



## ESP for Media:

### Wonderland of Metaphors Uncovers the Students' Perceived 'Needs'

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#### Article Info

#### ABSTRACT

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This paper tries to suggest a reconsideration of the needs analysis procedure regarding the ESP courses for the students of art (here, media arts) with an emphasis on the distinct contextual nature of such courses and the necessity of noticing the participants' own varying perceptions of their needs. Respecting the need for considering also the 'wants' in ESP, the data was collected from the students who participated in various media English courses at all academic levels (Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D.) in one of the unique Asian academic institutions focused on media-related fields. The paper, particularly, argues for acknowledgment of 'specific' wants (i.e., target students' own perceptions) in the particular media ESP context. While the proposal is supported by the participant students' (N = 153) narrated opinions gathered and analyzed through metaphor analysis (derived from "Cognitive Metaphor Theory"; CMT) now in service for the ESP needs analysis, it is stressed that traditional needs analysis procedures will not necessarily satisfy all ESP courses' requirements. Due to the fact that, to a large extent, different academic/professional communities possess their own distinct non-generalizable properties, the recommended procedure includes serious consideration of the context-bound feedback received from the students, as well. They broadly encompass tuning the content, resources, activities, and tasks regarded for various ESP courses to the very particular tastes of their target students.

**Keywords:** Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT); English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Needs Analysis (NA); Students; Image; Media

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## 1. Introduction

ESP refers to “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” and a key feature of any ESP course is that “the content and aims of the course are oriented to the specific needs of the learners” (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 2). Then, a key issue in the teaching of ESP is how to identify learners’ needs. Partridge and Starfield (2013) note that the issue of “learner needs” is becoming more complex, not only considering what learners need to do but also regarding “who they want to become” (p. 340). Moreover, ESP is chiefly concerned with “teaching and learning English by people who require language and apply it to perform professional and or academic tasks” (Taghipour et al. 2019, p. 2). Consequently, since the advent of the concept of ESP, the corresponding courses and how to conduct them have been a major concern for both educators and syllabus designers, as well (Zarei & Esfandiari, 2014).

“Learners come to any learning context with a history, desires, needs and wants that will shape how they learn what is being taught” (Partridge & Starfield, p. 32). Although numerous studies have been conducted in the area of ESP/EAP both in Iran and in the international dimension, the very background, likes, and tastes of the university students themselves in different majors were hardly ever focused on. Following that and in an attempt to recognize the ESP students’ ‘wants’ from their own viewpoints, this paper argues that ESP/EAP courses for different majors in universities should reflect both the target students’ own tendencies (as shaped by their past exposures) and the distinct nature of the specific courses bearing their unique context-tailored atmospheres in mind. To achieve that well and delve into the students’ clear mental preferences, the researcher applied “cognitive metaphors”!

Metaphor “is a symbiosis of three different dimensions: language, thought and communication” (Nacey, 2013, p. 9). In language learning and teaching, though considerably less focused on, images and metaphors EFL students carry are by no means less valid (in terms of the survey) or reliable (in data collection) than other more ‘quantitative’ and/or ‘objective’ tools of inquiry. In fact, indirect data elicitation tools help us provide more trustworthy and credible information (Farjami, 2012b). It does so via shaping and directing our cognition as also explicitly stated by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) in their *Analyzing Learner Language* with a whole chapter dedicated to metaphor analysis. Based on them, metaphors “are usually employed without consciousness on the part of learners” as they are “arguably less subject to false representation than learners’ direct comments about learning” (p. 313).

Metaphors “shed light upon how students perceive their language learning process” and “encourage reflection” (Zambon Ferronato, 2022, p. 103); they

“reflect the way we conceive of and understand the world around us” (Nacey, 2013, p. 9). The metaphors and images of learners are, in fact, part of their belief systems and can have a significant role in shaping their learning routes (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), “the study decisions they make” and “the learning strategies they adopt” awareness of which “would put the language teaching practitioners at a better vantage point” (Farjami, 2012a, pp. 75-76). These pictorial descriptions are of valuable metacognitive significance as they reveal the organization of the individuals’ conceptual systems. In fact, they “make us apply what we know about one area of our experience (source domain) to another area of our experience (target domain)” (Farjami, 2012a, p. 77) and elucidate the abstract ideas by tangible visual images (Neisser, 2003). Humans, actually, frame and express their experiences based on largely unconscious conceptual metaphors (Deignan, 2005). For instance, the conceptual metaphor of thinking of ‘communication’ as a ‘conduit’ is a popular theory explained via a metaphor. Therefore, not only is our daily communication formed by the language of conceptual metaphors but so is the very way any human understands scholarly theories. Such metaphors are widespread in communication and we do not merely use them in language. We, in fact, perceive and act consistent with the metaphors.

In foreign language teaching and learning, metaphor analysis is “an excellent heuristic for bringing implicit assumptions to awareness, encouraging reflection, finding contradictions, and ultimately fostering change in educational beliefs and practice” (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000, p. 341) and as it is difficult to evoke some class participants’ real language learning beliefs, conceptual metaphors can indirectly elicit them (Zambon Ferronato, 2022). Based on the knowledge of the aforementioned pictures and visualizations, the tastes, learning styles, and preferences of the students would be better known to both help them develop their learning and help the very course’s nuts and bolts be much more efficient. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, exploring the learners’ “ESP needs” through delving into their cognitive metaphors and images has been almost absent from the literature. Accordingly, this study explores the metaphors a distinct group of EFL learners, students of media ESP (media learners with strong artistic backgrounds), carry about their own majors, about English learning, and about their ESP. It, in fact, aims to reflect ESP needs through the language of ‘metaphors’ as essential tools for modifying the educational objectives of ‘specific’ courses by raising the awareness of ESP practitioners about the students’ less explicit beliefs and requirements vital to consider to design more efficient, target-specified, mission-oriented and learner-centered courses.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Media ESP

During the recent decades, along with hundreds of serious research delving into almost all divisions of ESP, a couple of researchers studied various aspects of *media ESP*, as well. Such investigations include English and/or communication needs analysis or the corresponding challenges (Borovac, 2013; Chernii et al. 2020; Ching Dawning, 2010; Talib et al. 2018), assessment (Riestra & ChaCón, 2012), course and materials design (Hartina & Syahrir, 2021; Pendery, 2015; Shraiber & Kolmakova, 2021; Tinmalasari, 2019; Tzoannopoulou, 2015), speaking course design (Yunati, 2016), blended learning (Syahid, 2019), or even the courses focused on preparing journalists (Batoš, Matić & Zakarija, 2010; Otamurodova, 2020). However, the ESP students' metaphors can be entirely considered an under-investigated area. Moreover, to the best of the author's knowledge, no study has been carried out with media ESP at focus in Iran to date, let alone targeting their metaphors.

### 2.2. Metaphor Analyses in EFL

Nacey (2013) clarifies that metaphors involve “the mapping of one image over another” (p. 22). These are also called “linguistic images” (p. 58) and the meaning of mental images “can usually be depicted with the help of icons” (p. 210). For instance, an “iron curtain is literally a safety curtain in theaters, intended to prevent the spread of fire from the stage to the audience” but in English, “this image had been adopted as a metaphor in politics (p. 1)” or the visualization of “grief as a ‘forest of sorrow’” which “feels fairly poetic.” (p. 13). Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) view metaphors as “windows for examining the cognitions and feelings of learners” (p. 313). The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was proposed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980. It views metaphor “as intrinsic to our conceptual system – that is, the way we understand the world” (Nacey, 2013, p. 12). Following the argument and the writers' subsequent broader conceptualization of the term in 2003 highlighting “conceptual metaphors”, several studies in applied linguistics opted for that.

Nacey's (2013) comprehensive study (within the Norwegian context), with its thorough review of procedures for metaphors' identification and categorization in EFL, represents a significant contribution to the relatively little research done concerning metaphor *production* by EFL learners. Ellis's (2002) study of the contrastive metaphors of learners, Talebinejad and Vahid Dastjerdi's (2005) cross-cultural study of metaphors among native and non-native speakers of English, Villamil and De Guerrero's (2005) pedagogic use of metaphors in teacher training classes and Parvaresh's (2008) metaphor analysis of adult learners regarding their EFL teachers are examples of that. Furthermore, Golfam and Nahavandi's (2021) investigation of the effects of

explicit metaphor instruction in developing speaking and listening skills, and their similar study (2022) with respect to reading and writing in an Iranian EFL context, and Zambon Ferronato's (2022) examining of teachers' and students' metaphorical beliefs about EFL learning and their mutual relationships are other studies in this category.

In addition, a series of extensive heuristic studies conducted by Farjami (2012a, 2012b, 2012c & 2018) can be regarded as the best examples of metaphor analysis in the context of ELT pedagogy in Iran. Farjami (2012a) reviewed 130 analogies in his study of English learners' metaphors and images of vocabulary learning and found *food & drink*, *collecting*, *journey*, *puzzle/problem*, and *music* as the five most frequent themes that emerged from the analysis. His similar study on "grammar learning" (2012b) based on content-analysis of thirty-nine completed forms also revealed that *constructing and structures* (13.66%), *thebody of rules* (12.94%), *problem-solving* (10.07%), and *playing games* (5.75) are the learners' most frequent images. Yet another study by him (2012c) in the broader context of "foreign language learning" involving 200 students extracted 229 themes the top five of which were *exploration*, *sports and physical activity*, *journey*, *food*, and *personal growth*. Frajami's most recent study (2018) aimed to compare the metaphorical orientations of Iranian male and female English learners to assess the ways the two genders visualize the nature of learning English and suggested that the lack of serious difference between the two revealing the stronger influence of socialization and converged beliefs. In another study (Xu et al., 2022), images and metaphors of Iranian EFL learners about English were explored through multimodal analysis. The concepts extracted portrayed the learners' positive attitudes, enthusiasm, and desire for English learning and suggested that most of the visual and verbal metaphorical representations depict language learning as a joyful, dynamic, and discovery individual process. Also, in a very recent investigation of the mental images of Saudi EFL students, while learning a foreign language (Al-Dawoody Abdulaal et al., 2023), most of the metaphorical representations portrayed language learning as an exciting and uniquely personal experience. Few of them, however, represented learning English as an awful experience.

Considering the invaluable role analysis of learners' metaphors have on ELT's policies and practices and despite numerous attempts some of which pointed to above, cognitive metaphors and mental pictures the students of various disciplines hold are not yet well investigated and dealt with. This is especially required with regard to ESP classes as they should be bound to the specific needs and tastes of their distinct target communities. There exist very few studies employing metaphor analysis in ESP courses. In her study, Velasco Sacrist en (2014) argued for the inclusion of metaphor in a business English course as a useful tool for raising awareness about the key concepts,

models, and issues and improving reading and translation skills. Plus, Ishak (2019) explored the Indonesian teachers' (N = 30) and students' (N = 50) perceptions of the ESP teaching and learning process. In this study, the metaphors analysis showed that most students held a neutral attitude about ESP courses and the teachers conceptualized that as a physical activity requiring process, careful measurement, effort, preparation, and time.

If EFL teachers are fully aware of their students' beliefs, thoughts, and impressions of learning a new language, they can modify their teaching activities in a way to suit the students' needs (Al-Dawoody Abdulaal, 2023). Understanding students' beliefs will also "contribute to improving teaching and learning" (Zambon Ferronato, 2022, p. 115). However, analysis of the 'perceived' needs of the students in ESP classes is almost absent in the ESP research literature. Therefore, this paper aims to shed light on the area now to reveal more about the schematic pictures media ESP students hold revealing their tastes and needs concerning English learning and their ESP courses. Accordingly, the research questions this study was to answer were decided on as follows:

- **Research Question 1:** How do students of media evaluate their fields of study? (i.e., what do they generally think of their majors)?
- **Research Question 2:** What is the attitude of students of media about learning English?
- **Research Question 3:** How do students of media feel about their ESP courses?

### 3. Method

The design of the study is both descriptive and qualitative. The researcher aimed to delve into the conceptual metaphors and images of students of various media-related fields about their field of study, English learning, and their ESP courses (as representative of their unconscious true expectations). Hence, the study mainly involves the codification of their personal narratives.

#### 3.1. Participants

The study was conducted in one of the unique universities across the Middle East, IRIB University. The university is affiliated with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and operates under the license and regulations of Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT). It is the leading academic institution specializing in media in Asia with a history spanning over five decades. The university, with more than 1000 students, presents a wide range of courses in the field of media leading to bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees.

Due to the context of the targeted ESP courses and the nature of the audience, convenience sampling opted for this study as recommended by Dornyei (2007). The respondents were Persian native speaker sophomore and junior students enrolling in various ESP classes studying at IRIBU during four consecutive semesters beginning in the Fall of 2021 most of whom with lower-intermediate or intermediate English proficiency levels because of which the medium of instruction of the ESP courses under investigation was mostly Persian.

Their majors and grades included electrical engineering (telecommunications) (B.A.), directing (B.A.), journalism (B.A.), digital graphic design (B.A.), TV production (M.A.), dramatic literature (M.A.), and media studies (Ph.D.) offered in two different campuses of IRIBU in Tehran and Qom and their age ranged from 18 to 30 ( $M = 24$ ) with the majority in their lower 20s. Totally, 153 students participated in the study including 105 males and 48 females. Their demographic details are as follows:

**Table 1**

*Demography of Participants*

Major	Male	Female	Total
B.A. in electrical engineering (telecommunications)	17	3	20
B.A. in directing	24	11	35
B.A. in journalism	10	10	20
B.A. in digital graphic design	2	13	15
M.A. in TV production	35	9	44
M.A. in dramatic literature	3	12	15
Ph.D. in media studies	3	1	4
Total			153

### 3.2. Materials and Instruments

A researcher-made open questionnaire was designed to delve into the students' overall conceptions and ideas of their own majors, English learning, and their media ESP courses. The items didn't directly ask the participants about their preferences in the form of direct explicit questions. Instead, in order to have more reliable 'personal' data and probe the students' revealing mental pictures and images expressed in metaphorical language, it was decided to focus on the students' 'cognitive metaphors'. As previously stated, the rationale was based on Lakoff and Johnson's *Cognitive (or Conceptual) Metaphor theory* first appearing in their classic *Metaphors We Live By!* (1980). Conceptual metaphors are helpful devices to understand complex ideas in simple language. The questionnaire for this study was adopted from

Lawley and Tompkin (2004), Farjami (2012a), and Zambon Ferronato (2022) who recommended sentence completion as a desired conceptual metaphor elicitation technique that “neither contaminates nor distorts the students’ metaphorical expressions” (Farjami, 2012a, p. 25) and actual mental images.

Due to the nature of the study and the necessity of gaining indirect insights, the questionnaire was decided to be short, open, researcher-made, and context-tailored with simple and straightforward diction letting the respondents fill in the blanks with any words/sentences which could best describe their cognitive metaphors (as representing their *inner voices*). For the sake of crystal clarity of the items for the students and their openness and comfort to express whatever they felt, it was originally in Persian. The questions included were written like “*X* (the targeted concept) *for me is* (please complete the sentence. It can be also one full paragraph)” (see Appendix A). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), as we are mainly dealing with “the narrative inquiry” in qualitative research, the questionnaires are either semi-structured or unstructured. Therefore, the reliability and validity of the tools are not usually statistically tested and numerically measured and reported but there are certain criteria to increase the “rigor” and “trustworthiness” of the research. Hence, the three-item open-ended questionnaire was checked by five EFL experts for its validity (content, appropriateness, etc.). Inter-coder reliability (ICR) was also calculated for the instrument using Cohen’s Kappa yielding the value of 0.79, which expresses a “sufficient” value (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 1074).

Following the results gained from the analysis of the questionnaires, the researcher attempted to cross-check the opinions expressed by the participant students. Hence, a short open inventory consisting of four main questions focused on various aspects of the study’s very concern was developed, validated (following the steps previously conducted for the questionnaire), and applied. The questions asked about the ‘English’ the students receive in their ESP courses, students’ satisfaction with those courses and if their professional needs are met, the top two lacks in the courses, and their suggested solutions for them (see Appendix B).

### **3.3. Procedure**

The data for this study were collected with the aim of gaining instant feedback from a wide variety of media English courses at all levels (B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.) at IRIBU. To have the most honest and iconic narratives, after clarification of the study’s purpose for the participants, they were made sure that the answers will only be used for study purposes and that there would be no impact on their scores. The questionnaires were handed to the participants at the beginning of the corresponding classes or were delivered online and as requested, were returned individually at the end with sufficient time allowed. The responses were in the form of sentence frames all



representing metaphorical analogies about the students' fields of study, learning English, and the target ESP courses. If in Persian, the written expressions and narratives were first carefully translated into English (by the researcher himself who is a native speaker of Persian) and then analyzed with all their implied metaphors and pictures on target.

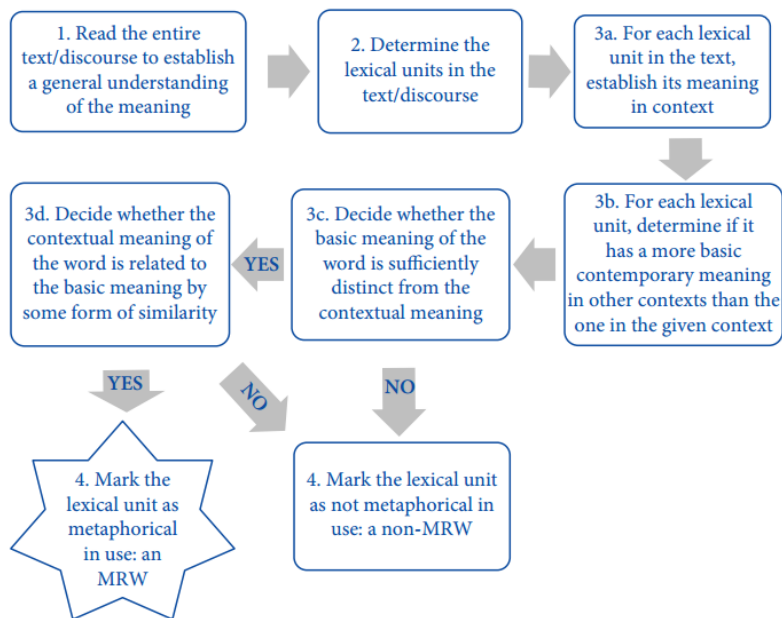
### **3.4. Data Analysis**

As recommended by Denzin and Lincoln (2018), content analysis was found the best in suiting the situation involving codifying the words and sentences students expressed in their responses, with the aim of determining specific characteristics within them. In the present study, the words and phrases applied acted as the 'units' of analysis, and the concepts that emerged were taken as 'codes' of analysis. Different segments of the answers were carefully observed and the concepts were indicated through targeting and data-reduction way of subsumption (the inclusion of unifying concepts under the same category). Following Nacey's (2013) *Metaphor Identification Procedure* (MIP) (figure 1 below), the streams of responses (students' narratives) were carefully analyzed and evaluated for the themes and motifs which were attached to them and emphasized (lexical units). Then, the determined codes were calculated for their frequency and relative portion. This is sometimes called "quantitative content analysis" and can produce reliable findings confirming the scientific method (Macnamara, 2005, p. 5).

The resulting data were tabulated depicting the 'themes' standing for students' ideas on (a) their majors, (b) English learning, and (c) their media ESP courses, and their frequency. It is noteworthy that the number of themes did not necessarily correspond to the number of participating students as it was possible that in each response, more than one principal theme was expressed and extracted. As the process of extracting themes was relatively interpretive, the whole process was also checked with two EFL experts to avoid any sort of ambiguity. Hence, in accordance with Denzin and Lincoln's (2018) recommendation, the data (narratives) were presented to them and they were each asked to carefully check the accuracy of the interpretive labels assigned. The extracted themes and categories were approved by both of them.

**Figure1**

*The Outline of Metaphor Identification Procedure (Nacey, 2013, p. 69)*



## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

#### 4.1.1. Questionnaire Results

In this section, the tabulated results corresponding to each of the targeted questions of the questionnaire are presented. The participants were first asked about their personal views on their own academic majors. According to the findings from the first section of the study (students' opinions on their fields of study) in response to the first research question, a two-sided picture was drawn by a great majority of students: prioritizing occupational concerns focused on 'welfare' (e.g., job security, income, etc.) though with no marginalization of the 'interest' and 'passion'. Furthermore, diverse horizons were painted by the students from different fields of media, again at least with a double face: technological ambitions combined with an eagerness to gain more expertise (in the case of engineering students) and artistic/creative/aesthetic interests with a great passion to both 'create' and 'influence others' (the case of students of directing, production, graphics, & drama). Table 2 summarizes the findings after which some highlights of the expressed narratives are also displayed.

**Table 2**

*Students' Images of Their Fields of Study (Question 1)*

Extracted Themes	Majors (m/f)							Total
	EE	D	J	DG	T	DL	M	
Interest/passion/enjoyment/identity/attractiveness/imaginatio n/mind full of ideas/creativity/experience	4/3	10/-	-/3	1/4	9/-			34
Creating a better life/lived experience for others /influencing others/ Transferring comfort and beauty to others		9/1		1/1	8/1	2/1	2/-	25
Reaching goal/ideal	2/1	7/-		1/7	6/-			24
Creating artistic/aesthetic/creative work		6/-		1/-	6/1	1/1		16
Job security/earning money	3/2	3/-		1/3	1/-			13
Voicing the voiceless/ Reminding the world of 'independence'/visiting (mis)leading (media)		3/-			4/1		1/1	10
Gaining skill/experience/expertise	2/2							4
Group work/teamwork/leading		2/-			2/-			4
Traveling the world of great authors/screenwriting /ideas on paper						1/3		4
The dialectic between science (humanities) and art						3/-		3
Entering the world of colors				-/2				2
Learning everything		-/1				-/1		2
Living wishes/dreams		2/-						2
Social prestige	-/1	1/-						2
Dealing with issues of society		1/-						1
Keeping up with technology	1/-							1
Portraying thespiritual dimension of human		1/-						1
<b>Updated equipment</b>						1/-		<b>1</b>

\*EE = electrical engineering, D = directing, J = journalism, DG = digital graphic design, T = TV production, DL = dramatic literature, M = media studies  
 \*\*m = Frequency for Males, f = Frequency for Females

*Highlights from the student's views on their fields of study*

- Student A: “TV production for me is seeking the truth, an adventure, reaching an artistic art within a group and in a space belonging to the audience, which can take him/her to various aspects of life!” (Participant No. 94, studying M.A. in TV production)
- Student B: “An interesting mixture of science and art, to truly understand dramatic works and create pieces via adding creativity to sharpen the audience.” (Participant No. 149, studying M.A. in dramatic literature)
- Student C: “Moving toward a comprehensive understanding and analysis of the media world to be more influential in this multi-sided competition.” (Participant No. 150, studying Ph.D. in media studies)

Extracted Themes	Majors (m/f)							Total
	EE	D	J	DG	T	DL	M	
Cmmunication/familiarity with foreigners/the world/understanding the others	5/-	8/1	1/2	2/4	5/1	-/3		2

Gaining updated Technical/academic knowledge/growth	6/1	6/2	1/3	8/-	1/1	1/-	0	
Frustration/boredom/difficulty/confusion higher the/stress/an obligation in education system	1/1	10/-	-/1	-/3	4/1	3/-	-/1	5
The opening door to a new world	1/-	/1	1/4				0	
Enjoying English magazines, YouTube, Instagram /series/reading instruction of devices	1/1	3/-	-/1	-/2	1/1	-/1	1	
Dealing with my interest/passion	-/1	4/-	-/1	-/1	-/2	1/-	0	
Investment for my future/advancement in job the	1/-		-/4					
Conveying national culture/identity/ideology/history, etc.	2/-	1/-	1/-					
Changing views about Iran/introducing Iran/domestic tourism	3/-							
Knowing international media better						2/1		
Perfect mental exercise/confidence		1/2						
Removing differences to reach a shared understanding		1/-		1/-				
Enjoying English rhythm				-/1				
Tasting the bitter 'colonialism' days				1/-				

The students were, then, asked about their viewpoints on learning English. The aim was to check their mental images of the concept, which can be, largely, in line with their both backgrounds and expectations. Here, the language was pictured in positive images; more as a means of 'gaining updated technical/academic knowledge for growth' by the engineers while for almost all of the other participants, the *interactional* function of English was highlighted; it mainly acted as a door to communicate with the rest of the world. From these two sections, it can be generally inferred that engineering students preferred the 'scientific' dimension of the English prism while the other students (studying more 'art-related' majors), in a sense, opted for the open, subjective, qualitative, aesthetic, fluid and social dimension, more. Table 3 summarizes the findings and after that, highlights of the students' narrative responses are presented.

**Table 3**

*Students' Images of "Learning English" (Question 2)*

\*EE = electrical engineering, D = directing, J = journalism, DG = digital graphic design, T = TV production, DL = dramatic literature, M = media studies

\*\*m = Frequency for Males, f = Frequency for Females

*Highlights from the student's views on learning English*

- Student A: “With all due respect, learning English is, for me, the hardship! difficulty! suffering! So frustrating!” (Participant No. 21, studying B.A. in directing)
- Student B: “For me, English learning is a way to extend and strengthen social, cultural, and educational relationships with a world beyond a country and in parallel with that, scientific, cultural, and social progression to best access my goals!” (Participant No. 64, studying B.A. in Journalism)
- Student C: “A tool to access the unlimited number of academic resources without which we will deprive ourselves of a rich world full of thoughts, ideas, and theories.” (Participant No. 153, studying Ph.D. in media studies)

After that, the respondents indicated their metaphors of the ESP courses they experienced. As stated earlier, the students’ expressed words and/or phrases were carefully checked, codified (subsumed under more inclusive categories), and then counted. In response to the third research question, most of the students clearly indicated a gap between their expectations from their ESP courses and the ones they received. The comments of this section were diverse but can be summarized under three categories: (a) ‘impracticality’ of the courses, (b) lack of ‘updated’ materials, and (c) being ‘theoretical’, ‘dull’, and ‘unattractive’; the viewpoints generally also approved by their interviews. The results are tabulated below (Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Students’ Images of Their Media ESP Courses (Question 3)*

tracted Themes	Majors (m/f)							
	EE	D	J	DG	T	DL	M	Total
impractical/non-functional/inconvenient/insufficient (5/1)	7/3		15/8	3/2	2/7	21/5		73
purely theoretical a handful of rigid passages/limited/ignorance of oral skills	4/2		12/5		1/8	33/7	1	50
must/necessity	10/2			6/4				22
useful/beneficial	4/3			4/4			1/3	19
boring/dull	2/1		11/4					18
old/outdated	7/3				-/6			16
unattractive					1/11			12
lack of harmony with other courses			4/-					4
waste of time	1/-							1

\*EE = electrical engineering, D = directing, J = journalism, DG = digital graphic design, T = TV production, DL = dramatic literature, M = media studies

\*\*m = Frequency for Males, f = Frequency for Females

*Highlights from the student’s views on their Media ESP courses*

- Student A: “In my field of study, ESP focused on technical aspects of media is not only a need but a must. I think such a course should, however, be more both updated and practical in order to satisfy our operational needs.” (Participant No. 13, studying electrical engineering)
- Student B: “Our field is probably intermingled with special English due to its nature. You know, various updated digital techniques, software, and apps, etc. & their ... believe me ... monthly (if not weekly!) reshufflings and versions. All that means one thing: specialized English we should receive and be exposed to.” (Participant No. 89, studying B.A. in digital graphic design)
- Student C: “Film-making and TV production are digitalized now. Plus, new techniques of shooting and programming are being introduced day by day! We need to equip ourselves with the knowledge via English studies and serious English follow-ups”. (Participant No. 112, studying M.A. in TV production)

**4.1.2. Interview Results**

It was tried to interview at least half of those who completed the questionnaire from each major. Hence, 20 students from ‘electrical engineering’, 17 from ‘directing’, 20 students from ‘journalism’, and eight from ‘digital graphic design’ (all B.A.s), 22 M.A. students of ‘TV production’, eight M.A. participants from ‘dramatic literature’ classes, and finally two Ph.D. students of media studies were asked for their ideas. The answers were recorded, transcribed, and, like the questionnaires, content analyzed and coded for the themes they referred to/implied. The results, corresponding to the four main questions stated in the questionnaire, are as below (table 5):

**Table 5**

*Interview Results for Media ESP Courses*

<i>Question Focus</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Top (Frequency)</i>	<i>Extracted Themes</i>
<i>1. The “Media English” students receive</i>	EE	(15)	theoretical/descriptive passages, translation
	D		
	J	(11)	concepts definition, translation (28)
	DG		theoretical/descriptive passages, translation
	T		
	DL		theoretical/descriptive passages, translation
	M		
	concepts definition, translation (34)		
	theoretical/descriptive passages, translation		
		(4)	concepts definition, translation (4)
	EE	(16)	no/more updated technical pamphlets in my
	D		sector

2. <i>Being satisfied/professional needs</i>	J	no/audio-visual materials (movies, series,
	DG	podcasts) (19)
	T	no/updated written and oral news media
	DL	products (9)
	M	no/updated digital graphic/design software (14)
3. <i>Top two lacks</i>	EE	no/audio-visual materials/production methods and facilities (27)
	D	no/watching masterpieces/authentic scripts (13)
	J	no/audio-visual materials/state-of-the-art references (3)
	DG	outdated books/impractical syllabus (11)
	T	absence of audio-visual materials/insufficient time (23)
4. <i>Solutions</i>	DG	outdated books/mere focus on texts (13)
	T	unattractive references/unnecessary stuff (grammar, etc.) (10)
	DL	absence of audio-visual materials/impractical syllabus (26)
	M	insufficient time/ mere focus on texts (9)
	EE	lengthy frustrating passages/lack of variety (2)
4. <i>Solutions</i>	EE	updating the references/profession-relevant syllabus (11)
	D	considering audio-visual materials/increasing the time (23)
	J	updating the references/adding oral English stuff (13)
	DG	more attractive references/focusing on urgent needs (10)
	T	considering audio-visual materials/profession-relevant syllabus (26)
4. <i>Solutions</i>	DL	increasing the time/ adding oral English stuff (9)
	M	shorter passages/considering various types of English inputs (2)

\*EE = electrical engineering, D = directing, J = journalism, DG = digital graphic design, T = TV production, DL = dramatic literature, M = media studies

## 4.2. Discussion

The results of this study evidenced that to a great extent, art students' metaphorical representations share common perspectives toward learning English. In applied cognitive linguistics, 'trace theory', holds that "repeated encounters with an item help fasten it in memory by leaving traces detectable", and 'dual coding theory' maintains that "association of verbal information with mental imagery aids recall" (Nacey, 2013, p. 32). Such metal images also reveal the students' beliefs about language learning which contributes to

improving teaching and learning and are of utmost importance (Xu et al., 2022; Zambon Ferronato, 2022).

The findings of this study seem to be supported by the same rationales and they accord with a few similar studies conducted; specifically, those of Farjami (2012) and Xu et al. (2022), reporting that most EFL learners visualize foreign language learning itself as an interesting activity. In addition, the results are in line with those of Ishak (2019) whose participants showed positive attitudes toward the ESP learning process. Though some participants recalled English learning with “frustration”, “boredom”, “difficulty”, “confusion”, “stress” and the like which are in accordance with the findings by Al-Dawoody Abdulaal (2023) who came up with some students’ perceptions of their ESP courses as “an awful experience” (p. 1). However, the ideas expressed specifically about ESP courses almost entirely stressed the ‘unattractiveness’ of miscellaneous aspects of the corresponding syllabi and their ‘irrelevance’ to the very professional/occupational needs students were feeling to face in their impending work-related settings.

The simple but significant meaning of the entire participant students’ voiced statements is that details of the ESP courses they experience should, to a great extent, be based on closer attention to their distinct contextual experiences as students of media and arts; a fact that is true for almost all other disciplines. Subject to the findings, it can be argued that multiple aspects of media ESP classes (and similar courses) may be reconsidered in light of both distinct artistic and creative backgrounds and the tastes of the target students, and their professional needs. As various academic/professional communities possess distinct non-generalizable characteristics (Amerian, 2020, 2022), the recommended procedure does not undervalue consideration of the ESP rituals (e.g., context-specific texts and tasks) but also entails serious noticing of the personal feedback received from the students themselves.

## **5. Conclusion and Implications**

This paper tried to accentuate the necessity of reconsidering the ESP courses’ needs analysis procedure by focusing on the target students’ own varying perceptions of their needs (i.e., beliefs about their ‘*wants*’). This is particularly important concerning the students of arts bearing their distinct educational context, varieties, and tastes in mind as shaped by their artistic background, creative tendencies, and the expected career positions in which they need and/or use English.

Zambon Ferronato (2022) simulates the students’ EFL beliefs to “icebergs” which are “invisible but very present aspects” of the language classrooms (p. 117). These beliefs can be best recognized through metaphor elicitation. According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), “Analysis of the metaphors that L2 learners use to talk about their learning can shed light on



how they conceptualize the language they are learning, the process of learning itself and, in particular, the problems and obstacles they experience on the 'learning journey'". (p. 313). Velasco Sacrist En (2014), also, believes that the incorporation of metaphor in ESP programs facilitates the learners' development of EFL conceptual and communicative competence. Farjami (2012a, p. 78) emphasizes that "teachers should take learners' perspective into account in determining how they select, package and present the instructional content". He adds that "learners' metacognitive belief systems" fundamentally influence "their classroom practice and the efficiency with which they tackle various challenges" (p. 79).

The profile of images and metaphors presented in this article are by no means definitive but can noticeably help ELT practitioners make ESP courses for specific academic disciplines more efficient and mission-oriented. In fact, the images students recalled can strongly act as symptoms of the impractical and ineffective syllabi the ESP courses are drawn around. As a road map, they can constructively aid us to modify the educational objectives behind the 'specific' courses, to well identify the correct orientation tied to the distinct requirements of the students and graduates, and to step toward not only target-specified but "learner-centered" classes more.

Metaphors language learners have can themselves be considered essential tools for "investigating our understanding and conception of many educational components such as the teacher, the learner, and the course book" (Farjami, 2012b). With its diversity of motifs and extent of colors, the wonderland of mental pictures, visualizations and metaphors can, based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999) act as bridges to learning. This way, ESP courses' resources, and activities will also benefit from the corresponding metaphor analysis findings. Overall, such studies can considerably raise awareness of ESP decision-makers, planners, and practitioners about the students' less explicit beliefs and requirements vital to consider but absent from the relevant agendas blueprints.

The reason that ESP researchers seem to traditionally attend media-related courses noticeably less than the other fields throughout the literature can be partly traced in the highly-evolved technology-based essence of the field of media (grown much more during the last two decades as a result of revolutions in ICT) which makes careful studying of it and its corresponding courses not an easy task. This paper tried to fill this gap and do it through the new lens of metaphors and visualizations as tools for perception analysis in ESP.

Respecting the study's limitations, it is noteworthy that due to feasibility reasons, class observation (through which it could be possible to compare the participant students' perceptions and those of their teachers) could not be included. Moreover, due to practicality constraints, it was not possible to record and analyze the participants' classroom behaviors and actions (as possibly more revealing of their EFL beliefs already portrayed in their

presented metaphorical sentence frames). The data collection tools could ask the learners more detailed questions, as well, via context-bound descriptive closed items. Last but not least, the impossibility of investigating the perceptions of art students in other majors and/or other universities can be considered yet another limiting factor for the study conducting which could not only increase the sample size and generalizability power of the study but could tell us much more about the distinct tastes of the arts students about their preferences for ESP classes.

Apart from what this paper attempted to investigate, there still certainly exist a number of serious under-investigated areas to study. Just to name a few, first, bearing in mind the ‘contextualized’ nature of ESP courses as their inherent philosophy, focusing on each of the varieties of ESP and/or EAP courses available will undoubtedly uncover multiple considerations to regard in designing more efficient and fully-functional courses. Moreover, cross-gender investigations can reveal much about the contrastive attitudes male and female students may have about different aspects of their ESP courses. Likewise, zooming in on discrepancies among the students’ opinions from different academic degree levels (B.A., M.A. & Ph.D.) can be fruitful. Finally, to yield a multi-sided picture, participant observation can also be added to the data-gathering methods.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Questionnaire

Age: ----- Gender: ----- Field of study (& degree level): -----	
Please fill in the blanks with your own words. لطفا جاي خالي را با کلمات خودتان پر کنید.	
1	<p>رشته ام برای من یعنی ... (لطفا این جمله را کامل کنید. می تواند یک پاراگراف هم باشد).</p> <p><b>English translation:</b> <i>To me, my field of study is...</i> (please complete the sentence. It can be also one full paragraph).</p>
2	<p>یادگیری زبان انگلیسی برای من یعنی ... (لطفا این جمله را کامل کنید. می تواند یک پاراگراف هم باشد).</p> <p><b>English translation:</b> <i>To me, learning English is ...</i> (please complete the sentence. It can be also one full paragraph).</p>
3	<p>کلاس زبان تخصصی ام برای من یعنی ... (لطفا این جمله را کامل کنید. می تواند یک پاراگراف هم باشد).</p> <p><b>English translation:</b> <i>To me, my ESP course is...</i> (please complete the sentence. It can be also one full paragraph).</p>