1. Introduction

Throughout the next pages, students will be looking at the definition of ESP, the reasons behind its emergence, its characteristics and its branches and the main differences between it and what we call English for General Purposes (EGP). It is necessary at this point to define ESP as depicted by some well-known scholars

i. Definition of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

We will try here to present some well-known definitions of ESP, upon which we will try to suggest a comprehensive definition.

One of the most recent definitions of ESP is that of Paltridge and Starfield (2013: 2), who consider it as: "the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is *to use English in a particular domain*."Another recent definition is that of Johns and Price-Machado (2001: 43), who think that ESP is: "a movement based on the proposition that *all* language teaching should be tailored to the *specific learning and language use needs of identified groups of students*— and also sensitive to the socio-cultural contexts in which these students will be using English." Prior to the above definitions was McDonough's (1998: 105) definition: "ESP describes language programmes designed *for groups or individuals* who are learning with an *identifiable purpose and clearly specifiable needs*." One of earliest definitions is the one suggested by Mackay and Mountford (1978: 2) who argue that "ESP is generally used to refer to the teaching of English for a *clearly utilitarian purpose*."

An analytic look at the above definitions can hence result in noticing much convergence between the authors' views (italicized sections show this convergence). Then, it could be argued that English for Specific Purposes is the teaching of English in order to achieve specific language skills, in a manner that allows the students to comprehend English discourse related to their area of specialty (business, management, politics, social sciences, etc.) or to use it in the future when they become professionals.

ii. Emergence of ESP

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been, since the 1960s, part of English Language Teaching (ELT). According to Tom Hutchinson and Alan waters (1987, pp. 5&6), the emergence of ESP was due to three reasons: the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics and a new focus on the learner.

➢ The demands of a brave new world

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have mentioned that the end of the Second World War (SWW) initiated an "age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale for various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the post-war world, the role fell to English."

In other words, the economic developments in the English speaking countries in the late 1950s and early1960s and the growth of science and technology in those countries contributed to increase the demand for ESP courses. This increase in demand was the result of massive applications for ESP courses in the English-speaking countries, which

were made by students from all around the world. In this regard, for instance, Bob Jordan and Alan Matthews (*in* English for Specific Purposes; milestones in ELT: 1978) wrote an research paper named "Practice Materials for Listening Comprehension and Writing Needs for Overseas Students", where they mentioned that 49 students from several countries attended an ESP course at the department of Education (University of Manchester, UK).

➢ **A revolution in linguistics**

By revolution, one can understand the shift from traditional linguistics, where the attention was centered on merely describing the features of the language toward the study of Register Analysis (RA) where the ways the language is used in real communication are spotlighted.

> **Commentaire [P1]:** Halliday et. Al. Introduced this term in 1964. It stands for the variety of English distinguished according to use.

➢ **A new focus on the learner**

This is not only Hutchinson and Water's view, but it is also that of many scholars, such as Rodgers (1969) who thinks that the learner's attitude to learning should be emphasized. Hence, this particular point has much to do with Psychology so long as it puts forward the importance of learners' attitudes to learning; an indispensable factor of students' motivation and, therefore, learning effectiveness.

iii. **Branches of ESP**

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.17) suggested the tree below to illustrate the branches of English Language Teaching (ELT).
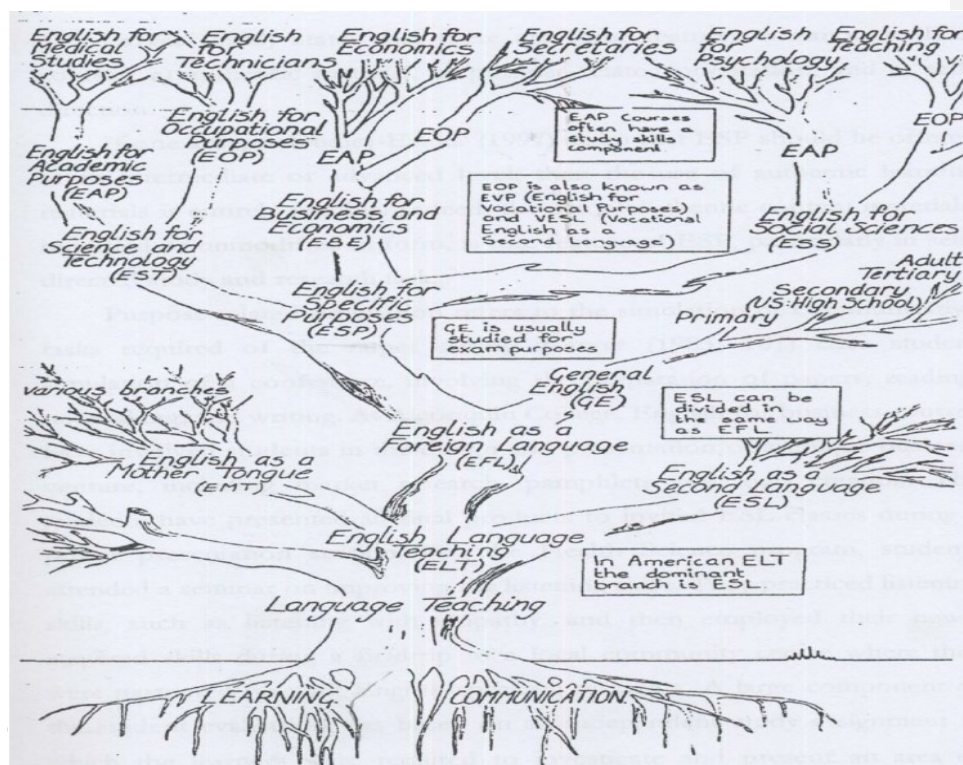
iv. Characteristics of ESP

According to ***Dudley-Evans*** (author of : Team-teaching in EAP: Changes and adaptations in the Birmingham approach, 2001), ESP has absolute characteristics and variable ones. Dudley-Evans thinks that ESP's absolute characteristics are as follows:

➢ ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of the learners;

➢ ESP makes use of the *methodology* and activities of the *specialism* it serves ;

➢ ESP is centred not only on the language (grammar, lexis, register), but also on the *skills*, *discourses and genres* appropriate to those activities.

He thinks that ESP's variable characteristics are:

➢ ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;

➢ ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different **methodology** from that of General English;

➢ ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a **tertiary** level institution or in a **professional** work situation. It could, however, be for learners at **secondary** school level;

➢ ESP is generally designed for **intermediate** or **advanced** students;

➢ Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems.

v. **English for Specific Purposes Vs. English for General Purposes**

Through a look at what we mentioned above, it can be argued that ESP is different from English for General Purposes (EGP); the following are some differences:

1. ESP is based on needs analysis, (No needs analysis is required to design an EGP course)

2. ESP is adults-centered (Secondary and/or university students), (EGP courses can start from primary school)

3. ESP involves homogenous learners (based on level requirements), (EGP students are heterogeneous learners)