procedures. To neglect them is to run the risk of producing a course that does not meet the needs of its users”

Some medical universities are still in need of well-designed curricula as the situation in China (Jie,2023)

“Ample and systemic teaching materials including textbooks, auxiliary materials are urgently needed. A good textbook can make students' learning efficiency get twice the result with half the effort.”

Some others neglect the learners' needs like in Indonesia (Fadjri, 2023). Therefore, the current study focuses on the PSA of the learners of EMP to explore the pedagogical perception of the teachers of EMP and ESP about the needs of the English learners at the medical colleges of the KSA.

Target Situation Analysis- TSA (Javid, Mohseni, Ameri, & Baradaran, 2020) provides a comprehensive data profile about the learners and establishes what the learners need to know to perform appropriately in the target situation (Munby, 1978). (Basturkman, 2010) referred to the process as tasks and activities that the learners should ideally know and what they should do in their English classroom situation. It investigates the learners' role during the teaching-learning of EMP, their linguistic skills, and the knowledge they need to perform efficiently in their future workplace (Hyland, 2008; Elgandi & Hoque, 2022). In the current study, the researchers explore the pedagogical needs of new EMP teachers in light of English learners' needs and perceptions at the medical colleges of the KSA.

On the other hand, from the personal experiences and reviews recorded in the field notes recorded during the study period, they have found that some new EMP instructors were not willing or might be unable to conduct the crucial needs analysis, particularly when they face some specialized courses that necessitate plenty of time and energy to be practically realized.

Needs assessment, a significant component of ESP, never existed in the EMP area of teaching-learning and, if it did, it was never systematic. But it was based on teachers' intuitions (Kiran, 2013). Therefore, General English Teachers (GETs) teach EMP in KSA without any formal training. This situation drifts the specific focus of the ESP/EMP courses in the KSA and ultimately fails to prepare the target group of students professionally with appropriate communicative skills (Elgindi & Hoque, 2022).

A body of studies including Alsharif (2018), Bayram (2020) Hekmati (2021), and Mulyadi (2020) highlight the ESP pedagogy from different perspectives. Alsharif (2018) explores the ESP teachers' perception of ESP pedagogy, Bayram (2020) explores the pedagogical knowledge of ESP teachers in Turkey, Hekmati (2021) investigates the ESP stakeholders through a wider lens to explore the pedagogical side while Mulyadi (2020) studies the technological and pedagogical aspects in Indonesia. Their findings in all these studies include that ESP teachers lack skills in ESP teaching, pedagogical knowledge and inappropriate material design.

Another study conducted by Alsharif (2018) examined the Teachers' perceptions of Pedagogy in Teaching ESP Courses at Saudi Arabian University. She focused on the ESP challenges that confront teachers of English for Specific Purposes. Conclusion: ESP teachers face problems in the teaching of English for Specific Purposes due to lack of know-how and traditional skills about discipline-specific content. She includes a reminder that most teachers are missing the skills development courses and have training needs in knowledge acquisition guiding style, as well. At the end of her research, she suggests that “more studies are needed to ascertain which pedagogical strategies teachers choose in teaching ESP courses. Bayram (2020) aims to identify novice ESP teachers' professional development needs at a foreign languages department of a foundation university in Turkey. The research sample was composed of 12 non-native English instructors teaching ESP courses to undergraduate students. A mixed-method of sequential explanatory design was utilized in the study. Findings revealed that teachers underlined the need for more materials and coursebooks on ESP, and the researcher stated they lacked the specialist knowledge necessary for creating materials from scratch. Moreover, the study found that ESP teachers with strong pedagogical but limited content knowledge may teach more effectively than a subject matter expert with no pedagogical knowledge.

Mulyadi (2020) studied the technological and pedagogical knowledge of 70 ESP teachers from 35 universities in Indonesia. He concluded that ESP teachers need to improve their ability to choose germane learning sources, recognize linguistic problems, and give appropriate

feedback on learners’ language aspects. They were also in need for collaboration between general English language teachers and content teachers who comprehend specific purposes of the discipline field and professional communities to enhance ESP teachers’ pedagogical and content knowledge in teaching English for nursing properly and effectively.

Hekmati (2021) explored the stakeholders’ perception of the status quo of EMP in the Iranian context and their ideas for the improvement of the current situation. The results of the study showed that the participants believed that the current EMP curriculum cannot satisfy medical students’ English language needs in the four major language skills and their subcomponents. Furthermore, they were not satisfied with the current class size, teaching and evaluation methods, textbooks, the time allocated for teaching EMP, and the components of the EMP curriculum. EPA courses in Iranian universities were designed unsystematically, without any careful assessment of learners’ needs.

All the studies discussed the difficulties, challenges, or perceptions of ESP or EMP teachers of pedagogical aspects of ESP or EMP. This study explores the pedagogical needs of ESP/EMP teachers at the Medical Colleges of the KSA. This will be the first step in improving and enhancing teaching ESP/EMP in the KSA. The envisaged measures will help achieve the aims, objectives, and learning outcomes of the ESP/EMP curriculum effectively. There has been hardly any research on the effectiveness of the EMP syllabuses of the medical colleges in the KSA and the factors impeding the GETs in the delivery of the EMP courses in the country.

**2. Methodology**

This study adopts the qualitative case-oriented approach, using both semi-structured interviews and an open-ended survey. This is an exploratory case study focused on understanding how GETs perceive ESP and EMP pedagogy, with a specific exploration of the pedagogical needs of EMP teachers for GETs in Jeddah city. It is relevant for this study because the current research seeks to investigate pedagogical perception of EMP by teachers from a variety of angles. This choice was made to ensure the researchers had a detailed account on comments, viewpoints and declarations of three other groups; medical professors (MP), EMP Ts teachers, and GETs.

*2.1 Participants Profile*

The units of analysis consisted of three groups of participants using the purposive sampling method. (Miles and Huberman, 1994) The first group was five EMP teachers (EMP Ts) who were selected from among 17 working teachers, whose experience in teaching medical English language ranges from 5 to 12 years.

Table 1. Demographic Data and Experience of EMP Teachers

| <b>P</b>      | <b>Age</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Nationality</b> | <b>Experience in Medical field (years)</b> |
|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|--|
| Participant 1 | 55         | Male          | Egyptian           | 5  |
| Participant 2 | 49         | Male          | American           | 3  |
| Participant 3 | 54         | Male          | Sudanese           | 6  |
| Participant 4 | 48         | Female        | Sudanese           | 9  |
| Participant 5 | 42         | Male          | Jordanian          | 9  |

Table (1) displays the demographic data of the participants. As for the second group of participants, it consisted of three medical professors (MP) who work as medical college deans and were chosen out of five deans requested to participate in the study. Their experience in medical college deanship ranges from 8 to 20 years.

Table 2. Demographic Data and Experience of Deans

|                      | <b>Age</b> | <b>GENDER</b> | <b>COUNTRY</b> | <b>EXPERIENCE</b> |
|----------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Participant 1</b> | 60         | Female        | Iraqi          | 15 years          |
| <b>Participant 2</b> | 57         | Female        | Egyptian       | 7 years           |
| <b>Participant 3</b> | 55         | Male          | Jordanian      | 2 years           |

Table (2) shows their demographic data. Groups two of the participants were chosen from five medical colleges in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia specifically in the city of Jeddah.

Table 3. Demographic Data and Experience of GETs

| <b>P</b>  | <b>AGE</b> | <b>CERTIFICATE</b> | <b>EXPERIENCE YEAR</b> |
|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | 30         | Bachelors          | 6                      |
| <b>2</b>  | 37         | Bachelors          | 13                     |
| <b>3</b>  | 33         | Bachelors          | 9                      |
| <b>4</b>  | 36         | Bachelors          | 12                     |
| <b>5</b>  | 39         | Bachelors          | 15                     |
| <b>6</b>  | 40         | Bachelors          | 16                     |
| <b>7</b>  | 32         | Bachelors          | 8                      |
| <b>8</b>  | 33         | Bachelors          | 9                      |
| <b>9</b>  | 36         | Bachelors          | 12                     |
| <b>10</b> | 38         | Bachelors          | 14                     |
| <b>11</b> | 35         | Bachelors          | 11                     |
| <b>12</b> | 41         | Bachelors          | 17                     |

|           |    |           |    |
|-----------|----|-----------|----|
| <b>13</b> | 37 | Bachelors | 13 |
| <b>14</b> | 36 | Bachelors | 12 |
| <b>15</b> | 35 | Bachelors | 11 |
| <b>16</b> | 34 | Bachelors | 10 |
| <b>17</b> | 32 | Bachelors | 8  |
| <b>18</b> | 39 | Bachelors | 15 |
| <b>19</b> | 40 | Bachelors | 16 |
| <b>20</b> | 38 | Bachelors | 14 |
| <b>21</b> | 32 | Bachelors | 8  |

Table (3) shows the third group of participants consisted of 21 GETs from different schools in the Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with experience ranging from 6 to 17 years, all of whom are interested in teaching EMP.

2.2 Research Tools

In the present study, the researchers have used semi-structured interviews with the MP (medical professors) and EMP Ts (medical teachers) and an open-ended survey with GETs. After the interviews had been conducted with EMP teachers and the deans, an open-ended survey was prepared and sent to GETs to triangulate the findings. All collected data were integrated to triangulate (corroborate) the findings by interpreting different forms of data about the same phenomenon (Mason, 2002).

2.2.1 Open-ended Survey for GETs

The open-ended survey using a questionnaire was conducted involving 21 participants from 5 medical colleges of the City of Jeddah in the KSA. The open-ended questionnaire aimed to investigate the needs and knowledge of GETs to teach in Medical Colleges and to explore their familiarity with medical English, medical terminology, and pedagogy of EMP.

2.2.2 The Semi-Structured Interview

In the current study, the interviews involved 5 EMP teachers (EMP Ts) and 3 Medical professors (MP), the purpose was to investigate the participants' views and suggestions on the pedagogical needs of GETs teachers. The participants were chosen purposively from 5 medical colleges following a combination of typical and criterion sampling strategies. Criterion sampling is a strategy in which all cases meet a given criterion (Creswell, 2007). The 5 participants of the semi-structured interview were chosen according to their experience of at least three years in teaching EMP. "Criterion sampling involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (Patton, 2001, p. 238). In addition to the experience in teaching EMP, having a master of PhD certificate was preferable.

2.2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative data was collected via semi-structured interviews and an open-ended survey. The qualitative data were organized by ATLAS.ti. Data of GETs needs analysis were analyzed manually. The results for each item are displayed in Tables (4, 5, and 6) and in figures (1, 2, 3, and 4). Afterward, thematic analysis was conducted to identify major themes from the responses of the two groups. After the collection of data from MP and Ts, the researcher sent an open-ended survey questionnaire to GETs in different schools in Jeddah city to assess the present academic and pedagogical situation of the GETs regarding ESP and EMP in light of the primary findings from the interviews. After preliminary reading of the collected data, the researchers identified three important themes: 1. GETs knowledge of ESP and EMP pedagogy, 2. Weaknesses of received courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy and 3. how much is it important to study courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy. Regarding knowledge of ESP and EMP pedagogy, participants made statements like: *I know nothing(p1); I don't know about ESP and EMP pedagogy(p2); I know nothing about this(p15); I only know the meaning of the term. (p17)* shown in Table-4 below:

Table 4. the responses regarding knowledge of ESP and EMP pedagogy

| P  | ESP and EMP pedagogy Knowledge  |
|----|---|
| 1  | I know nothing- I didn't study this in the college – I have no idea about this field. I don't know about this area.               |
| 2  | I don't know about ESP pedagogy- I am sorry I haven't studied these courses. It is not included in our bachelor plan.             |
| 3  | I don't understand- I just heard about it but I have no information about it. I only know the term without any details.           |
| 4  | I heard about it only- It was not included in our curriculum. No, I don't know about this.  |
| 5  | I have no information- I don't know – I only have some readings. Only some general information.                                   |
| 6  | Nothing- No idea about ESP or EMP. I didn't study this in the college.  |
| 7  | I don't know- I only know it's specialized English course. Only some general information not much details.                        |
| 8  | I don't know anything- I have no idea about this language field. We didn't study the term at all.                                 |
| 9  | Nothing- I just read some articles about ESP online. Only some general information.   |
| 10 | I have no information- We haven't studied this in our college. No sorry I haven't read about these terms.                         |
| 11 | Nothing- I have only general idea about ESP from some articles on the internet.   |
| 12 | I don't know anything about it – I didn't study ESP. I have no idea about this because I graduated many years ago.                |
| 13 | Nothing – I just heard about ESP which is specialized English courses. They are English language courses but for specific fields. |
| 14 | I didn't study about this area – Sorry I only know the title.   |
| 15 | I know nothing but only the specific English for specific field such as engineering, medicine ...etc.                             |
| 16 | Nothing, more than they are courses for specific group such as medical, engineering ....  |

- 17 I don't know about ESP – I only know the meaning of the term but I have no idea about the courses.
- 18 I don't know – I think they are English courses for medicine or any other field of the language for specific groups.
- 19 I don't know about ESP or EMP pedagogy
- 20 Sorry I know nothing about this because I haven't studied this in the college.
- 21 I am sorry we haven't studied these courses

Tables (4) shows an unanimity among the participants who are not familiar with ESP and EMP pedagogy. Some participants responded that they know nothing about the field. P1, P2, P6, P8, P10, P12, P14, P16, P19, P20, and P21 reinforce each other by their statements like: I don't know – I haven't studied these courses – I have no information about his field- I don't know about ESP pedagogy- I know nothing about this.

Few participant (P5, P9, P11) showed that they only have some readings and they have only general information about ESP and EMP pedagogy, P5: "I only have some reading from internet and I have only general information about ESP and EMP pedagogy."; P9: "I know nothing but I read some articles online and it provided me with some general information;" " P11:"I have only general idea about ESP and EMP pedagogy from online reading"

Some participants(P3-P4-P7-P13-P15-P17-P18) indicated that they only knew the term or had simply heard about ESP and EMP. P3 , P7 and P18 claimed that he only know the meaning of the term and he has no further information, P4 said it was not included in our curriculum but I only know the term.P13 stated that they are courses for specialized English, P15 and P18 said they are courses for specific fields such as engineering. P17

Participants' responses regarding the ESP & EMP Pedagogy Courses include statements like: *I didn't study courses in ESP pedagogy(P1); I didn't hear about these courses(P6), I know nothing about this course(P3); there are no courses in ESP pedagogy available(P8).* Table 5 shows participants' answers regarding attending courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy.

Table 5. the responses of attending courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy

| P  | <i>ESP and EMP attending courses</i>   |
|----|--|
| 1  | I didn't attend any courses – There were no courses in ESP or EMP.I haven't come cross with these courses                                  |
| 2  | I didn't find any courses in ESP – I only read online articles. No at all, there were no courses in ESP in the college.                    |
| 3  | No nothing – no courses in such area. I didn't study any courses related to this field. I don't remember something like that.              |
| 4  | In my college of education, we have no courses in ESP and I didn't study these courses even after I graduated.                             |
| 5  | I haven't heard about any courses in this field – No I didn't attend any courses and there were no available courses for this specialty.   |
| 6  | No courses in this area – no I didn't attend any courses or even workshops because I haven't heard about them.                             |
| 7  | I don't know, if there is any courses such ESP or EMP in the university or English department or any other college.                        |
| 8  | No, I didn't attend any ESP courses – I haven't seen such courses whether in the college or outside the college                            |
| 9  | No, I didn't study these courses, but I just heard about the ESP from the internet   |
| 10 | I didn't attend – I even don't know about any ESP courses. If there's any courses, I will join but there's no course of ESP                |
| 11 | I think there's no courses in ESP but it's only a matter of online reading or experience. No separate courses for ESP                      |
| 12 | No, I didn't attend – I don't know if there are courses on this or not but in the college, we didn't study ESP at all.                     |
| 13 | May be there's online courses or a YouTube channel or any platform but for me, I didn't study or even heard that there were courses of ESP |
| 14 | I only read some studies regarding ESP but no studying. It was just like short articles online but no more than this.                      |
| 15 | No, I didn't – I didn't find any courses in ESP  |
| 16 | I only know that it's a long experience – I didn't attend  |
| 17 | I didn't attend ESP courses – I don't know any   |
| 18 | No, I don't know any courses   |
| 19 | Unfortunately, there were no courses in ESP in my college, so I didn't study any of these courses  |
| 20 | No not at all I haven't attend any courses   |
| 21 | I don't think there' any ESP training courses. I think it's just some online readings.   |

It is evident that participants unanimously reported not having attended any training courses on ESP & EMP pedagogy. Their dominant response was: "No courses, *I have not attended any courses on ESP & EMP pedagogy. I only read online articles, or they think that it comes from experience.*" The majority of GETs claimed that they hadn't attended any ESP courses but only two participants, P2, P9 believed it comes from experience when the teacher teaches such courses. Regarding the importance of undertaking ESP & EMP pedagogy courses before teaching EMP, participants unanimously agreed that: *'It is very important to attend such courses. All participants gave the same answer.'* Table 6 shows participant responses on the importance of attending training courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy before teaching EMP.

Table 6. Responses regarding the importance of attending ESP and EMP pedagogy courses

| P  | <i>ESP and EMP courses importance</i>   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Yes, it is very important to attend such courses  |
| 2  | Yes sure. It is essential nowadays to attend ESP pedagogy courses. I think all English teacher should attend.   |
| 3  | I think so- It is important for the English teacher to attend ESP courses. Absolutely yes we all should attend these courses  |
| 4  | In my point of view, it is important to be added in education college courses – very important  |
| 5  | Yes, it is very important to attend such pedagogy courses. It will benefit us and our students later  |
| 6  | Yes sure. It is crucial and important   |
| 7  | It is very important. I think all English teachers should study ESP courses   |
| 8  | Yes absolutely – very important courses and it should be mandatory for all who are interested in ESP courses.   |
| 9  | Yes, if there’s any ESP pedagogy courses, I will surely attend. Very important  |
| 10 | Yes, it is very important to attend such courses  |
| 11 | Yes of course- very important   |
| 12 | Yes, I think so- it is very important to attend such pedagogy courses   |
| 13 | Yes- I think so – It is very important according to my interest of ESP branches   |
| 14 | It is important for English teachers to attend pedagogy courses in ESP- very important  |
| 15 | Yes sure. Very important  |
| 16 | Yes of course - ESP pedagogy courses are important for all English teachers   |
| 17 | Yes, I think so- ESP pedagogy is very important to attend courses in  |
| 18 | Absolutely yes. It is very important to attend such courses. This will improve our teaching skills and strategies to teach ESP.   |
| 19 | Yes, sure- very important   |
| 20 | I think yes. It is very important to attend pedagogical courses in ESP for teachers and for the students as well.   |
| 21 | Very important – today is vital to attend these courses about the specialized language. While I feel confident in my general English teaching skills, I would greatly benefit from training on how to adapt my methods for teaching medical English effectively |

Table (6) shows that all participants agreed attending such courses is very important, or important, particularly, before teaching EMP in Medical Colleges. In summary, the results show that GETs had no prior knowledge and had not attended any training course in ESP and EMP pedagogy. It can also be identified that studying training courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy is regarded as very important for any new EMP teachers before joining medical universities to teach EMP.

Regarding the Semi-Structured Interview, the researchers presented the pedagogical needs for EMP teachers from the Ts and MP perspectives. MPs’ responses varied. MP2 stated that *new EMP teachers need to be familiar with the specific methodologies of ESP and EMP, suitable teaching methods for medical courses and the methodology for teaching medical terminology*. The statement highlighted that new EMP teachers, dedicated to teaching ESP and EMP, should study pedagogical course. Adopting a specific methodology of ESP enhanced the performance of the teachers and consequently improved the performance of students while also overcoming the teaching challenges. MP3 mentioned that *new EMP teachers should study how to design a course and curriculum, how to write the course objectives, how to achieve the course objectives, how to write good exam questions*. The statement threw some light on the need of new EMP teacher to study pedagogical course to prepare themselves before teaching medical English language in the medical colleges for medical students. Hence, MPs provided some suggestions: New EMP teachers should study ESP and EMP methodology; they have to be trained in teaching methods that are suitable for the medical field. They also need to study how to design a curriculum for English for specific purposes, the proper way to structure a lecturer or lesson, how to write course objectives and how to achieve these objectives. Figure (1) shows the answers.

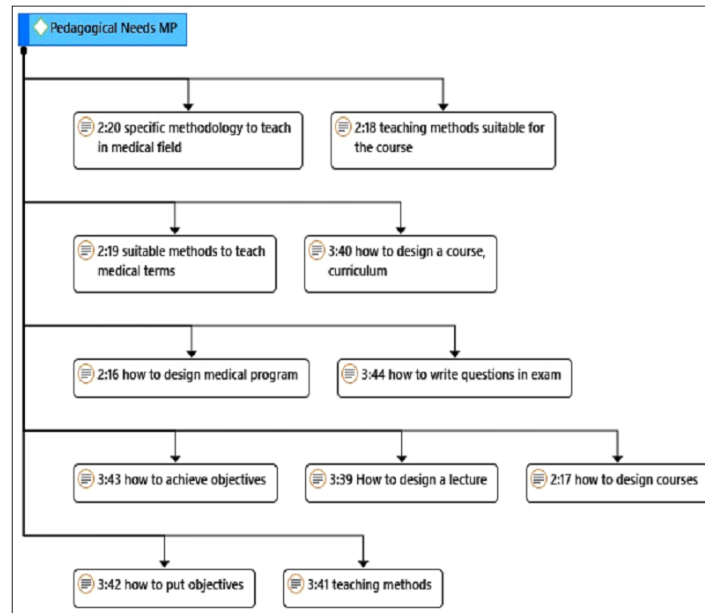


Figure 1. Pedagogical Needs (Medical Professors)

As for the pedagogical needs from TS perspective, Figure (2), T4 mentioned that *new EMP teachers must incorporate a task-based attitude TBL (task-based learning) and Problem-based learning (PBL) when teaching EMP. If EMP teachers are assigned a project, they should know how to design a course, and how to use medical scenarios in teaching medical students.* It seems from the pedagogical point of view, the participant focused on the teaching strategies that help in getting students engaged in the learning process. This response suggests that EMP teachers should study course design, as each ESP group has specific needs based on their specialty. T8 stated that *new EMP teachers should create a positive, attractive, warm environment for students, they should study methodology and principles of teaching regarding ESP, they should also study the methodology of teaching medical terminology.* This response focuses on the specific methodology of teaching ESP and EMP and it highlighted the importance of creating an attractive classroom environment. T5, T6, and T7 suggest that *new EMP teachers should study how to design a lesson, how to design a unit. They should have training in the ESP field, teaching methodology, and course design.* Just like MPs, Ts mentions similar pedagogical items that new EMP teachers need to be trained on before they start teaching medical English language to medical students.

Ts provided insight into the pedagogical needs of new EMP teachers. They suggested that new EMP teachers should adopt Task-Based Learning (TBL) to train in the use of English for specific fields. They should also learn how to create a positive and engaging learning environment for medical students, study the principles of ESP and EMP teaching methodology, and focus on course and syllabus design, as well as the use of medical scenarios in teaching. They should also be aware of the needs of learners and how to design a course based on needs.



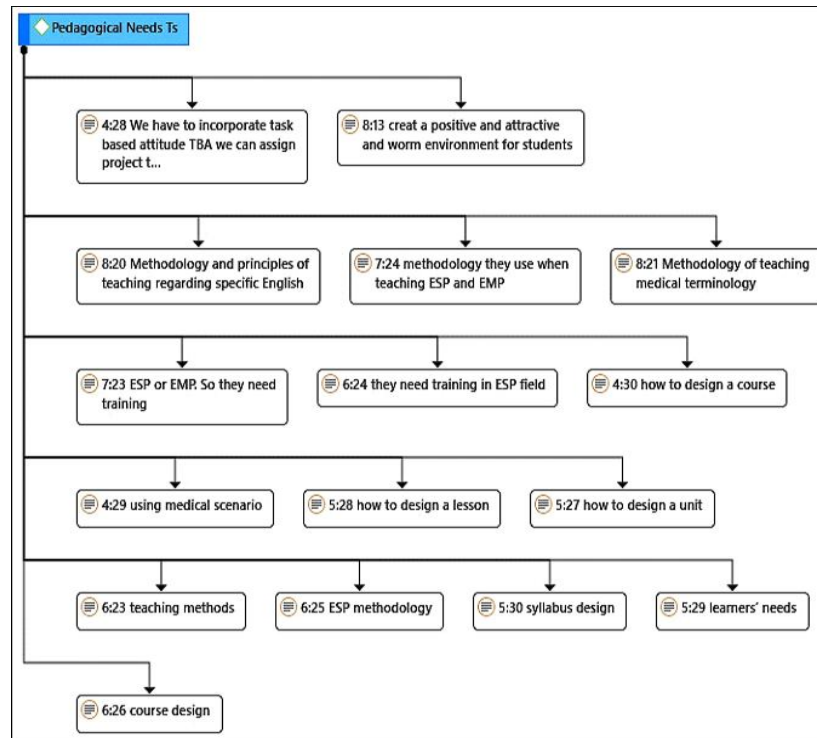


Figure 2. Pedagogical Needs (Ts)

With a review of answers of MPs and Ts, two codes emerged which are: *Curriculum* and *Instructions*. Both groups of participants agreed that new EMP teachers should have training courses on curriculum and Instructions on ESP and EMP. Figure 3 shows the summary of curriculum patterns proposed by MP and Ts.

**Code 1: Curriculum:** Figure 3 states the participants' answers regarding the curriculum. Participant 2 recommended studying how to design a course and how to design a medical program. Regarding participant 3, he stated that curriculum should include how to write the objectives, how to design a lecture, a course and a program. As for participant 4, he insisted on the importance of studying How to design a course. As for participant 5, she recommended studying syllabus design, learners' needs, how to design a unit and how to design a lesson. As for participant 6, he stated that it is important to study How to design a course.

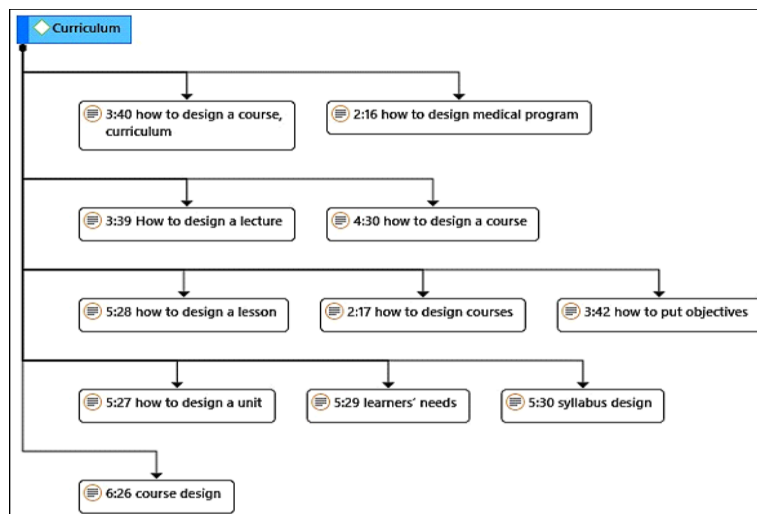


Figure 3. Curriculum

In curriculum training, there were related themes that emerged. They include syllabus design in ESP. As proposed by participant 5, EMP

teachers need to study syllabus design in ESP. He added that EMP teachers should study needs analysis of learners.

Additionally, participant 3 confirmed that EMP teachers should study designing medical programs for medical students. The second subtheme is how to design a course, lecture in ESP. As stated by participants 3, 4 and 5, EMP teachers need to study designing a course, a lesson and a lecture. The third subtheme is setting objectives of the course and needs analysis. As participant 3 mentioned, one of the pedagogical needs of EMP teachers is to study writing the objectives of the course. They should know how to set an objective for a lesson and a course.

Code 2: Instructions Participants’ answers regarding the instructions varied. As it is shown in the figure, participants 2 recommended that the instructions course should include teaching methods to teach medical terms in EMP or specific teaching method suitable to the ESP courses while participants 3 stated that the course should include teaching methods, writing objectives and writing exam questions. As for participant 4, he insisted that the instructions course should include how to use medical scenario in teaching. He added that we should incorporate task-based learning because it’s a common teaching strategy in the medical field. Additionally, participant 6 emphasized the need for training courses in ESP methodology and teaching methods, while participant 7 added that both ESP and EMP teaching methods should be included. Moreover, participant 8 suggested that we should include how to create a positive, attractive and warm environment for students, he added methodology and principle of teaching specific English in addition to methodology of teaching medical terminology.

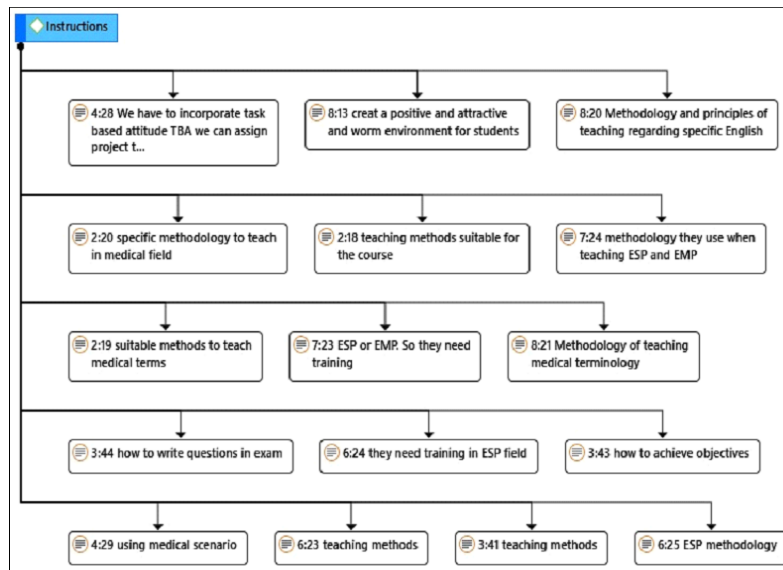


Figure 4. Instructions

Responses from MPs and Ts regarding training courses on instructions include themes such as teaching methodology in ESP. As stated by participants 7 and 8, EMP teachers need to study courses on ESP and EMP methodology. Additionally, participant 6 mentioned that EMP teachers should receive training in teaching methods specific to the ESP field. Another theme is using teaching strategies suited for medial English, such as task-based learning (TBL) and case scenario. Participant 2 stated that EMP teachers should study specific methodology to teach in the medical field, they should adopt teaching methods that suitable for medical courses. Another theme is that they should study a specific methodology of medical terms. Participant 8 said EMP teachers should study the methodology of teaching medical terminology. Additionally, participant 7 added that EMP teachers should study a specific methodology to teach medical terms. Figure 4 shows the summary of MP and Ts responses. Responses to Question 5 were coded and categorized under two groups of pedagogical needs which include 1: curriculum and 2: Instructions.

**3. Findings**

**a) Findings from the Survey: \_**

GETs responses revealed a consensus that all GETs are unfamiliar with ESP pedagogy and they don’t have any information about this field. Regarding ESP or EMP training courses, participants confirmed that they had not studied any related courses, and such courses were not available during their time at university. As for the importance of undertaking ESP and EMP pedagogy courses, they claimed that it is very important to study such courses for GETs before joining medical colleges to teach ESP and EMP. To sum it up, from the review of the results, it can be noticed that GETs had no knowledge or had not attended any training courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy. It can also be identified that studying training courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy is regarded as very important for any new EMP teachers before joining medical universities to teach EMP.

**b) Findings from the interviews are:**

Responses from Ts and MPs revealed that GETs need to study courses in ESP & EMP pedagogy. Accordingly, they recommended courses in curriculum and instructions. In **curriculum** training, they proposed to include ESP Syllabus design, needs analysis, how to design EMP courses, how to design a lecture, how to set ESP & EMP course objectives, and how to phrase the objectives properly. Regarding **instructions**, it was proposed that GETs should be trained in ESP teaching methodology and teaching strategies suited to the medical field, such as case scenarios and TBL.

#### 4. Discussion

It is worth mentioning that an online course for ESP teachers was recently launched by Constantinou (2021) at Cyprus university of technology to address the dire needs of English language training. The course aligns with the current research findings, as it introduces ESP pedagogy including lesson planning, students' needs analysis, setting objectives, learning outcomes and ESP characteristics. However, to answer the first research question (How familiar are GETs with the pedagogical practice in EMP? the survey questions were answered by GETs. All GETs confirmed that they had no knowledge about ESP and EMP, they had not attended any training courses in ESP or EMP pedagogy and all of them believed that it was very important for GETs to study training courses in ESP and EMP pedagogy before teaching EMP. Afterwards, based on their answers that showed GETs needed to study courses in ESP & EMP, the second research question was addressed to MP and EMP Ts (What are the pedagogical needs of GETs to be successful EMP teachers?). Both groups MP and EMP Ts proposed items to be included in the training courses as GETs needs. They recommended teaching GETs training courses in Curriculum and Instructions. Regarding **curriculum**, they recommended teaching them ESP syllabus design, needs analysis and how to prepare for a lecture and how to write a course and a lesson objective. In terms of **instruction**, it was proposed to teach GETs ESP teaching methodology, teaching strategies fit to medical field such as case scenario and TBL and they should adopt a teaching methodology for medical terminology.

This aligns with Elgindi & Hoque's (2022) when they stated that ESP teachers in the KSA face pedagogical challenges when teaching EMP. It is also in consistency with Bayram & Canaran (2020) when they agreed that most GETs did not have the passion for teaching ESP due to the lack of both content and pedagogical knowledge. Mulyadi et al (2020) reached the same conclusion when they claimed that the ESP. The study found out that a new EMP teacher has pedagogical needs concerning curriculum and instructions. It is also consistent with Blecher (2006), she claimed that modern ESP approaches recognize the importance of involving learners in the needs assessment process. ESP instructors are expected to take on multiple roles, such as needs assessors, syllabus designers, materials developers, and subject specialists. Regarding curriculum, a new EMP teacher should know how to design syllabus in ESP, how to design a course, lecture in ESP, how to set objectives of the course, and how to conduct a needs analysis. As for the findings about instructions, new EMP teachers should know: ESP teaching strategies such as TBL (Ramadhan et al., 2021); PBL (problem-based learning, student-centered teaching and teaching methodology in ESP such as group discussion and medical scenario. These results are in consistency with Hekmati et al (2021) and Hani & Hoque (2022) when they claimed that medical students are not convinced with the present EMP curricula, texts and the teaching and assessment methods. It comes also in the same line with Alsharief (2008) when she claimed: ESP teachers in KSA face challenges in teaching ESP as they lack the skill of teaching ESP and the knowledge of the ESP branch and the development of ESP courses. These findings match the online ESP developmental course by Constantinou (2021) such as needs analysis and lesson plan. Significantly, there is a correlation between the first question that proves the needs of GETs to study training courses in ESP & EMP and the second question that recommends these needs.

#### Findings:

All surveyed GETs reported having "no idea" or only a "general understanding" of ESP and EMP pedagogy. This highlights the need for targeted professional development programs. One medical professor stated, "Many GETs struggle with incorporating medical terminology and real-life scenarios into their lessons. This makes it difficult for students to connect the language learning to their future careers." All the experienced EMP teachers emphasized the importance of pedagogical training specific to ESP and EMP. This highlights the need for such training to be readily available. A participating GET commented, "While I feel confident in my general English teaching skills, I would greatly benefit from training on how to adapt my methods for teaching medical English effectively."

#### Overall, the findings suggest a critical need for:

- **Professional Development Programs:** Targeted training programs focusing on ESP and EMP pedagogy (curriculum and instruction) are essential to equip GETs with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver effective EMP instruction.
- **Curriculum Revision:** Teacher education programs should incorporate courses on ESP and EMP pedagogy to ensure future GETs are adequately prepared to teach specialized English courses.
- **Improved Needs Assessment:** Systematic needs assessments focused on learners' specific requirements and the challenges faced by GETs can inform the development of targeted training programs and curriculum revisions.

All GETs reported limited or no knowledge of ESP and EMP pedagogy, highlighting the need for targeted professional development programs. Medical professionals and experienced EMP teachers emphasized the need to equip GETs with specialized pedagogical skills for effective EMP curriculum and instruction. The findings suggest a strong correlation between the identified needs of GETs and the recommendations from medical professionals and experienced EMP teachers.

**Implications:**

These findings call for a multi-pronged approach to improve the quality of EMP instruction in Saudi Arabia:

- Develop and Implement Professional Development Programs: Targeted programs focusing on ESP and EMP pedagogy can equip GETs with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver effective EMP courses.
- Revise Teacher Education Curriculums: Integrating ESP and EMP pedagogy into teacher education programs can ensure future GETs are adequately prepared to teach specialized English courses.
- Conduct Regular Needs Assessments: Systematic assessments that consider both learner needs and GET challenges can inform the ongoing development of professional development programs and curriculum revisions.
- Further research could explore the effectiveness of specific professional development programs or curriculum revisions in improving the pedagogical practices of GETs teaching EMP. Furthermore, investigating the challenges faced by medical students learning EMP could offer valuable insights for further research.

By addressing these critical needs, decision makers in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia can improve the situation regarding EMP instructions., eventually empowering medical students with the necessary English language skills to succeed in their chosen field.

**5. Conclusion**

The current research explores the pedagogical needs of (GETs) to teach (EMP) in Saudi Arabia effectively. The findings, which emerged from interviews with medical professors, experienced EMP teachers, and a survey of 21 GETs, expose a significant gap between the assumed competence of GETs and their real readiness to teach EMP. The reason behind this gap is the lack of ESP or EMP courses in undergraduate English language teacher preparation programs in Saudi Arabia and the lack of on job training of the same field. Decision makers in Saudi Arabia should include ESP courses in their undergraduate programs that prepare English language teachers focusing on the pedagogy of the field. These courses should cover instruction, curriculum, and needs assessments to equip the GETs for effective EMP teaching resulting in high performance of instructors and students as well. Moreover, these professional development courses will help ESP teachers to overcome all challenges that might hinder their performance when teaching ESP or EMP. Furthermore, on job training on ESP and EMP pedagogy should be created to enhance the performance and teaching skills and instructions and curriculum design.

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**Authors' contributions**

Dr. Hani Mohamed Elgindi and Prof. Mohamed Shams Hoque were responsible for study design and revising. Ms. Sawsan Merghani was responsible for data collection. Ms. Maha Malik drafted the manuscript and Ms. Warqaa Alwazir revised it. All authors contributed equally to the study.

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