



## TEACHING ENGLISH FOR MEDICINE AS AN APPROACH APPLIED TO LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN THE MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS

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**Abstract :** *The English language, due to its role in the world today, has become the cornerstone of higher education development. One's ability to speak specific English to his domain is a good asset required by job market and scientific research. The present study sought to point out the difficulties and challenges to ESP teaching learning at medical schools. To that perspective, 150 respondents split into 100 medical learners, 20 ESP teachers and 30 healthcare professionals have been sampled from Medico – Social Training School (EFMS) of Parakou to participate in the survey. Data have been collected through questionnaires, interviews and class observation. The analysis performed with SPSS software showed that teachers are faced with lack of modern teaching materials, learners' demotivation in classes and large class size. The courses' contents do not fit the learners' needs as well as the teaching method adopted by teachers.*

**Keywords:** *English for medicine, approach, specialty, Benin, health schools, medical institutions.*

### **Introduction**

Language is a tool of communication. It designs particularly the manner of expressing ideas and feeling either through speech or written, even though gestures. English in Benin environment is a foreign language, and it is one of the most essential international languages for communication. It is the language of communication and business, worldwide. It is used in many domains and enterprises where it is used as a medium of exchange. English is very important in getting a better job and in social interaction with people around the world.

Accordingly, people need to learn specific language for taking part in conferences, to communicate with international professionals of native countries, etc. Then, learning English as foreign language (EFL), involves both general and specific needs. In that perspective, specific English learners are supposed to have the basic use of English communication. Stevens (1988) separated the concepts of absolute characteristics and variables characterization in the learning and teaching of ESP. From that perspective, the language for specialty must be directed as follows:

- Elaborated to be in the streamline of the major study field
- Linked to the most problematic issues in the options and professions
- Centered the options and professions
- Opposed to general language

Dealing with variables in the characterization, language for specific study needs to be:

- Tackled strictly in the majors to be acquired
- Not to delivered regarding with specific methods

Moreover, the two absolute determinants in the process of determination of the modules in ESP are as follows:

- Objective
- oriented
- Derivative from analysis from the lacks, wants, necessities and needs

Unfortunately, general English language is not yet well understood by most of Beninese EFL learners and ESP learners particularly. They have significant lack in grammar, conjugating, and vocabulary. Moreover, the majority meets difficulty in formulating good sentences and can't keep in oral discussion. However, ESP teaching and learning goes along with general English. In medical schools, students, after years of study, still feel important difficulty in using specific English. They are not able to communicate appropriately by using terminologies of their specialty

whereas medical science is a universal science which uses English a lot as a medium of communication and treatment. Also, drugs, vaccines, surgical materials and other medical products' labels are always or partly in English. Also, such learners did not have advanced knowledge in medicine applied to the targeted language. They could have a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) similarity. In contrary, they gained medical principles and knowledge from French language usage in teaching units constituents. As a consequence no one can use them accordingly without a good level at medical English. Furthermore, international seminars, conferences and capacity building workshops led by international physicians are conducted in English. During such meetings, English is exclusively used, with sometimes no interpretation. This makes non speakers not to understand very well the exchanges and then they do not grasp the core message to be proficient in their job. The present research work points out the challenges and difficulties for an effective ESP teaching learning to medical learners.

Due to its indispensable position in profession, more and more companies require English proficiency from applicants. Then, the ability to speak specific English is a very good asset for getting job opportunity. Indeed, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is English language instruction designed to meet the specific learning needs of a specific learner or group, within a specific time frame for which instruction in general English will not suffice.

In medical sciences, the necessity of English is noticeable, and many learners can regret for not gaining competencies in English as a Foreign Language in the course of medical studies. The use of English during such studies becomes greater and greater. However, the different programs or curricula are very poor in some communities. It becomes difficult for learners and language instructors for effective assessment. In medical schools, learners start classes by responding to questions on their language history.

Consequently, students in medical domain need to search for scientific phenomenon in documents that are global on internet but naturally in English language. Most of such learners would like to have the higher proficiency in English to have good findings for their research work. Moreover, the compulsory situation of their fundamental knowledge in English is recommended. In a normal standard, when learners registered for medical program, that means that their output is tended to be advanced intermediate where the traditional level gaining in secondary school must be completed in a due time.

It may be possible to meet fellows from other countries, mostly from English countries or Arabic ones which can only speak English during the academic year. Then, it will be unbearable that learners do not reinforce their capacity in English competences and keep speaking French for higher program to university. So, managing such lack at university is a must for EFL/ESL instructors.

### **Conclusion**

The present study revealed the challenges and difficulties in ESP teaching at medical secondary school. The findings show that ESP teachers meet some difficulties in EFL classes such as lack of materials, students' non participation to classroom activities, students' lower level of general English. For students, teachers do not make their teaching methods and courses match with their needs. These observations have raised teachers' lack of training and showed the undeniability of needs assessment in ESP class. Moreover, medical professionals meet important language issues in their workplace because they receive most of the time foreign patients to treat. The study calls for school authorities' responsibility upon the ESP teaching at vocational schools.

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