

VOLUME 8.ISSUE.6., 2020
ISSN:2455-0302
Impact Factor:3.980 (ICI)

**International Journal of ELT,
Linguistics and Comparative
Literature
(IJELC)**

A Peer Reviewed International Journal
doi.org/10.33329/elt.8.6

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Index

International Journal of ELT, Linguistics and Comparative Literature
(IJELC)

Volume 8 Issue 6.2020 (Nov-Dec Issue)

S.No	Article Details	Page No
1.	Testing Grammar in ESL/EFL Classroom Dr. J. JOHN LOVE JOY¹, ADIBOINA THIRUMALA DEVI² 1Assistant Professor of English, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli 620 002 2Lecturer in English, AlRayan Campus, Imam Abdurahman Bin Faisal University, Dammam, KSA. doi:10.33329/elt.8.6.1	1-4
2.	DEVELOPING INGRAINED CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM THROUGH CRITICAL LITERACY Dr. NOORA ABDUL KADER Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh doi:10.33329/elt.8.6.5	5-10
3.	USING TESTS TO REINFORCE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY WITH ARAB LEARNERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE Dr. MUSTAFA MASIHUDDIN SIDDIQUI Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shaqra University, Dawadmi, KSA doi:10.33329/elt.8.6.11	11-18
4.	USING EFFECTIVE IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO IMPACT E.S.P TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS IN BENIN Euphrasie, M. ADJAHOUINO¹, Juvénaie PATINVOH AGBAYAHOUN², Innocent Sourou KOUTCHADE³, Estelle BANCOLE-MINAFLINO⁴ 1,2,3,4Université d'Abomey-Calavi, République du BENIN. doi:10.33329/elt.8.6.19	19-36



USING EFFECTIVE IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO IMPACT E.S.P TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS IN BENIN

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Article Received: 15/11/2020

Accepted: 16/12/2020

Published online: 31/12/2020

doi: [10.33329/elt.8.6.19](https://doi.org/10.33329/elt.8.6.19)

ABSTRACT

Despite the numerous teaching/learning approaches witnessed by the educational system in Benin and the current implementation of the Competency- Based Approach, teachers of English in technical schools in Benin are still using the Objective-based approach which makes the teacher being the center of the teaching/learning process although previous studies suggested the Competency Based Approach as the most appropriate one for ESP teaching (Djelil, 2012; Bratanych and Vyshnevskaya, 2018). Besides, these teachers are not qualified for teaching ESP. This situation compromises learners' ability to use English as a tool for communication both in their daily lives and in their future professions. The present study aims not only to find out teachers' perceptions and practices of TESP but also to point out the scarcity of effective and efficient in-service training opportunities for ESP teachers in technical schools in Benin. It also intends to bring up the positive impact of well-organised in-service programs on teachers' performances. To reach those goals, questionnaires have been addressed to fifty (50) ESP teachers from whom ten (10) have been observed in class situation in nine technical schools. Two (02) English teaching advisers have been interviewed. The findings have revealed that teachers have a positive perception of TESP in theory but fail to match theory with practice. It has also been proven that there is an absence of qualified ESP teachers and inspectors added to a shortage of qualified ESP teaching advisers in Benin technical schools. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate teaching/learning materials and of adequate training in TESP has created a hindrance for students' performance in ESP classrooms. Thanks to the results of this research, a special attention can be granted to TESP in Benin, both in Teacher Training Colleges and in in-service teacher training programs as teachers' professional development fights complacency and works for the betterment of learners' output.

Keywords: TESP, TEFL, Teacher professional development, Competency-based approach, technical schools

Résumé

Malgré les multiples réformes qu'a connues le système éducatif béninois et la mise en œuvre de l'Approche par Compétence, les professeurs d'Anglais dans les établissements d'Enseignement Secondaire Technique continuent d'utiliser l'Approche par Objectif qui n'est pas appropriée à l'enseignement/apprentissage de l'Anglais pour des objectifs spécifiques. Par ailleurs, les professeurs d'Anglais dans les lycées et collèges



d'enseignement secondaire technique n'ont pas la qualification requise pour l'enseignement/apprentissage de l'Anglais pour des objectifs spécifiques. La présente étude vise non seulement à identifier la perception que les professeurs d'Anglais ont de l'Anglais par rapport aux objectifs spécifiques et la pratique qu'ils en font mais aussi à attirer l'attention sur la pénurie d'opportunités en formation continue efficace et efficiente en faveur des professeurs d'Anglais dans les établissements d'Enseignement Secondaire Technique. Cette étude a aussi pour objectif de prouver qu'une formation continue bien organisée a un impact positif sur la performance des enseignants. Pour atteindre ces objectifs, des questionnaires ont été envoyés à cinquante (50) professeurs d'Anglais desquels dix ont été observés en situation de classe dans neuf lycées techniques. Deux conseillers pédagogiques en Anglais ont été interviewés. Les résultats ont révélé que les professeurs d'Anglais ont une bonne perception de l'enseignement de l'Anglais pour des objectifs spécifiques seulement en théorie. Il a aussi été prouvé qu'il y a une absence de professeurs d'Anglais qualifiés et d'inspecteurs pour l'enseignement/apprentissage de l'Anglais dans les établissements d'enseignement secondaire technique en plus d'une pénurie de conseillers pédagogiques. En outre, le manque de matériels didactiques et de formation adéquate sont des obstacles pour la performance des apprenants. Grâce aux résultats de cette étude, une attention spéciale pourra être accordée à l'enseignement de l'Anglais pour des objectifs spécifiques tant dans les écoles normales supérieures que dans la planification des formations continues car le développement professionnel des enseignants est un instrument de lutte contre la complaisance et œuvre pour l'amélioration des résultats des apprenants.

Mots clés: Enseignement de l'Anglais à buts spécifiques; Enseignement de l'Anglais comme langue étrangère; Développement professionnel des enseignants, approche par compétence, collèges d'enseignement technique.

INTRODUCTION

For many years now, technical secondary schools learners have been learning English with the calamitous remark that they are unable to use the target language as a tool for communication. Indeed, ESP programs, as implemented in technical schools, are not appropriate to enable learners to acquire the needed communicative competences. In addition, ESP teachers have not only been implementing the Objective based approach in their ESP classes, but have also been usurping the title of professional teachers – ESP teachers have been translating professional contents into English – and sometimes make learners memorize some grammar rules and some concepts related to business or industrial English. Furthermore, almost all ESP teachers in Benin technical secondary schools are unqualified for TESP as they have neither received any specific pre-service training related to TESP nor have they been assisted in the form of in-service training activities so far. Such a situation is actually compromising learners' output in ESP classes and prevents them from using English fluently in their daily lives.

This research work aims to find out Benin ESP teachers' perceptions of TESP. It also intends to point out the absence of qualified ESP teachers, teacher trainers and to draw the authorities' attention on the importance of in-service programs on the one hand, and to prove, on the other hand, that well-organized in-service training activities for ESP teachers, far from solving all the problems of education in technical schools, can be used to equip ESP teachers with adequate tools for efficient and successful teaching/learning/evaluation practices. To reach those goals, the study has considered the following questions:

1. How do Beninese ESP teachers perceive TESP?
2. What difficulties do ESP teachers face in their profession in technical schools in Benin



3. What impacts do such difficulties have on learners' achievement?
4. How can professional development help the ESP teachers overcome their difficulties from their own perspective?

This research is worth undertaking with regard to the innovations it can bring to ESP teaching and learning practices in technical schools in Benin. It can help alter Beninese English teachers' perceptions of TESP. In that perspective, it can provide ESP teachers with a clearer understanding of what ESP teaching is, how it should be taught and their roles in ESP classes. Furthermore, the study can prompt teachers to engage in professional development activities in the framework of well-organised in-service training programs.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Historical Survey on ESP

The early origins of ESP extend as far back as the end of the Second World War; a moment during which people and mainly non-native speakers saw English as a Lingua Franca since they had to study in English speaking countries for various purposes (Teodorescu, 2010). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) sustain that three major reasons gave birth and emergence to ESP: demands for English to suit particular needs; development in the field of Linguistics and educational psychology. Robinson (1991) believes that ESP emerged and developed owing to the need to use the language in specialized contexts. According to Ramirez (2015: 383),

ESP has existed as a separate branch of language teaching for around forty (40) years. At the beginning, it focused upon the specific lexicon of technical and scientific texts, but it soon changed its emphasis towards the rhetorical uses of language in precise discourses. Next, the four skills, which were neglected by all previous methods, were assessed through the introduction of needs analysis studies.

As for the types of ESP, David Carver (1983) classifies ESP into three categories: English as a restricted language, English for academic and occupational purposes and English with specific topics. But Hutchinson and Waters (1987) believe that the term *English for academic and occupational purposes* (EAP and EOP) is nothing else than the sub branches of ESP. Nevertheless, they think that there isn't any sharp difference between EOP and EAP, since "people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to a job" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:16). Whatever the terms, English as a restricted language or English with specific topics, in my opinion, both designate the different terminologies used to name ESP, not the types of ESP. In fact, if the restricted repertoire is dependent on the specialized aim of the learner to learn the language, then the content will be dependent on the specialized aim. Whether the language is learnt for present or future needs, the content will vary from one profession or purpose of learning to another. The specific topic being dealt with each time will be restricted to the language repertoire needed by the learner. Consequently, the different types of ESP widely accepted nowadays in ESP teaching area, whatever the diversity of classifications made by Carver, Hutchinson and Waters and other authors such as Robinson and Jordan, are the two categories of EAP and EOP in ESP.

Despite the fact that many scholars advocate that ESP stems from ELT, it is not as such that it is similar to English for General Purposes (EGP) since ESP courses are goal-oriented, skill and research-based where data gathered during the needs assessment are used to design syllabi, courses and to implement activities (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hyland, 2006; Robinson, 1991). Therefore, it is with some reasonable justifications that Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) describes the true ESP teacher or ESP practitioner (Swales, 1988) as needing to

International Journal of ELT, Linguistics and Comparative Literature*(Old Title-Journal of ELT & Poetry)*<http://journalofelt.kypublications.com>**Vol.8.Issue.6. 2020(Nov-Dec)****ISSN:2455-0302**

perform five different roles namely the role of a language teacher, collaborator, course designer and materials provider, researcher and evaluator. Kennedy & Bolitho (1984) point out that the ESP practitioner is called to be conducting needs analysis with or without support and to design a syllabus, to write courses and materials based on the data collected. Regarding those tremendous roles of the ESP teacher, it is compulsory for him/her to take part in ongoing in-service training programs to effectively and efficiently perform his/her different roles.

1.2 Some Previous Studies Related to In-service Training to Teachers

Oliva (1993) defines the term in-service education as a program of organized activities of both a group and individual nature planned and carried out to promote the personal and professional growth of staff members, in this case teachers. *“Professional development is the strategy schools and school districts use to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career”* (Hirsh, 2010; quoted in Mizell, 2010:1). Teacher professional development is of paramount importance as teachers’ quality impacts more on learners’ performance than any other factor. Kampen (2019) reveals that teacher professional development is important because it affects students’ learning, encourages the success of new teachers and promotes a growth mindset. Actually, some of the factors characterizing education in schools (class size, expenditure per pupil) do not have demonstrable effects on student performance while teacher quality (as measured by skills, knowledge and qualifications) plays a decisive role in students’ progress (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Hanushek, 2003; Varga, 2007; quoted in Kárpáti, 2009). Furthermore, Harwell (2003) notices that billions of dollars invested for the restructuring of schools and programs and the development of students’ curricula and teaching materials had very little impact on students’ performance. She believes that such a failure is due to the fact that *“We cannot expect students to change what they do if we are content for teachers to continue doing what they have always done”* (Harwell, 2003:2). Mizell (2010:3) points out that *“professional development is the only strategy school systems have to strengthen educators’ performance levels. Professional development is also the only way educators can learn so that they are able to better their performance and raise student achievement”*.

Nonetheless, most teachers fail to value in-service programs for different reasons. Oliva (1993) sustains that teachers’ exclusion from the process of in-service programs, the absence of practical helps with the day-to-day problems of instruction in in-service training activities explain teachers’ negative attitude towards such activities. Teachers think that what is presented to them during professional development does not meet their present needs or contradict their belief. Consequently, they usually go back to what they had already been doing. As a matter of fact, professional development must give the opportunity to participants to learn new classroom practices in the contexts within which such practices will be used (Harwell, 2003).

In fact, for professional development to be effective, it should be based on curricular and instructional strategies that have a high probability of affecting student learning – and, just as important, students’ ability to learn (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Hunzicker (2010) asserts that effective professional development must be supportive, job-embedded, instrumentally-focused, collaborative and on-going. Kampen (2019) also notes that effective professional development must be specific, on-going, embedded into the teaching process. It must also get teachers invested and personalize teacher learning with a professional development plan. *“Effective professional development is on-going, includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they will use with their students, and encourage the development of teachers’ learning communities”* (OECD, 2005). Professional development can be in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences, panels and symposiums.



2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

2.1 Participants

In this survey, a subset of 50 ESP teachers (from whom forty teachers actively participated in the study) has been addressed in nine (9) public technical schools in Benin. Those technical schools represent five (05) departments. Two (02) ESP teaching advisers who are used to conducting in-service training activities also participated in this study.

2.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The gathering of information from teachers and teacher trainers has been done by means of questionnaires, class observations and interviews. The teachers' questionnaire comprises four main parts. The first part concerns the background characteristics of ESP teachers and is made up of four (04) questions. The second part of the questionnaire consists of six essential points and deals with teachers' perception of TESP. The second-to-last part is made up of two questions relating to the challenges ESP teachers have to address and the difficulties they have to overcome in their teaching practices. The impacts that such difficulties have on their learners' performance are also addressed. The last section of this questionnaire is made up of ten essential questions and deals with the organisation of in-service training activities for ESP teachers. Ten (10) of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire have been observed in classroom situation basing on the following criteria: teacher's attitudes, learners' reactions, activities implemented and materials used.

Contrary to ESP teachers, two educational advisers have been interviewed about their implications in the organization and implementation of in-service training activities. Thanks to their responses, useful information about the effectiveness and efficiency of in-service programs for ESP teachers has been gathered.

2.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedure

To collect the different data, a visit was paid to teachers in nine technical schools where some teachers filled in the questionnaires right away. Other questionnaires were sent back to the research team some weeks later after they had been filled in during weekly meetings. All the data gathered were edited for the consistency of the responses. Frequencies were worked out and percentages were cross-tabulated. From the beginning to the end of the study, tables and figures are used to illustrate the data where appropriate.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Teachers' Perception of TESP

Results gathered thanks to the teachers' questionnaire makes it clear that the majority of the respondents; that is 29 of the respondents (72.5%) define TESP as teaching English to meet learners' communicative needs whereas seven of them (17.5%) view TESP as teaching of the profession subjects in English and four(10%) of the respondents perceive TESP as teaching of grammar and technical vocabulary in isolation.

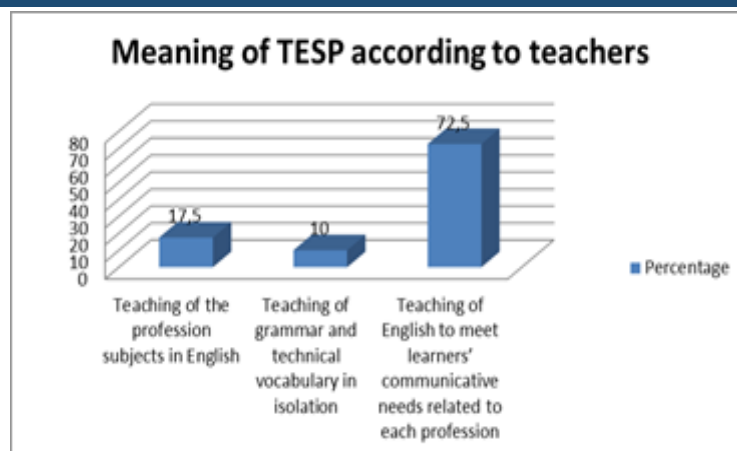


Figure 1: Meaning of TESP according to teachers.

In addition, the same instrument brought to light (as disclosed in table1) that three-quarters (3/4) of the respondents think that they are involved in Teaching English for Occupational Purposes while quarter (1/4) of the respondents believe that they are involved in Teaching English for Academic Purposes. If English for Occupational Purposes is needed by people who are working and need English to perform a task related to their job, then the majority of the respondent teachers are mistaking the field of ESP they get involved in and this misunderstanding may have a negative impact on their teaching practices.

Table 1: The branch of ESP teachers get involved in

The branch of ESP teachers get involved in	Frequency	Percentage
English for Academic Purposes	10	25
English for Occupational Purposes	30	75
TOTAL	40	100

Moreover, half of the participants assume that being an ESP teacher means that one is asked to be playing challenging extra roles. Among those roles, ten (10) of the respondents recognize that they play both the role of course designer/material provider and the one of an evaluator. At the same time, five of those respondents reveal that they play the role of collaborator while five others play the role of a researcher.

3.1.2 ESP Teachers' Challenges and Difficulties

One of the most important finding of the teachers' questionnaire related to the second research question is that none of English teachers who are involved in teaching ESP in technical schools in Benin is qualified for TESP. Actually, eighteen (18) respondents composed of fourteen (14) holders of BAPES and four (04) holders of CAPES with a percentage of 45% have a professional qualification for EFL teaching. Fifty-five per cent (55%) of the participants; that is twenty-two (22) of the teachers have an academic qualification. Those results as displayed in Figure (2) prove that ESP teachers in Benin resemble to general practitioners to whom it is asked to remove a decayed tooth of a patient.

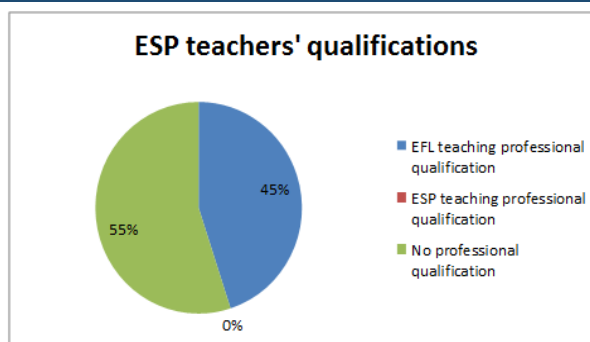


Figure 2: ESP Teachers' Qualifications

Another finding from teachers' questionnaire as pointed out in Figure (3) makes it clear that about fifteen (15) respondents with thirty eight point forty six per cent (38.46%) find it difficult to teach ESP for the lack of teaching/learning/evaluation materials, whereas almost nine (9) of them with a percentage of twenty three point eight per cent (23.08%) think that their difficulties in TESP lie in learners' misbehavior. At the same time, another twenty three point eight per cent (23.08%) link their difficulties to the lack of training. Seven point sixty-nine per cent (07.69%) of teachers' challenge in TESP is related to the ignorance of topics to be taught. Let's note that those respondents are exclusively teachers with at least five years of TESP. Finally, seven point sixty-nine percent (07.69%) think that the lack of incentives is their main challenge in TESP. The above results reveal that ESP teachers are going through enormous difficulties in ESP teaching. Moreover, teachers with less than ten years of experience in TESP are even ignorant of the topics to be taught. This means that those teachers lack the academic dimension of teaching; one of the most important qualities of a proficient teacher.

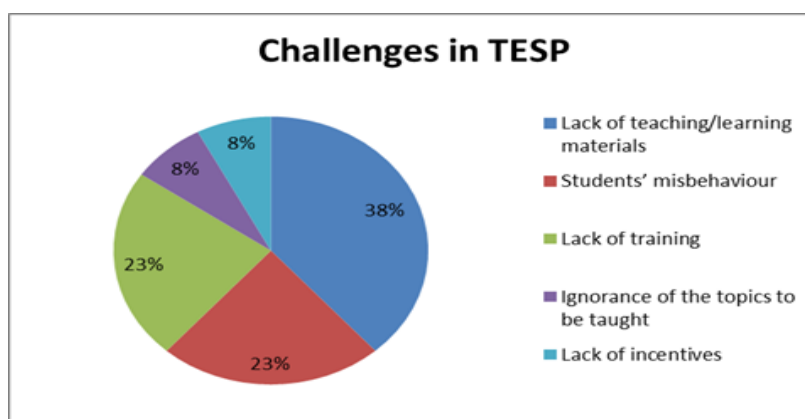


Figure 3: ESP Teachers' Challenges

3.1.3 Impacts of Teachers' Difficulties on Learners' Performance

As for the third research question, two research instruments, namely the teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation checklist have been used to collect data. This combination of instruments helps to cross-check results of one instrument by another one.

Hence, the teachers' questionnaire makes known as illustrated by Figure 4 that thirteen teachers (that is about 32% of the respondents) think that their difficulties negatively impact their learners' output while eleven (about 27%) of the respondents recognized that learners' difficulty to master language functions is



caused by the different problems they are facing in TESP. Moreover, another eleven (27%) of the respondents reported that learners' hindrances in developing language skills are due to teachers' predicaments. Finally, five (about 14%) of the research sample pointed out that learners' failure to achieve learning objectives is a consequence of the different problems teachers are facing in TESP. Whatever the impact, all the respondents admitted that the different quandaries they find themselves in teaching ESP are actually affecting their learners in the acquisition of the necessary language components needed in communication.

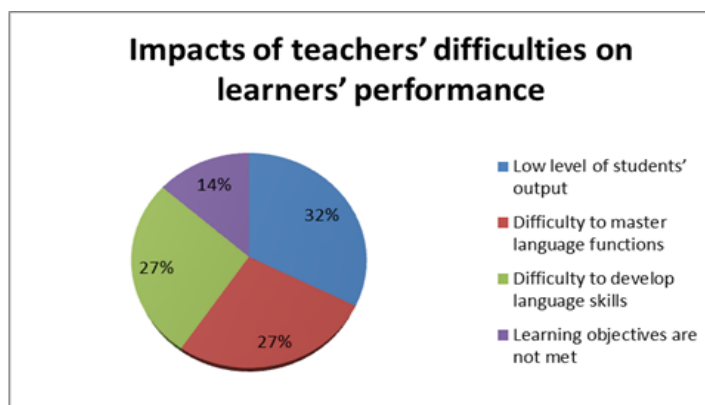


Figure 4: Impacts of teachers' difficulties on learners' performance

Moreover, the second research instrument revealed that only two of the ten teachers observed in classroom situation showed knowledge and understanding and have effectively planned and achieved clear objectives. They also used teaching methods and classroom management strategies that enabled all students to learn effectively. Additionally, they set activities which were mostly based on communicative tasks and in adequacy with the lesson's objectives. Methods and visual aids used were appropriate to each type of activity and materials used enabled learners to practice and develop language skills. Consequently, learners have proven their understanding of materials and worked in an active, collaborative and cooperative learning atmosphere.

In the eight remaining classes, students were passive learners who just listened to explanations about the different concepts of business English given by the teacher. Only reading activities were performed by the students with grammar exercises and vocabulary was taught in isolation. The teacher centred method was used with teacher talking time (TTT) higher than student talking time (STT). Students did not have any opportunity to practise the target language. Some students (especially in secretarial classes) were sleeping.

3.1.4 In-service Training to ESP Teachers

Data collection related to the last research question has been done using teachers' questionnaire and ESP teaching advisers' structured interview. Results from teachers' questionnaire as disclosed in Figure (5) pointed out that only nineteen respondents take part in in-service training mostly in the form of weekly workshops (18respondents). They simultaneously participate in meetings, conferences, class visits but termly or yearly. The weekly workshops are usually related to classroom management and lesson planning. Only one respondent out of the nineteen ones who participate in in-service activities make a self-professional development in reading ELT or ESP journals. None of the respondents has made a trip as a medium of professional development.

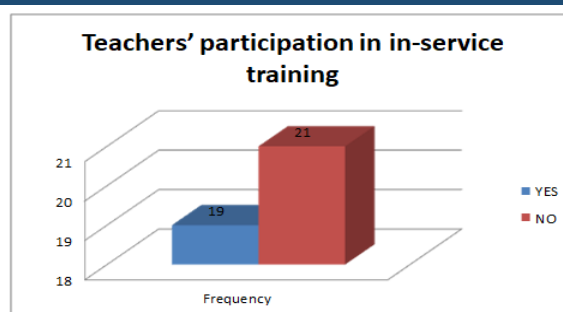


Figure 5: Teachers' participation in in-service training

If twelve of the respondents admit that those training activities positively impact their learners' as their teaching strategies have been improved, the seven (7) others who take part in those activities believe that they gain nothing from those sections (see table 2). Some of the participants do not find the existing training provisions as sufficient enough to build up an efficient ESP teacher for various reasons (see table3). All forty (40) participants revealed that the failure of authorities to well organize existing training provision, the redundancy in topics, the lack of appropriate training materials, the lack of professional consciousness, the negative attitude of some teacher trainers and the fact that teachers' expectations are not always met during those training sections explain the absenteeism and negative attitudes of some ESP teachers towards in-service programs (see table4).

Table 2: Impacts of in-service training activities on the teaching/ learning /evaluation process

Impacts of in-service training activities on the teaching/learning/evaluation process	Frequency	Percentage
My students have become more interested as my teaching strategies have been improved	12	63.16
No impact because nothing has changed	2	10.53
It is just a formality	5	26.31
TOTAL	19	100

Table 3: Reasons why existing training provision is sufficient or not to build up a proficient teacher

	Reasons why existing training provision is sufficient or not to build up a proficient teacher	Frequency	Percentage
Existing training are not sufficient	Lack of qualified trainers	4	10
	Teacher professional development and efficiency is dependent on regular and continuous training	7	17.5
	Existing training activities (only workshops and class visits) are not relevant and are on the same topics: lesson planning and classroom management	17	42.5
	Existing training activities are not about TESP	8	20
Existing training are sufficient	Trainers are doing their best to satisfy teachers	3	7.5
	Professional development should be individual	1	2.5
TOTAL		40	100



Table 4: Reasons for teachers' absenteeism and negative attitudes towards existing training provision

Reasons for teachers' absenteeism and negative attitudes toward the existing training provision	Frequency	Percentage
Authorities fail to well organize in-service training activities	3	7.5
Teachers' expectations are not met as trainers fail to deliver what they have on their handouts and they don't succeed in bringing all the required information	9	22.5
Redundant topics	9	22.5
Lack of appropriate materials	4	10
Absentee teachers don't worry about any penalty	2	5
Lack of motivation	3	7.5
Inappropriate period	4	10
No calling for teaching hence negligence and carelessness	2	5
Lack of professional consciousness	2	5
Negative attitude of some teacher trainers	2	5
TOTAL	40	100

The structured interviews with the two teaching advisers revealed that both have been involved in in-service training activities for at least five years. Since then, they have been facing numerous problems. In fact, the reduced number of advisers makes it quite difficult to reach all the technical schools (most of which are private schools) so as to visit all ESP teachers owing to the distances. Once they succeed in reaching some schools, it happens that some teachers are reluctant to receive them. Moreover, advisers noticed that teachers' practices are different from the content of the syllabus and even from the required teaching/learning method. Unfortunately, teachers are obstinate enough to improve their teaching/learning/evaluation practices when advisers return for class visits. Another challenge TESP advisers have to face is the lack of appropriate documents not only for their own lesson planning and the designing of evaluation papers but also for training activities related to TESP. In addition, there is no inspector for TESP and advisers have to work with inspectors of general secondary schools who sometimes do not master the contents of TESP. To overcome such difficulties, advisers tried their best to sensitize teachers regularly and encourage them to attend periodic workshops organised on their behalf.

As for in-service training organisation, both advisers said that in-service training activities are regularly organised on behalf of ESP teachers in the form of class visits and termly workshops. The topics of those workshops are chosen on the basis of teachers' shortcomings listed during class visits. Those workshops are often about lesson planning, classroom management and the report of an evaluation. Frequent evaluations of those in-service training are done in the form of class visits but sometimes, advisers are not satisfied with the results they get from those evaluations since teachers do not always succeed in applying new strategies they have been taught during workshops.

Advisers think that some part-time teachers are reluctant to participate in in-service training activities not only because they are not paid for such activities but also if they attend such workshops which are held on Wednesdays, they will lose a huge amount of their remunerations as they are paid on the basis of what they have done. Advisers think that it would be of great help if authorities assist educational advisers in



documentations and logistics so that they can vary types of in-service training and succeed in visiting all teachers who are under their responsibilities. Besides, they would appreciate if ESP teachers are trained for TESP and are specialised for each branch of technical education.

To improve the existing range of in-service programs so that they effectively and efficiently help ESP teachers, participants suggest that authorities train ESP teachers in TESP; recruit teaching advisers and inspectors for TESP; use teachers' weaknesses discovered during class visits and inspections as a tool to improve existing training provision; provide trainers and teachers with appropriate teaching/learning materials; write syllabus to match all technical subjects and make sure there are teacher's guide as well as student's book for each technical branch; gather teachers' needs before training and match those needs with training contents; diversify types of training activities. Finally, participants believe that teachers must be sensitized and all actors in education on the usefulness of teachers' professional development. In the light of the findings, some crucial points need commenting on.

3.2 Discussion of the findings

Basing on figure 1, it can be deduced that the majority of the participants' answers are fully compatible with the definition of previous studies in the field of TESP as assumed by Ramirez (2015). Unfortunately, their theoretical approach of TESP seems not to be in adequacy with their teaching practices. Actually, discussion with some educational advisers and the findings of classroom observations reveal that some of the respondent teachers consider the language as a subject, meaning that vocabulary items are taught without contextualization; students are asked to learn structures and some definitions by heart and ESP teachers sometimes usurp the title of professional teachers although ESP students should normally learn to acquire professional skills to perform job-related functions, meaning that ESP programs focus on teaching English in an integrated manner not in isolation. The findings from the three research instruments shed light on the urgency of specific training devoted to ESP teachers.

Besides, ESP teachers are facing numerous problems which are having disquieting impacts on learners' performance since learning objectives are not met as learners have difficulty to master language functions and to develop language skills as disclosed by figure 4. Certainly "*there is no more complicated, enervating or frustrating job in the world than teaching*" (Champagne 1980: 401). But there are peculiarities in TESP that make the job a little more challenging than EFL teaching. While it is true that based on the functions the teacher performs in different activities, Harmer (1983) defined the teacher's roles as controller, assessor, organizer, prompter, participant and resource-provider; notwithstanding it is equally true that more other important roles distinguish the ESP teacher from the GE teacher. That's why Harmer (2003) believed that the ESP practitioner has more than one role. In fact, she/ he is a course designer and material developer, controller, organizer, assessor, prompter and researcher. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claimed that being an ESP teacher requires more than being only a language provider. An ESP teacher has got several roles to play in addition to teaching. Dudley-Evans and Johns (1998:121) maintained that "*The key stages in ESP are needs analysis, course (and syllabus) design, materials selection (and production), teaching and learning, and evaluation.*" ESP course design is the product of a dynamic interaction between these elements which "*... are not separated, linearly-related activities, rather, they represent phases which overlap and are interdependent*". The authors illustrated the theory and the reality of the stages in ESP process through these cyclical representations (qtd in Lamri, 2016)

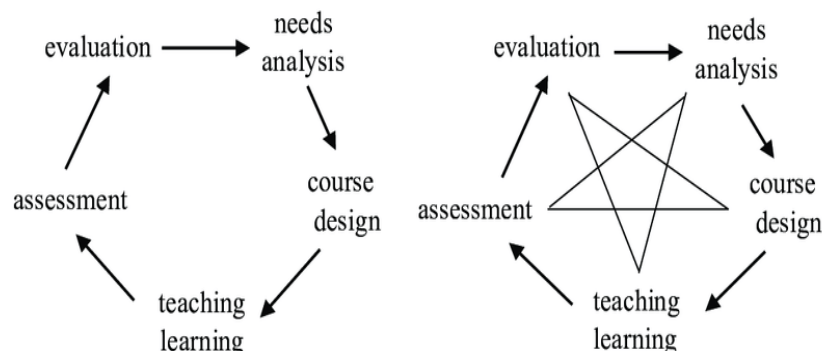


Figure 6: Stages in ESP process

Source: An introduction to English for Specific Purposes (Lamri, 2016)

Hence, being an effective ESP practitioner demands from English teachers the capabilities to implement successfully those stages which influence one another with the inevitable stage of needs analysis during which the ESP practitioner has to collaborate with specialist teachers, professionals and why not learners themselves. The success of this first stage enables the ESP practitioner to bring in the ESP class authentic materials thanks to which learners can build up compulsory communicative skills related to each of their professions. The ability to be performing those stages requires from the ESP teacher special skills that can be acquired only through ongoing training and more experiences in the field.

Unfortunately, none of the respondent teachers has gone through a specific training related to ESP teaching (figure1, p.5). In addition, the fewer professional development opportunities for the English language teachers do not enable ESP teachers to grow as no thorough research, needs assessment and needs analysis are previously done to identify teachers' needs before in-service programmes. It is also found that individual talents, weaknesses and skills are not identified and catered for in the programs. Furthermore redundant topics which are not always relevant are dealt with during workshops, the only type of in-service training implemented so far. Such a repetition in topics and the use of only one type of in-service training demotivate teachers and leads to their absenteeism as shown by table4 (p.10). Tables 2 and 3 have proven that the existing in-service training provisions are not sufficient enough to build up an efficient ESP teacher for varied reasons since only a few respondents find those training activities as positively impacting their teaching/practices. In fact, for professional development to be effective, it should allow teachers to acquire and develop the necessary skills and knowledge needed to meet learners' learning difficulties.

Professional development should normally focus on identified gaps in learners' achievement (Harwell, 2003). In the context of professional development for ESP teachers in technical schools in Benin, in-service training should address students' difficulties to develop language skills, vocabulary and functions. Professional development for ESP teachers should be based on teachers' difficulty to apply their roles as ESP teachers in needs analysis, course designing and material providing. In-service programs must strengthen teachers' ability not only to collaborate with specialists and subject teachers but also to get involved in constant research. For in-service programs to be effective, they should not be theoretical but practical, innovative and creative and conducted by professionals with classroom experiences that are relevant for their students and can be used right away and for a long time.



Added to all the above conditions, in-service programs will effectively and efficiently help teachers improve their performance if teachers' suggestions are taken into account; if they have a voice and choice in the topics and if such in-service programs are organized in a way that allows teachers to collaborate and speak honestly during needs surveys. Nevertheless once needs surveys are conducted, they must be followed by a thorough analysis by in-service training organizers because not always what teachers think is their needs is actually what they really need. Class observations' results should then be considered while planning for in-service programs.

CONCLUSION

As this study probes into the topic of "*Using effective in-service training to impact E.S.P teachers' performance in technical schools in Benin*", it aims at exploring some of the determinants that impact TESP in technical schools in Benin and the use of effective and efficient in-service training to improve teachers' performance.

To reach that goal, data have been collected in order to answer the four following research questions:

1. How do Beninese ESP teachers perceive TESP?
2. What difficulties do ESP teachers face in their profession in technical schools in Benin
3. What impacts do such difficulties have on learners' achievement?
4. How can professional development help the ESP teachers overcome their difficulties from their own perspective?

The findings of this study have mainly pointed out the following:

- teachers have an appropriate perception of TESP in theory but they fail to match theory with their daily teaching/learning/evaluation practices in the ESP classroom;
- there is not only a shortage of qualified ESP educational advisers and an absence of TESP inspectors in technical schools in Benin but also a high rate of unqualified ESP teachers;
- ESP teachers are facing daunting problems which are creating a hindrance for students' performance in the ESP classroom. In addition,
- in-service training activities only focus on workshops and do not take into account teachers' daily needs in the ESP classroom. As a consequence, teachers show a negative attitude towards such in-service programs. To instil in teachers a willingness to attend in-service activities, they must have a say in those in-service programs mainly during the planning step. In-service programs should help teachers with their daily teaching practices.

The analysis of the ESP teaching/learning conditions have proved that much remains to be done. In fact, teachers in general and ESP teachers in particular are facing so many problems which stall the enhancement of learners' performance. Unfortunately, no specific training is organised to help teachers. To meet teachers' needs and indirectly learners' achievement, it is recommended that the government urgently recruit and train TESP inspectors, educational advisers and teachers. In addition, in-service training to ESP teachers must emphasize what TESP is and the different roles ESP teachers should play. Training should also emphasize various topics with a variety of in-service programmes. Those topics ought to be chosen after thorough research and analysis of teachers' needs.



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Appendix No.1: QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS

Dear colleague, we would like to collect data in the framework of our research work the title of which is: **“Using effective in-service training to impact ESP teachers’ performance in technical schools in Benin”**.

We would be grateful if you could fill in this questionnaire as clearly and objectively as possible so as to help us in this research. In advance, thank you.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

- 1- Which group of ESP teacher do you belong to?
 - a) Civil Servant Teacher (APE)
 - b) Non- permanent government hired Teacher (Agent Contractuel de l’Etat)
 - c) Part-time school hired Teacher (Contractuel Local/Vacataire)
- 2- What is your academic and professional qualifications?

BAC DUEL Licence Maîtrise

BAPES CAPES Master Doctorat
- 3- Did you receive any pre-service training before your first contact with learners?

Yes No
- 4- How long have you been teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP)?

Less than 5 years 10-15 years 20-25 years

5-10 years 15-20 years Above 25 years
- 5- Did you receive any specific training before you began teaching ESP?

Yes No

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF TESP**

6- What is Teaching English for Specific Purposes (TESP)?

- a) Teaching of the profession subjects in English
 b) Teaching of grammar and technical vocabulary in isolation
 c) Teaching of English to meet learners' communicative needs related to each profession

7- English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is composed of two branches: which one are you involved in?

- a) English for Academic Purposes
 b) English for Occupational Purposes

8- In addition to the roles of a General English teacher, have you been compelled to play any other role in TESP?

Yes No

9- If yes, which one?

- Course designer Material provider Collaborator
 Researcher Evaluator

10- Is it easy to apply those roles?

Yes No

ESP TEACHERS' CHALLENGES

11- What difficulties have you been encountering as an ESP teacher?

- a) Lack of teaching/learning materials d) Students' misbehaviour
 b) Incomprehension of the topics to be taught e) Lack of training
 c) Lack of incentives f) Other difficulties (mention them)

12- What impact do such difficulties have on your learners' performance?

- a) Low level of students' output c) Difficulty to develop the language skills
 b) Difficulty to master the language functions d) Learning objectives are not met
 e) Others

IN-SERVICE TRAINING TO ESP TEACHERS

13- Have you been involved in any in-service training so far?

Yes No

14- If yes, how often?

- a) Weekly b) Monthly c) Termly d) Yearly

15- What sort of training do you often take part in?

- a) Workshop c) Conference e) Class Visit
 b) Meeting d) Trip f) Through ELT or ESP Journals

16- What was the content of these training activities?

17- What impact do such training activities have on your teaching/learning/evaluation process?

- a) My students have become more interested as my teaching strategies have improved
 b) No impact because nothing has changed c) It is just a formality

18- Have you expressed your needs before the planning of the training activities?

Yes No

19- If no, what impact does this shortcoming have on the effectiveness of the training?



20- Do you think that the existing training activities are sufficient enough to build up a good and efficient ESP teacher?

Yes No

21- Why or why not?

22- How can you explain the absenteeism and negative attitudes of some teachers toward the existing training provision?

23- Make suggestions that could help the existing training provision foster ESP teachers' professional development.

APPENDIX N° 2: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TO TEACHER TRAINERS

1. What kind of teacher trainer are you?
2. Which department are you responsible for?
3. How long have you been involved in in-service training organisations and how are they organised?
4. Since then, what have been teachers' difficulties and weaknesses?
5. How do you help teachers to overcome those difficulties?
6. What kinds of training activities have been organized on behalf of ESP teachers?
7. How are topics chosen?
8. What is the content of trainings activities?
9. Do you evaluate the effectiveness of those training on teachers' practices once trainings are ending?
10. If yes, how?
11. Are you satisfied with the result you've got from those evaluations?
12. Why or why not?
13. In your opinion, why are some teachers reluctant to participate in in-service training activities?



APPENDIX N° 3: Classroom Observation Checklist

General Information:				
Teacher's name:				
Observer's name:				
School:		Date:		Observation No:
Respond to each statement using the following scale				
1=Not observed 2=More emphasis recommended 3=Accomplished very well				
Statements	Response1	Response2	Response3	Comments or any other observations
I-Teacher's attitudes The teacher plans effectively and sets clear objectives that are understood The teacher shows knowledge and understanding Teaching methods used enable all students to learn effectively Students are well managed and high standard of behaviour are insisted upon Learners' work is assessed thoroughly The teacher talks less than learners during activities Homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend learning				
II-Learners' reactions Learners responded to the teacher's questions appropriately They have a good mastery of the target language Learners talk more than the teacher during activities They have understood the materials given to them They worked individually as asked by the teacher They assisted each other during group work They have shown an active, collaborative and cooperative learning atmosphere				
III-Activities and Materials Activities were in adequacy with the lesson's objectives Activities were mostly based on communicative tasks Methods and visual aids used were appropriate to each type of activity Materials used enabled learners to practice and develop language skills				

Post- observation interview schedule

- What were the teacher's major strengths as demonstrated in the course that will contribute to effective student learning?
- What were the teacher's major weaknesses that need improvement?
- Are there any strategies or resources that would be recommended to enhance the design of this course?