

# A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE ESP (ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES) -BASED POST-GRADUATE RESEARCH IN TURKEY\*

## TÜRKİYE'DEKİ ÖZEL AMAÇLI İNGİLİZCE ODAKLI LİSANSÜSTÜ TEZLERİ ÜZERİNE SİSTEMATİK BİR İNCELEME

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### Abstract:

Despite worldwide interest in foreign language teaching programs adopting the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach from its inception in the 1960s to the present, ESP-based language programs have been weakly highlighted in Turkey. The current study aims to present a systematic review of ESP-based research, specifically the master's and doctoral dissertations archived at the Database of National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education, conducted in Turkey between the years of 1987 and 2019. The studies were basically reviewed according to the basic framework covering the scope and the methodological foundations employed by their researchers. Depending on this framework, the reviewed studies were categorized and descriptive analysis was employed. Hence, the current study concludes that the post-graduate research in the field of ESP conducted in Turkey has mostly remained at needs assessment level. Methodologically, there have been a scarce of experimental studies in the field. Regardless of the nationwide interest and investment in integrating recent educational technologies into foreign language teaching programs, there has been a limited number of studies conducted with the purpose of developing an online ESP course or designing an ESP-based program with a focus on recent educational technologies.

**Keywords:** English for Specific Purposes, English Language Teaching, Post-Graduate, Thesis, Review.

### Öz:

Özel Amaçlı İngilizce (ÖAİ) yaklaşımını benimseyen yabancı dil öğretim programlarına, 1960'larda ortaya çıkışından bu yana, dünya çapında bir ilgi olmasına rağmen, Türkiye'de ÖAİ odaklı yabancı dil programları yeterince ön plana çıkmamıştır. Bu çalışma, 1987-2019 yılları arasında Türkiye'de yürütülüp, Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu Tez Merkezi Veri Tabanında arşivlenmiş yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerini kapsayan ÖAİ odaklı araştırmaların sistematik bir incelemesini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Yürütülmüş olan tezler temel olarak araştırma kapsamı ve metodolojik altyapıyı oluşturan öğeleri içeren bir çerçeveye göre incelenmiş, sınıflandırılmış ve betimsel analizleri yapılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye'de ÖAİ alanında yürütülmüş olan lisansüstü tezlerinin çoğunlukla ihtiyaç analizi basamağında kaldığı görülmüştür. Metodolojik olarak bakıldığında, ilgili alandaki deneysel çalışmaların sayısı oldukça azdır. Eğitim teknolojilerinin yabancı dil öğretiminde benimsenmesi hususunda ülke çapında bir ilgi ve yatırım olmasına karşın, yapılan sistematik inceleme sonucunda görülmüştür ki, ÖAİ odaklı çevrimiçi ders tasarımı ya da günümüz eğitim teknolojilerini benimseyen ÖAİ odaklı dil öğretim programlarının geliştirilmesine ilişkin lisansüstü çalışmaların sayısı oldukça kısıtlıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Özel Amaçlı İngilizce, İngilizce Dil Eğitimi, Lisansüstü, Tez, İnceleme.

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing interest, both national and international, in the academic studies presenting research trends of varied disciplines. In Turkey, Göktaş et al. (2012) focused on educational research papers published in selected indexed journals between 2005-2009. Similarly, Gülbahar and Alper (2009) examined the research articles regarding instructional technologies. Also, Karadağ (2009) reviewed the doctoral dissertations conducted in the field of educational sciences. In English majoring disciplines such as English Language Teaching (ELT), Applied Linguistics, English language and linguistics, a number of researchers have also drawn on the previously conducted scholarly research. These papers have been published with various titles as *review*, *systematic review*, *content analysis*, *document analysis* and *trends* in the related area of research. In 2011, Alptekin and Tatar; in 2014, Solak; in 2016, Yağız et al., and later, in 2018 Aydınlı and Ortaçtepe documented and analyzed a variety of studies conducted in the field English language teaching and learning published in Turkey. A number of researchers reviewed doctoral research on English language teaching and learning completed in Turkey between the years 2009 and 2014 (İnal, et al., 2016; Özmen, et al., 2016). Focusing on master's degree in five selected ELT departments across the country, Kırmızı (2012) analyzed the content of theses released in the years between 2005 and 2010. Koçyiğit and Erdem (2018) examined both master's and doctoral studies regarding English preparatory programs at tertiary level. More specifically, a recent content analysis by Hismanoglu (2019) focused on the articles on English pronunciation teaching published in fourteen distinguished international journals between 2012-2017. The research to date has tended to focus on the research on English language sub-skills or language itself in general by reviewing research papers or theses published at different educational degree programs. No previous study has examined the post-graduate research conducted in the field of ESP. The current systematic review aims to contribute to this growing area of research in Turkey by characterizing the existing ESP-based post-graduate research including master's or doctoral dissertations. It is expected that this systematic review will generate fresh insights into the ESP-based research and nourish the growth of the field in Turkey where the number and kinds of ELT-related programs at different educational degrees are rapidly proliferating.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW: ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Simply as a division of ELT, ESP has been treated as *English for Special Purposes* or *English for Specific Purposes* in the related literature. "S" has referred to both *special* (Kerr, 1977; Mackay & Mountford, 1978) and *specific* in recent years (Baştürkmen 2006, 2010; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). The vision for specificity or specialty is indeed attributed to its strong emphasis on analyzing and considering language learners' needs, wants, lacks, and goals in the language learning process. Each step in establishing the foundations of an ESP-based language teaching curriculum is taken by considering target language learners' needs,

lacks, wants, and goals in accordance with their work-related or educational specialist areas of interest. Identifying absolute and variable characteristics of ESP, Dudley-Evans and John (1998: 4-5) propose a list:

#### Absolute Characteristics

1. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners;
2. ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
3. ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

#### Variable Characteristics

1. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English;
3. 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;
4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
5. Most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

The global innovations in response to scientific, technological, financial and social demands of a changing world after World War II, the acceptance of English as a *lingua franca*, gaining new insights into educational psychology taking learners at the heart of education and their reflections upon the developments in linguistics with a new focus on the significance of language and communication altogether contributed to the emergence of ESP as a new division in ELT (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Recognized as the earliest ground-breaking work in the field, the book *Structure of Technical English* published by A.J. Herbert in 1965 points out the domination of EST (English for Science and Technology) at the very beginning of ESP movement. In the following years, these domains flourished in accordance with the demands in time. Within the time, new sub-fields emerged such as English for Medicine, English for Tourism, English for Engineering, English for Aviation, English for Business and Economics, English for Secretaries, English for Technicians and so on. Robinson (1991) offers *protean* as a label for ESP due to its constant shift and its receptivity to innovations occurring in three areas of language, pedagogy and special interest fields of target learners all over the world. ESP owes its changing nature and prosperity to its strong emphasis on needs analysis process, which is underlined with an earlier motto “Tell me what you need English for and I will tell the English that you need” (Hutchinson & Waters 1987: 8). Accordingly, Richards (2001: 52) gives an account of the reasons behind conducting needs analysis:

- to find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide, or university student
- to help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students
- to determine which student from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills
- to identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important
- to identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do
- to collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing.

In the related literature, needs analysis is defined as “a process of establishing the *what* and *how* of a course” (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998: 121). A recent figure in the field, Basturkmen (2010) argues that needs analysis process is regarded as a significant attempt to find answers to questions regarding *when*, *where*, and *why* language learners need target language. Considering all, these perspectives identifying needs analysis process outline a critical role for ESP in each aspect of English language education including curriculum design, materials development, assessment and evaluation processes.

### 1.1. Purpose of the Research

The current study presents a precise systematic review of the ESP-based post-graduate studies including theses or dissertations archived at the Databases of National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education and conducted between the years of 1987 and 2019 in Turkey. It aims to indicate the state of ESP-based post-graduate studies concisely and accordingly, sheds light on the research gap by documenting the existing research trend in the post-graduate level in Turkey. The current study poses the following research questions:

1. How is the distribution of the reviewed ESP-based post-graduate studies by the educational degree?
2. How is the distribution of the reviewed ESP-based post-graduate studies by the year of publication?
3. How is the distribution of the reviewed ESP-based post-graduate studies by the research context?
4. How is the distribution of the reviewed ESP-based post-graduate studies by the research sample?
5. What are the main ESP sub-fields of interest in the reviewed ESP-based post-graduate studies?
6. How is the distribution of the reviewed ESP-based post-graduate studies by their research scope?

The following section presents the research method adopted, the research process, review inclusion criteria, and data collection tool.

## 2. METHOD

The current study presents a descriptive case study highlighting the state of ESP-based research conducted at the post-graduate level in Turkey. The related dissertations were reviewed in accordance with the basic framework on methodological foundations including the purpose, the research setting, and the research design in relation to ESP-subfields of interest employed in the dissertations. Since all Turkey-based dissertations are officially archived at the Databases of National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education, the researcher reviewed the accessible dissertations. As for the review criteria, “ESP, English for Specific Purposes, Özel Amaçlı İngilizce (Turkish equivalent of ESP)” were employed as keywords throughout the search. The theses or dissertations written in English and Turkish were analyzed. It was detected that the first available related dissertation was conducted in 1987. Thus, the current study reviewed the related dissertations released in the years between 1987 and 2019 in Turkey.

At the end of the review, a total of 54 theses were accessed and analyzed systematically. To this end, a structured review form was prepared by the researcher after reviewing the related literature.

The structured form covers the following categories:

**Table 1:** The Categories in the Structured Review Form

Category
Degree
Title
Author
ESP Sub-Fields of interest
Research scope
Research sample
Research setting (location)
Research setting (time)

Since the current study attempts to review, describe, and quantify the qualitative content available in the post-graduate studies, it also falls into the category of descriptive content analysis. In the analysis part of the study, the quantitative data analysis procedures were employed. Basically, descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage were performed. As Weber (1990: 10) claims, “The best content-analytic studies use both qualitative and quantitative operations on texts.” Therefore, the related findings are discussed along with the tables and figures presented in the following section.

### 2.1. Limitations

It is noteworthy to emphasize that all Turkey-based master’s theses and doctoral dissertations are officially archived at the Databases of National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education. However, authors have a right to not allowing the readers to

access the full text. Therefore, the researcher reviewed the accessible dissertations by using the aforementioned keywords. Furthermore, the use of specific keywords throughout the database search might also result in the exclusion of some studies with similar focus. In order to ensure a standardization and credibility, the researcher preferred the most commonly used keywords characterizing the topic of interest, that is, the umbrella terms.

### 3. FINDINGS

The current systematic review study included a total of 54 ESP-based post-graduate studies conducted in Turkey from 1987 and 2019. Table 2 presents the studies reviewed by their degrees (M stands for Master's and D for Doctoral study), titles, authors, and date of publication.

**Table 2:** The Reviewed Post-Graduate Studies by Their Degrees, Titles, Authors and Date of Publication

No.	Degree	Title	Author / Date (in alphabetical order)
M		<i>Content-based vocabulary teaching at Akçakoca tourism and hotel management college of Abant İzzet Baysal University in Bolu</i>	Acar, A. (2000)
D		<i>Genre-based approach to writing instruction for students at English Language and Literature department</i>	Almacioğlu, G. (2017)
M		<i>Needs assessment of medical students in ESP courses at Erciyes University.</i>	Akgül, M. (1991)
D		<i>Teaching English for the students' specific purposes in mixed-discipline classes at university bound language preparatory centres.</i>	Aksungur, S. (1994)
M		<i>English Language Needs Assessment of the Students of the Medical Faculty of Cumhuriyet University.</i>	Alagözlü, N. (1994)
D		<i>A study on language for specific purposes program evaluation(Turkish Military Academy case)</i>	Altmışdört, G. (2009)
M		<i>Implications of student attitudes towards the program of English in Mersin School of Tourism and Hotel Management</i>	Aysen, Ç. (1994)
M		<i>A Needs analysis for the ESP Classes at the tourism education department of the trade business and tourism education faculty of Gazi University</i>	Boran, G. (1994)
D		<i>Identifying Academic English Needs of English Medium Medical Students at Hacettepe University for a Communicative Course Design</i>	Boztaş, İ. (1987)
M		<i>The Effects of CEFR - based ESP speaking and listening activities on the success of students in Faculties of Tourism</i>	Büyükkalay, N. (2016)
M		<i>Evaluation of an effectiveness of an ESP textbook 'English for business studies': A case study at Başkent University</i>	Coskuner, D. P. (2002)
D		<i>Designing, developing and delivering an online medical English course with a focus on esp and online learning: EMPonline 2016</i>	Dağ Akbaş, R. (2017)
M		<i>Leaners perceptions in the evaluation of an ESP course</i>	Demirbulak, D. (1992)
M		<i>Teaching foreign language (English) for specific language purpose applying need analysis (the case study of S.D.U. Eğirdir Vocational High School)</i>	Diken, Ü. (2006)
M		<i>The use of DIU ( Designedly Incomplete Utterances) in an esp setting in Turkey</i>	Dilber, E. (2018)

**Table 2:** (Cont.)

No.	Degree	Title	Author / Date (in alphabetical order)
M		<i>A Needs assessment study on English language needs of the tour guidance students of faculty of applied sciences at Başkent University</i>	Ekici, N. (2003)
M		<i>A Needs analysis for the students of economic, business management, and finance departments: ESP courses at Afyon Kocatepe University</i>	Ertit, A. (1999)
M		<i>Teaching reading in ESP context: A comparison of structural method and interactive method</i>	Emener, Ö. (1989)
D		<i>Designing an ESP syllabus for the preparatory English students of the department</i>	Efe, H. (1996)
D		<i>A Modular ESP course design for the upper-intermediate learners at the Faculty of Medicine at Gazi University</i>	Ertaş, G. (1998)
M		<i>An Assessment of teacher perceived needs of ESP students in the faculty of economics and administrative sciences at Erziyes University</i>	Göksin, A (1991)
M		<i>Teaching English for specific purposes at Akşehir Vocational School of Selçuk University</i>	Günay, E. (1999)
M		<i>An Evaluation of the graduate level preparatory course as a needs assessment for a new syllabus design for basic sciences</i>	Hergüner, G. (1990).
M		<i>A Needs-based writing syllabus for the students of international relations and political science at Başkent University</i>	Işık, E. E. (2002)
D		<i>Impact of learner-centered teaching and learning process on pre-advanced first year medical students' performance, attitudes and retention in medical English.</i>	Joshani-Shirvan, S. (2008)
M		<i>Language needs of electric-electronics engineering students at Dumlupınar University: ' Do they need ESP?</i>	Kahraman, A. (2004)
M		<i>A Suggested model ESP syllabus for the learners at tourism business hotel management colleges in Turkey</i>	Kabadayı, A. (1996)
M		<i>Evaluation of the effectiveness of the ESP reading materials for 215 English for law course at the English language school of Başkent University</i>	Kanik, F. (2002)
D		<i>Eğitim dili İngilizce olan yükseköğretim kurumları hazırlık okulları program uygulamalarında belirli amaca yönelik dil öğretimi açısından karşılaşılan sorunlar</i>	Karataş, N. (1994)
M		<i>Needs analysis in English for specific purposes (a field study with pilots receiving air traffic terminology training)</i>	Kaygan, A. D. (2005)
M		<i>A needs analysis study in terms of the perceptions of the students' learning and target needs at an ESP program: A case study</i>	Kazar, S.G. (2013)
M		<i>A Complete English-for-specific-purposes syllabus for agricultural economics</i>	Kırkgöz, Y. (1990)
M		<i>The effect of the keyword method on esp vocabulary learning and retention</i>	Koparan, N. (2018)
M		<i>A corpus-based approach on the design and implementation of a lexical syllabus for electrical and electronics engineering students</i>	Kürtül, N. (2016)
M		<i>An ESP curriculum design for improving the writing skills of the hotel management staff</i>	Oğuz, M. N. (1990)
M		<i>Teaching vocabulary with reference to 'military texts' at the military academy</i>	Özdi, N. (2000)
M		<i>A Needs analysis for Anadolu University Civil Aviation students ESP courses</i>	Pişiren, H. (1996)
D		<i>English for tour guiding through readings</i>	Ridgeway, C. A. (2003)
M		<i>Practice of needs analysis for English for specific purpose in vocational high school</i>	Sabuncuoğlu, A. (2010)

**Table 2:** (Cont.)

No.	Degree	Title	Author / Date (in alphabetical order)
M		<i>A Sample English course design for the veterinary science students</i>	Saka, A. R. (1989)
M		<i>Teaching reading in ESP with special reference to English in electrical engineering and electronics</i>	Saka, Ö. (1996)
D		<i>A suggested English language teaching program for Gülhane Military Academy.</i>	Sarı, R. (2003)
M		<i>Promoting speaking strategies in ESP through drama</i>	Saygılı, H. K. (2014)
M		<i>The development of a technical word list and self-study material for aircraft maintenance students</i>	Serpil, R. (2017)
M		<i>A Needs analysis: The feasibility of a collaboration between mechanical engineering and electric-electronics engineering departments and YADIM for the instruction of ESP</i>	Seçen, B. (2001)
M		<i>Designing an ESP syllabus for the preparatory English students of the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management at Bilkent University</i>	Subaşı, M. (1990)
M		<i>A Survey on learner autonomy and motivation in ESP in a Turkish context.</i>	Tayar, A. B. (2003)
M		<i>Determination of the specific needs for ESP course and materials design: A descriptive study at Osmangazi University Eskişehir</i>	Tezcan, H. (1998)
M		<i>A Suggested syllabus model for a course in developing reading skills with special reference to the ELT department at Gazi University</i>	Tikence, M. (1991)
M		<i>Students', instructors' and academics' opinions regarding the English for specific purposes courses (The case of Gazi University)</i>	Tupurtu, M. (2017)
D		<i>A Modular ESP course design for the advanced learners of English at the Army Academy</i>	Uluşan, R. (1995)
M		<i>A Needs assessment of the students of the department of tourism and administration and hotel management at Balıkesir University</i>	Üstünlüoğlu, E. (1994)
M		<i>Suggested negotiated esp syllabus for multinational peacekeeping operations within a constructivist perspective</i>	Yaşar, N. (2015)
M		<i>Needs assessment of the prep-class students in the Faculty of Medicine at Ondokuz Mayıs University</i>	Yeniçeri, Ö. (2008)

Among all the reviewed ESP-based post-graduate studies, 42 of them were conducted in master's degree (78%) and 12 of them (22%) were published in doctoral degree. The related findings are shown in Table 3.

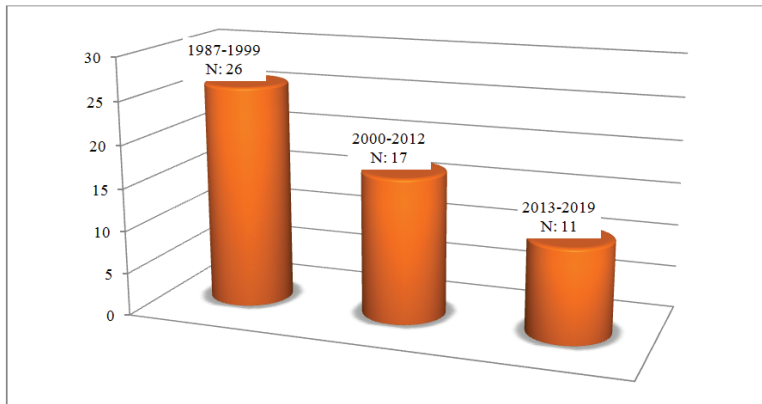
**Table 3:** ESP-based Research by Master's or Doctoral Degrees

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Master's Degree	42	78
Doctoral Degree	12	22
Total	54	100

The ESP-based post-graduate master's and doctoral studies under investigation were also reviewed in terms of their setting including publication year and location. The following figures (Figure 1 and Figure 2) present the related findings. Figure 1 displays frequency distribution of the reviewed master's and doctoral studies per their publication year. The



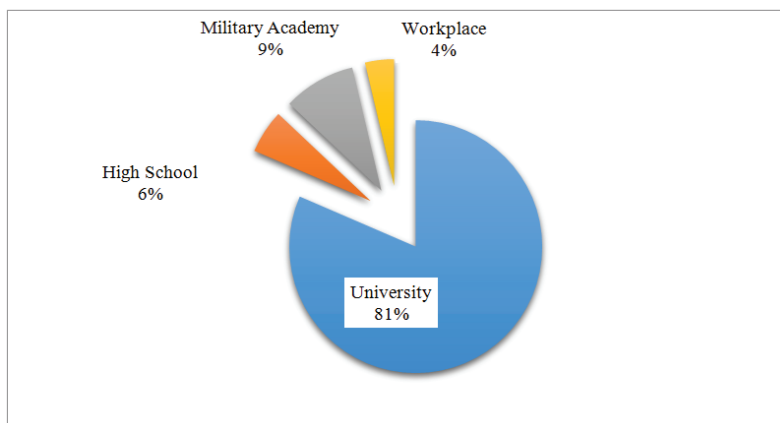
current review sheds light on the research conducted within 32 years (1987-2019). This period of time is divided into 3 periods regarding the publication year of the research (1987-1999, 2000-2012, 2012-2019) as it follows:



**Figure 1:** ESP-based research by their publication year

As it is inferred from Figure 1, the ESP-based studies were more popularly conducted between the years 1987 and 1999, as compared to the time-period between the years 2000 and 2012. The number of master’s and doctoral studies with a focus on ESP published between the years 1987 and 1999 is higher (N=26) than those published between the years 2000 and 2012 (N=17). It is also observed that the number of ESP-based post-graduate studies tends to stay comparable once the number of studies published in the next 6-year time period is taken into consideration (N=11).

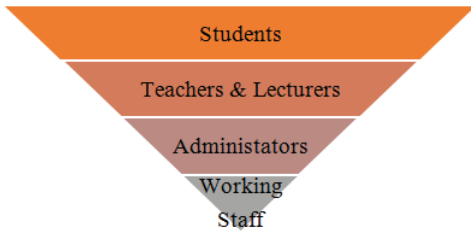
When it comes to the research setting where the ESP-based post-graduate studies were conducted, the current study revealed that only 4% of the research were conducted in workplaces. Figure 2 illustrates the different research settings and the percentages of the related data.



**Figure 2:** ESP-based Research by Their Research Setting

As can be seen in Figure 2, most of the post-graduate researchers preferred universities in an attempt to conduct their ESP-based research (81%) whereas 6% of them conducted their research at high school (6%). Besides, it indicates that 9% of the research were conducted in military academies. All in all, it can be stated that the great majority of the ESP-based post-graduate research was conducted in educational settings, rather than workplaces.

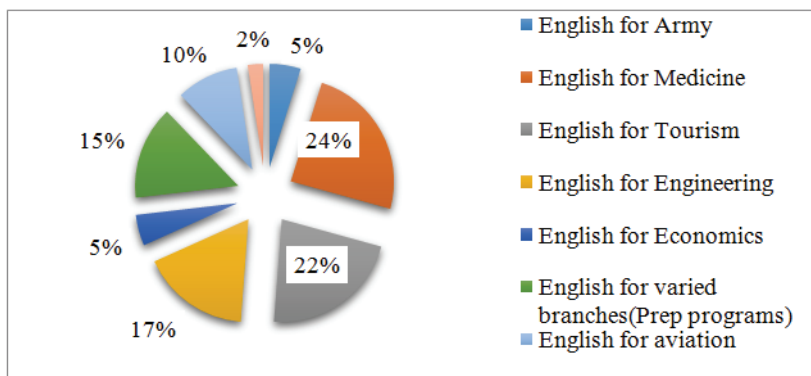
Given the research sample employed in the ESP-based post-graduate research, the current research highlights four main group of participants including students, teachers or lecturers, administrators and working staff. Since more than one group of participants were assigned in some of the ESP-based post-graduate studies (see Dağ Akbaş, 2017; Karatas, 1994; Sarı, 2003) percentage values were not calculated. Figure 3, nevertheless, indicates the sum of diverse sample.



**Figure 3:** ESP-based research by their research sample

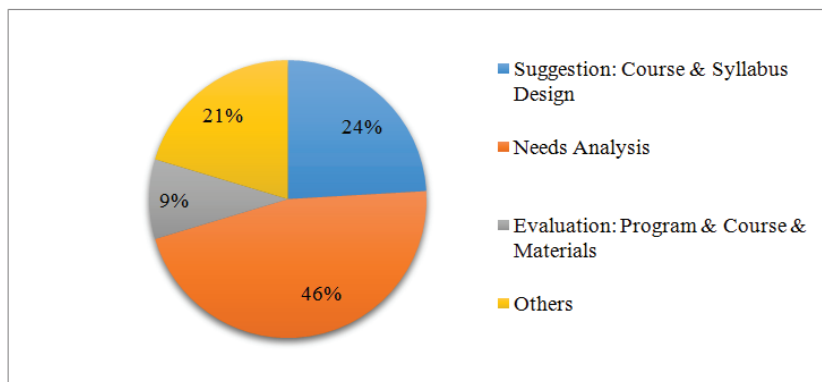
Due to its strong emphasis on the necessity of needs analysis process, ESP-based studies are indeed expected to integrate all types of stakeholders having diverse roles at different levels of hierarchy in the discipline of interest. The current study denotes that the post-graduate researchers in Turkey have mostly studied with students, teachers and/or lecturers, and also, rarely with administrators. On the other hand, it seems that working staff in different occupations have been rare in the focus of interest.

Figure 4 shows the reviewed ESP-based studies by their field of interest. It is shown that the studies conducted in the field of *English for Medicine* constitute 24% and those in the field of *English for Tourism* constitute 22% of the ESP-based studies. It seems that *English for Medicine* and *Tourism* is the most popular field of interest within the context of post-graduate studies in Turkey. These fields are followed by other ESP sub-fields such as *English for Engineering* (17%), *English for (varied branches within) preparatory programs* (15%), *English for Aviation* (10%), *English for Army* (5%), *English for Economics* (5%), and *English for Politics* (2%) respectively. The least popular field of interest among all is *English for Politics*.



**Figure 4:** ESP-based Research by Their Field of Interest

The systematic review, moreover, indicates that the post-graduate studies have a variety of research goals. All the research goals and purposes were grouped under four categories. Firstly, it is found out that almost half of the studies reviewed presents a needs analysis process (46%). Secondly, the research purpose adopted in the reviewed studies is to suggest an ESP-based course or syllabus design (24%). Thirdly, as the review points out, a number of studies (21%) have diverse research purposes like examining the level of students' motivation and their control over their learning at a vocational school (Tayar, 2003) or conducting a comparative analysis in terms of methodologies adapted in ESP-based reading classes (Emener, 1989). Lastly, few studies focus on evaluation processes including program, course or materials evaluation (9%), as it is presented in Figure 5.



**Figure 5:** ESP-based Research by Their Research Scope

Once the research methodologies are reviewed, it is concluded that most of the post-graduate research are survey-based methods with a focus on ESP, which is reflected in the needs analysis part of the findings presented in Figure 5. What is striking in the review is the limited amount of experimental or comparative studies. Among all, Aksungur (1994), Dağ Akbaş (2017), Emener (1989), Joshani-Shirvan (2008), and Büyükkalay (2016) adopted

experimental research design in their post-graduate ESP-based research. In other words, the number of studies grasping a purpose of controlling phenomenon is relatively limited as compared to those with a purpose of describing or exploring phenomenon.

As both the year of publication and the research goals are taken into consideration, it is possible to state that there has been a gradual increase in the number of experimental studies in the recent years. What stands out in the review is the popularity of needs analysis survey studies employing questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments (See Akgül, 1991; Alagözlü, 1994; Diken, 2006; Kaygan, 2005; Yeniçeri, 2008; Sabuncuoğlu, 2010; Üstünlüoğlu, 1994). Similarly, most of the post-graduate studies suggesting a course or syllabus design are based on a survey-method. Additionally, it is seen that the number of post-graduate studies on ESP-based material evaluation (Coşkuner 2002; Kanik, 2002) and program evaluation (Altınışdört, 2009; Sarı, 2003) has remained steady throughout the years. It is also rare to see comprehensive ESP-based post-graduate studies with multiphase design covering needs assessment, designing a program, and delivering and evaluating it (Dağ Akbaş, 2017).

This section has presented the related findings with a reference to the tables and figures. The next section of this paper moves on to discuss the findings and conclusions. It also presents suggestions for further research and implications for future practice.

## CONCLUSIONS and SUGGESTIONS

The current study set out to review the post-graduate ESP-based research conducted in Turkey. It provided an insight into the research trend within the context of ESP-based research archived at the Databases of National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey between the years 1987 and 2019. A total of 54 post-graduate studies, specifically the master's and doctoral dissertations, were concisely reviewed. The reviewed research conducted within this thirty-two-year period of time highlighted the constant popularity of the ESP-based approaches in Turkey. However, the review also signifies the fact that there is still a need for improvement in the field. In this section, conclusions, suggestions for further research and implications for future practice are presented precisely.

A large body of research has been available about the ESP needs analysis of the students within different educational settings, however, there is almost no study analyzing needs of professionals in different occupations or no focus on ESP in workplace. In fact, needs analysis process is a basic leading step to take in the ESP-based approach (Basturkmen, 2010; Dudley-Evans & John, 1998). As for a comprehensive needs analysis process, it is also necessary to integrate varied ideas, opinions, experiences and suggestions of all stakeholders including students, practitioners, supervisors, experts, professionals, administrative figures including directors, and even secretarial figures. Few studies have comprehensively amalgamated needs of target units. In the same vein, a content analysis carried out by Yağız, Aydın and Akdemir (2016) indicated that most of the samples of the ELT research in Turkey

consisted of teachers and undergraduate students. As it is frequently stated in the related literature (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), not the existence of the needs but the awareness of these needs is vital for a quality foreign language teaching and learning process. Therefore, this awareness should be reflected upon the design of language teaching programs. What is needed here is to develop research-informed ESP programs to foster the quality of education for the target sample. The current research strongly suggests that the need for development of research informed ESP-based programs remains critical.

This review moreover found that a few studies were designed with a focus on genre-based approach and on corpus-based approach. As the preliminary findings of the earlier research of the author at the International Congress of Educational Research in 2019 indicated previously, similarly, despite the nation-wide interest and investment in integrating recent technologies into education, a limited number of post-graduate studies were conducted with a purpose of suggesting or implementing an ESP-based program integrating recent educational technologies. Additionally, the systematic review has shown that the post-graduate research in Turkey between 1987 and 2019 has placed no emphasis on teachers, their characteristics or ESP teacher training, despite their vital role in language teaching and ESP approaches. Other possible areas of future research would be to develop ESP teacher training programs, to characterize an ESP trainer and their contributions to the quality of education.

As for the research methodologies in the reviewed post-graduate ESP-based studies, there has been a tendency for descriptive survey studies adopting both qualitative and quantitative research traditions. The similar tendency for quantitative research traditions including specifically surveys or descriptive studies is commonly preferred in published articles as it was maintained by Yağız, Aydın and Akdemir (2016). There would therefore seem to be a definite need for further comparative, correlational and experimental studies addressing different aspects of ESP-based approach, programs and their outcomes.

With respect to the sub-fields of ESP in the post-graduate research in Turkey, *English for Medicine*, *English for Tourism* and *English for Engineering* are at the core of the research context whereas no study was found to be conducted in the ESP sub-fields such as *English for Science and Technology*, *English for Psychology*, and *English for Teaching*. These sub-disciplines might be other areas of interest for future researchers.

As for the timing in relation to professional and educational experiences concerned in the reviewed studies, no study focused on *English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)* or *English for Professional Purposes (EPP)*. In other words, the post-graduate ESP based research mainly fall in the category of *English for Educational* or *Academic purposes* or *English for Specific Academic Purposes* (as classified by Dudley-Evans and John, 1998; Robinson 1991) by focusing on educational experiences of the target unit. Further research would be of great help in contributing to pedagogical practices and research on *EOP* or *EPP*.

It is believed that notwithstanding the relatively small sample size (a total of 54 Post-graduate studies), the current study reviewing the ESP-based postgraduate research historiographically offers valuable insights for future researchers and practitioners since it provides a concise picture depicted in post-graduate research conducted over a 32 year-period in the context of ESP in Turkey.

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### **Disclosure Statement**

In this systematic review study, all the data were obtained from the online Database of National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education, and the reviewed studies are listed in the references section. Accordingly, there is no need for ethical permission.

### ***Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Beyanı***

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### ***Araştırmacıların Katkı Beyanı***

Tek yazarlı ele alınan makale yazar tarafından üretilmiştir.

### ***Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı***

Makalede herhangi bir olası çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

### ***Destek ve Teşekkür Beyanı***

Makale için herhangi bir destek alınmamıştır.

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