CURRICULUM RELEVANCE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS: PERSPECTIVES FROM ENGLISH–BUSINESS STUDENTS AT M'SILA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: The introduction of a double major in English and Business at M'sila University represents a significant innovation in Algerian higher education, intended to equip students with interdisciplinary skills aligned with global market demands. However, this promising initiative currently lacks a dedicated English curriculum designed to the specific needs of learners oriented to business studies. Instead, students are required to follow a traditional English program designed for language majors, which raises questions about its relevance, practicality, and effectiveness in preparing students for real-world professional contexts. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), this study investigates students' perceptions of the English element within the double major, focusing on its integration with business studies and its contribution to career readiness. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through a questionnaire administered to first and second year students enrolled in the program during the 2024–2025 academic year. Findings reveal widespread dissatisfaction, with students consistently reporting a lack of connection between course content and their professional aspirations. Modules such as literature and civilization were seen as academically interesting but professionally irrelevant, while students expressed a clear need for practical instruction in business communication, professional writing, and workplace interaction. In light of these results, the study proposes targeted reforms to enhance the curriculum's relevance and impact. The study highlights the need for curriculum redesign grounded in needs analysis, integration of content-based instruction, and collaboration between English and Business faculties to enhance the program's relevance and employability outcomes.

Keywords: Curriculum development; English for Specific Purposes; interdisciplinary education; students' perceptions

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1. Introduction

The English language is essential for students pursuing a degree in Business, as it serves as the primary medium of communication in global commerce, finance, and international negotiations. For Algerian business students, proficiency in English opens doors to international markets, allows access to up to date economic knowledge, and facilitates collaboration with foreign partners and institutions.

In response to these demands, the Algerian government has recently introduced a new double major in English and Business, currently available at only one university in the country. While this initiative represents an innovative approach to combining disciplines, the curriculum has not yet been adapted to suit the specific needs of this unique program. Instead, students are required to follow the traditional curricula of each discipline, as originally designed for students specializing solely in English or Business.

While modules such as Literature, Civilization, and Phonetics contribute to linguistic and cultural awareness, they are less directly applicable to professional business contexts. Some scholars (Hussein, 2025; Olasehinde, 2015) have questioned the relevance of traditional language and culture modules within interdisciplinary programs that combine English with professional fields such as Business.

In contrast, the curriculum would be more relevant if it included targeted subjects such as business communication, technical writing, English for marketing, business correspondence, and cross-cultural negotiation. Adapting the English component of the double major to better align with the realities of the business world would greatly enhance its impact and better prepare students for future employment.

2. Background of the Study

Double majors have emerged as a hallmark of interdisciplinary education, enabling students to acquire broader competencies and enhance their professional prospects. In an increasingly competitive labor market, versatility and adaptability are highly valued, and combining two disciplines is often regarded as a strategic academic choice. For instance, pairing English language studies with Business Administration equips graduates with both linguistic competence and managerial skills necessary for participation in international markets. Such pathways have been associated with enhanced employability, professional enrichment, and cognitive flexibility (Del Rossi & Hersch, 2008, 2016).

In Algeria, the introduction of the Double Licence initiative in 2023 represented a significant step toward aligning higher education with the demands of globalization. The reform allows students to pursue two degrees simultaneously, thereby promoting interdisciplinary training and strengthening employability. Within this framework, the English–Business double major at M'sila University was established as a pioneering model intended to bridge the gap between linguistic proficiency and business literacy. However, the program has inherited a curriculum rooted in traditional literary and linguistic studies, raising questions about its adequacy for students whose primary career trajectories lie in business-related fields.

The importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) becomes particularly evident in this context. ESP scholars emphasize that English instruction should be tailored to learners' disciplinary and professional needs rather than restricted to general linguistic competence. Paek (2025), for example, argues that ESP plays a central role in shaping students' professional identity by allowing them to connect language learning with their anticipated workplace roles. In the case of Business Administration students, this means mastering specialized communicative tasks such as writing business reports, negotiating with partners, and presenting proposals.

Recent studies in ESP and Business English highlight both opportunities and challenges in aligning curricula with professional demands. Wiastuti, Ruminda, and Juhana (2024) report that English courses for business students often suffer from limited authentic materials, insufficient teacher preparation in business discourse, and weak curricular integration. Such issues resonate with the Algerian context, where English departments are still developing expertise in ESP-oriented instruction. Needs analysis research also demonstrates the urgency of curricular adaptation. Maharani (2025), for instance, found that Business Administration students in Indonesia demanded English modules directly related to workplace communication. Similarly, Cahyaningrum and Arroyyani (2024) emphasize that systematic identification of students' communicative requirements is essential for effective ESP program design.

To interpret these issues more comprehensively, the present study draws on the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a pedagogical approach that advocates the simultaneous teaching of subject content and a foreign language. Initially conceptualized within the European educational context, CLIL has gained international recognition as an effective model for developing both disciplinary knowledge and communicative competence (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2007). It emphasizes learning through and about language, positioning language not merely as a medium of instruction but as a core component of cognitive and cultural development (Marsh, 2002).

CLIL's theoretical foundation rests on the *4Cs* framework proposed by Coyle (1999), which identifies four interrelated dimensions essential to integrated learning: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. The Content dimension refers to the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge and skills, while Communication highlights the active use of language for learning and expressing disciplinary understanding. Cognition involves the mental processes that enable learners to construct meaning and engage in higher-order thinking, and Culture promotes the development of intercultural awareness and a global outlook through exposure to diverse perspectives (Coyle et al., 2010). These four dimensions interact dynamically to create learning environments where language serves both as a tool for accessing disciplinary knowledge and as a means of developing academic literacy (Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

Taken together, these insights provide a useful framework for understanding the case of M'sila University. While the English–Business double major holds significant promise, its success depends on how effectively the English curriculum addresses the applied communicative needs of business students. The persistence of traditional modules such as literature or phonetics may limit the program's professional relevance unless reforms are introduced that integrate ESP principles. Against this background, the present study examines students' perceptions of the English curriculum in the double major, with the aim of identifying potential adjustments that would enhance both academic outcomes and career readiness.

Through this lens, curriculum relevance extends beyond linguistic accuracy or content coverage to encompass how effectively the curriculum fosters meaningful connections between language use, disciplinary thinking, and professional practice. Thus, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) serves as both a conceptual and evaluative framework for interpreting the findings of this investigation.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Defining Double Major

A double major refers to an undergraduate academic path in which a student simultaneously fulfils the requirements of two distinct fields of study (Zhu & Zhang, 2021). Rather than earning two separate degrees, the student receives one degree that formally recognizes expertise in both disciplines. This model offers the potential for a more comprehensive educational experience, blending theoretical knowledge with practical competencies. For instance, a student pursuing both English and Business Administration combines linguistic and analytical skills with business literacy and market-oriented thinking. Such interdisciplinary training is increasingly relevant in a globalized economy that values flexibility and competencies across all sectors.

3.2. Advantages and Limitations of a Double Major

Numerous studies have highlighted the advantages of pursuing a double major. Chief among these is the opportunity to acquire a broader and more diversified skill set. Pigden & Jegede, (2016) notes that interdisciplinary academic exposure enhances students' ability to think critically, solve complex problems, and adapt to varied professional environments. From an employment perspective, graduates who combine language proficiency with knowledge specific to this domain, such as business or technology, are often more attractive to employers seeking employees with diverse and transferable competencies (Del Rossi & Hersch, 2008; Grabsch et al. ,2022). Moreover, students with dual academic interests often report higher levels of academic satisfaction and engagement, as the ability to pursue multiple intellectual passions fosters motivation and personal fulfilment (Del Rossi & Hersch ,2016). Additionally, double majors may benefit from a competitive edge when applying to graduate or professional programs, particularly in cases where the combination of fields supports interdisciplinary research or advanced specialization (Brint et al., 2012; Mcdossi, 2023).

Despite these benefits, the pursuit of a double major is not without its drawbacks. One of the most frequently cited challenges is the increased academic workload. Balancing two curricula can be time consuming and stressful, often leaving little room for extracurricular involvement, internships, or study abroad programs (Del Rossi & Hersch, 2008; Fourie-Malherbe et al., 2016). In some cases, students require more than the standard four years to graduate, resulting in additional financial burdens and delayed entry into the workforce (Del Rossi & Hersch, 2016). There is also the concern that depth of study may be compromised, as students might struggle to engage meaningfully with the core material of each discipline when their schedules are overloaded. Brint et al. (2008) further caution that the theoretical and practical alignment between fields can be difficult to achieve, especially in programs where curriculum integration has not been thoroughly planned.

3.3. Historical Development of Double Majors in Algeria

In the Algerian context, the notion of a double major is a relatively recent development. Historically, Algerian universities adhered to a rigid, discipline-specific model shaped by the French academic tradition. This changed with the 2004 introduction of the Licence–Master–Doctorate (LMD) system, which aimed to introduce greater modularity and foster alignment with European standards. However, it was not until January 2023 that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research formally introduced the *"Double Licence"* initiative. This policy seeks to equip students with the interdisciplinary competencies required in an evolving labor market by encouraging the concurrent study of complementary fields.

By the 2024–2025 academic year, several Algerian universities had launched accredited double degree programs, including pairings such as Mathematics and Computer Science and Quantitative Economics and Computer Science. These efforts reflect a broader national strategy to modernize the higher education system and bring it in line with international best practices. A key milestone was the May 2024 workshop organized by the National Erasmus+ Office Algeria, which focused on the implementation of joint, dual, and double degree programs. This event underscored the government's intention to institutionalize interdisciplinary education and foster the collaboration across various departments.

Nevertheless, early implementations reveal significant structural and pedagogical challenges. Many programs, including the English–Business double major at M'sila University, rely on existing curricula that were never designed to intersect. This results in fragmented academic experiences for students and raises serious concerns about the effectiveness and coherence of interdisciplinary training. The present study seeks to address this issue by evaluating the extent to which the English curriculum within this program supports the practical and academic needs of students preparing for careers in business.

4. Methodology Design

This study adopts a descriptive mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to evaluate the relevance and adequacy of the English curriculum within the English–Business double major at M'sila University. The choice of a mixed-methods design was informed by the need to gather comprehensive insights into students' perceptions while also identifying patterns and measurable indicators of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The quantitative strand allows for the collection of standardized data through structured questionnaires, whereas the qualitative component offers a more nuanced understanding through open-ended responses that capture students' individual experiences and recommendations.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of the teaching methods and materials used in English courses?

2. To what extent are English–Business students at M'sila University satisfied with the English curriculum offered in their program?

3. How relevant do students perceive the English curriculum to be in supporting their business studies and professional goals?

4. To what extent do students feel the current curriculum prepares them for real-world business communication and employment?

4.1. *Population and Sampling*

The target population consisted of all first and second year students enrolled in the English–Business double major during the 2024–2025 academic year. Given the limited size of the population (53 students in total) a convenience sampling strategy was employed. This method, while non-random, was considered appropriate due to logistical constraints and the exploratory nature of the study. To ensure ethical rigor, participation was voluntary and responses were anonymized, thereby encouraging students to respond honestly without fear of academic repercussions.

4.2. *Research Instrument*

To answer the research questions, the data collection tool was a questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated through expert review by two faculty members specializing in English language education and curriculum design. The questionnaire was structured into five thematic sections: demographic information, general perception of the English curriculum, integration with business studies, teaching methods and materials, and readiness for the job market. It comprised both closed-ended questions, using Likert scales and multiple choice formats and open-ended items that invited participants to elaborate on their views and suggest improvements. In this study, a 4-point Likert scale was used instead of the more common 5-point format. The main reason for this choice was to avoid a neutral or middle option, which often allows respondents to choose a "safe" position without expressing a clear opinion. By removing the midpoint, participants were encouraged to take a more definite stance, either toward agreement or disagreement, thus providing more conclusive data for analysis (Johns, 2010).

The instrument was administered in English, which corresponds to the language of instruction for the English modules and matched the participants' academic level.

4.3. *Data Collection Procedure*

Data collection was carried out during the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year, between March and April 2025. The researcher coordinated with course instructors to administer the questionnaire during regular English class sessions in order to maximize participation and minimize disruption to students' schedules.

At the beginning of each session, the purpose of the research was explained in clear and simple terms. Students were informed that the study aimed to evaluate the English curriculum in the double major program and that their feedback would contribute to possible curriculum reform. They were assured that participation was voluntary and that refusal to take part would not affect their academic standing. Informed consent was obtained verbally, and students were reminded that they could withdraw at any time without penalty.

The questionnaire was distributed in paper form to ensure accessibility for all participants. Instructions for completion were given in English, which is the language of instruction for the modules under study. Students were provided with clarifications when necessary to ensure full comprehension. On average, participants took 15–20 minutes to complete the questionnaire, after which the forms were collected directly by the researcher.

Of the 53 students enrolled in the program, 50 completed the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 94%**.** According to Babbie (2020), a response rate above 70% is considered justifiable in survey research; thus, the rate achieved in this study can be regarded as excellent. This strong participation reflects both the relevance of the topic to students and the effectiveness of conducting the survey during scheduled classes.

Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness before being digitized and entered into a database for analysis. Throughout the process, ethical safeguards were maintained. Students' identities were kept confidential, and no personal identifiers were included in the dataset. The researcher coded the responses numerically to preserve anonymity while allowing patterns to be identified. The combination of high participation and ethical rigor ensured that the collected data were both reliable and trustworthy.

5. Findings

This section offers a comprehensive analysis of the data collected through the student questionnaire. The findings are thematically organized in accordance with the primary research objectives, with a particular focus on evaluating the perceived adequacy and relevance of the current English curriculum offered to students enrolled in the English–Business double major at M'sila University. The analysis aims not only to describe tendencies but also to interpret students' responses in light of the interdisciplinary nature of the program.

Section A: Demographic Profile of Respondents

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the surveyed students.

Table 1.

Gender Distribution

Gender	Percentage
Female	75.0%
Male	25.0%

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were female (75%), a distribution pattern consistent with trends in language-related fields within Algerian higher education. This predominance of female participants may reflect the increasing engagement of women in academic disciplines that combine English studies with business-oriented programs. It also highlights a broader national tendency toward female participation in humanities and social sciences.

Year of Study:
- 2nd Year: 57.1%
- 1st Year: 42.9%

This balanced representation ensures insights are drawn from students with varying levels of experience within the program.

Section B: General Perception of the English Curriculum

The purpose of this section is to assess students' satisfaction with the English curriculum and its relevance to their business studies.

Student Satisfaction with the English Curriculum

To gauge the overall satisfaction of students, participants were asked to rate their degree of contentment with the current English curriculum on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied).

Table 2.

Satisfaction with the English Curriculum

Level of Satisfaction	Percentage	**Mean**	**Sd**
Very Dissatisfied	32.1%	11.03	00.71
Dissatisfied	25.0%		
Satisfied	7.1%		
Very Satisfied	0.0%		

Very Dissatisfied 1 ;Dissatisfied 2 ; Satisfied 3 ; Very Satisfied 4.

A striking 57.1% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the English curriculum, including 32.1% who were very dissatisfied. In contrast, only 7.1% reported being satisfied, and none indicated strong satisfaction. The mean score of 1.03 further reinforces the predominance of negative perceptions. These results suggest that the current English curriculum may not effectively address students' academic or professional needs, particularly in linking English language learning with business-related competencies.

Such findings point to a potential gap between curricular content and students' expectations for practical and interdisciplinary relevance. This highlights the need for curriculum redesign that integrates more business-oriented communication, applied English skills, and real-world contexts aligned with the students' future professional domains.

Relevance of the Curriculum to Business Goals

Students were also asked whether the curriculum was relevant to their business studies and future career needs.

A majority of 64.3% of respondents indicated that the current English curriculum is not relevant to their business-oriented goals. This finding suggests a noticeable disconnect between the curriculum's content and the practical language skills required in business contexts. The result reinforces the perception that the existing program emphasizes general linguistic competence over applied or professional communication, thereby limiting its contribution to students' future employability and field-specific proficiency.

Most and Least Useful Modules

For this section, students were asked to indicate the module(s) they found most useful in the English program. They were allowed to select more than one option if they considered several to be equally beneficial. Consequently, the total percentage of responses exceeds 100%. In analysing the data, the module receiving the highest percentage of selections was identified as the most frequently chosen and therefore interpreted as the one students perceived as most useful overall. This method highlights the predominant trend while acknowledging the diversity of students' choices.

Table 3.

Most Useful Modules According to Students

Module	Percentage
Written Expression	82.6%
Oral Expression	75.3%
Study Skills	58.4%
Grammar	24.7%
Reading and Text Analysis	24.0%
Linguistics	12.0%
Phonetics	5.7%
Civilization	2.6%
Literature	2.4%

The data from Table 3, reveal a strong preference for practical modules that enhance productive language skills, such as Written Expression (82.6%) and Oral Expression (75.3%). Similarly, Study Skills (58.4%) was viewed as a valuable support module for academic success. In contrast, theoretical modules, including Literature (2.4%) and Civilization (2.6%), were perceived as less relevant to students' academic and professional goals. This clear orientation toward applied language learning reflects students' desire for curricula that prioritize communication, writing, and employability-oriented competencies aligned with business contexts.

Section C: Integration with Business Studies

This section investigates the extent to which students feel the English curriculum prepares them for communication in business contexts.

Curriculum Integration with Business Content

Students evaluated how well the English curriculum incorporated business-related language and scenarios. Their responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not Effective) to 4 (Effective).

Table 4.

Perceived Communicative Effectiveness

Perceived Effectiveness	Percentage	**Mean**	**Sd**
Effective	10.9%		
Fairly Effective	16.4%	2.16	1.14
Poorly Effective	32.1%		
Not Effective	59.4%		

Effective 4 ; Fairly Effective 3 ; Poorly Effective 2 ; Not Effective 1

As shown in Table 4, a substantial proportion of respondents (59.4%) perceived the curriculum as not effective in developing business communication skills, while an additional 32.1% rated it as poorly effective. Only 27.3% considered it even moderately effective (fairly effective or effective). The mean score of 2.16 reinforces the generally negative perception, indicating limited integration between English language instruction and business-related content.

Overall, fewer than 30% of students felt that the curriculum adequately supports their ability to communicate in professional or business settings. This suggests that the English curriculum remains largely theoretical, with insufficient emphasis on specialized vocabulary, authentic business discourse, or context-based practice.

Exposure to Business Vocabulary

To further assess the degree of alignment between the English curriculum and business-oriented learning objectives, students were asked to indicate how frequently they encountered business-related vocabulary in their English courses.

Table 5.

Exposure to Business Vocabulary

Frequency	Percentage
Always	0.0%
Rarely	60.7%
Never	21.4%

The responses reveal a notable lack of exposure to business-specific vocabulary, with 60.7% of students reporting that such vocabulary appeared only rarely in their courses and 21.4% indicating it was never addressed. The absence of consistent, targeted vocabulary instruction suggests a significant gap in the curriculum's ability to prepare students for professional communication in business contexts, an essential component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction.

In open-ended responses, many students recommended the introduction of practical, business-oriented modules, such as English for Business Communication, Internship Report Writing, and Intercultural Communication. These suggestions underscore students' desire for a more applied and career-relevant English curriculum that integrates linguistic competence with real-world professional needs.

Section D: Teaching Methods and Materials

The goal of this section is to understand students' perceptions of the teaching methods and classroom resources.

Engagement with Teaching Methods

Students were asked to evaluate the degree to which classroom teaching methods were engaging and stimulating. Responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Boring) to 4 (Very Engaging).

Table 6.

Engagement with Teaching Methods

Student Perception	Percentage	Mean	Sd
Very Engaging	3.6%		
Engaging	14.3%	1.43	0.86
Boring	32.1%		
Very Boring	21.4%		

Very Engaging 4;Engaging 3 ; Boring 2 ; Very Boring 1

As shown in Table 6, a combined 53.5% of respondents described the teaching methods as either boring or very boring, while only 17.9% found them engaging to any degree. The mean score of 1.43 indicates a generally low level of classroom engagement. These results suggest a need for more interactive, student-centered pedagogical practices, such as project-based learning, simulations, and group discussions that reflect authentic business communication situations.

Use of Authentic Business Materials

Students were also asked how often they were exposed to real-world materials such as business reports, articles, and case studies during their English courses.

Table 7.

Use of Authentic Business Materials

Frequency	Percentage
Always	8.6%
Rarely	39.3%
Never	52.1%

The data in Table 7 indicate limited use of authentic materials, with over 90% of students reporting that such resources were rarely or never used in class. This finding reinforces the perception that the current curriculum lacks practical integration with business contexts. Students' feedback points to a strong call for the inclusion of authentic business documents, case studies, and workplace simulations to enhance relevance, motivation, and communicative competence in professional settings.

Section E: Readiness for the Job Market

This section explores the extent to which students believe the English–Business curriculum prepares them for professional life and future employment contexts.

Confidence in Using English Professionally

Students were asked whether they felt confident using English in professional or workplace situations.

Table 8.
Confidence in Using English Professionally

Response	Percentage
No	57.1%
Not Sure	35.7%
Yes	7.2%

As shown in Table 8, a majority of students (57.1%) reported that they do not feel confident using English in professional contexts, while 35.7% were uncertain about their ability to do so. Only a small minority (7.2%) expressed confidence. These results suggest that despite completing the English–Business program, most students perceive a significant gap between their language training and the communicative demands of the job market.

Preparation for the Job Market

To further assess employability readiness, students were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed the curriculum prepared them for the job market, using a four-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree).

Table 9.
Preparation for the Job Market

Response	Percentage	Mean	Sd
Strongly agree	00.0%		
Agree	00.0%	1.29	0.52
Disagree	46.4%		
Strongly Disagree	35.7%		

Strongly Agree 4; Agree 3; Disagree 2; Strongly Disagree 1

Table 9 shows that a combined 82.1% of respondents (disagree or strongly disagree) do not believe the current curriculum adequately prepares them for employment. The low mean score of 1.29 further confirms the negative perception of the program's professional relevance.

Overall, these findings underscore an urgent need for curricular reform to bridge the gap between academic training and real-world business demands. Students' lack of confidence and perceived unpreparedness highlight the importance of integrating career-oriented communication skills, internships, and practical business projects into the English–Business curriculum to enhance employability outcomes.

Additional Concern

The following excerpts are representative of students' comments gathered from the open-ended section of the questionnaire. These qualitative responses provide valuable insight into learners' attitudes and highlight recurring themes related to curriculum relevance, teaching practices, and professional preparedness:

"I want to learn how to write professional emails, not just analyse poetry."

"Business English should be a part of every semester."

"The lectures are boring. We need real situations and more speaking."

"Add more modules related to internships and professional life."

"It would be helpful to work on presentations and how to talk to clients in   English."

"We need to practice job interviews and real-life conversations."

These voices qualitatively reinforce the quantitative findings, emphasizing students' desire for a curriculum that is practical, interactive, and professionally oriented. Respondents clearly value communicative competence and applied language use over purely theoretical or literary content.

The findings from the study can be summarized in the following points:

- Students perceive a gap between the English curriculum and their business goals.

- Practical and communication-based modules are preferred.

- Business content and authentic materials are notably absent.

- Teaching methods are perceived as outdated and disengaging.

- Most students do not feel prepared to use English in professional settings.

These insights collectively point to the urgency of integrating business-specific language content, enhancing interactivity in instruction, and aligning academic preparation with real-world business demands.

6. Discussion

The findings from the present study reveal a significant disconnect between the existing English curriculum and the professional aspirations of students enrolled in the English–Business double major at M'sila University. The results highlight students' dissatisfaction with curriculum content, teaching practices, and the lack of integration between language learning and business applications. Interpreted through the lens of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) theory (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), these outcomes emphasize the absence of a clear needs analysis, a cornerstone in ESP curriculum design, which should ensure that language instruction reflects learners' professional goals and communicative needs. The section below explores the key trends and patterns that emerged from the investigation.

6.1 Curriculum Relevance and ESP Alignment

Students' perception that the curriculum lacks relevance to their business studies and future careers reflects a fundamental misalignment between course content and target situation needs (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). ESP theory posits that effective language programs should derive their objectives from the specific contexts in which learners will use the language. The predominance of general linguistic content, rather than business-related

discourse, suggests that the curriculum remains anchored in a General English (GE) model, which limits its capacity to prepare students for the workplace.

Similar findings have been reported by Del Rossi & Hersch(2016), who observed that interdisciplinary students in China perceived language curricula as too generic and disconnected from their secondary fields. Likewise, Anthony (2018) argues that ESP instruction must bridge academic learning with professional practice through task-based and context-specific materials. The findings from the present study, thus underscore the theoretical necessity of curricular specificity, as defined in ESP frameworks, for promoting learner motivation and professional preparedness.

6.2 Preference for Practical and Communicative Modules

Students' strong preference for practical modules, particularly Written and Oral Expression, corresponds with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, which emphasize meaningful use of language over rote learning of forms. According to Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence, proficiency requires not only grammatical accuracy but also sociolinguistic and strategic competence, which are best developed through applied, interactive activities. The neglect of such components in the current curriculum explains students' limited confidence in using English professionally.

This pattern echoes the work of Brint et al. (2008), who found that interdisciplinary and pre-professional programs yield higher satisfaction when instruction prioritizes applicability and skill transferability. The findings suggest revising the curriculum to include an ESP-oriented framework.

6.3 Limited Integration of Business Content

The minimal exposure to business vocabulary and professional genres reported by students reinforces the notion of weak domain integration. From a theoretical standpoint, this deficiency contradicts the genre-based approach to ESP (Hyland, 2007), which advocates teaching the rhetorical and linguistic conventions of specific professional communities. Without exposure to authentic materials such as business reports, emails, and case studies, students are unable to internalize the discourse structures necessary for effective participation in business communication.

Comparable results were reported in Rahman (2015), where Bangladeshi ESP students also cited the absence of authentic content as a key barrier to employability. Similarly, Pigden & Jegede (2016) found that interdisciplinary programs lacking real-world application foster a gap between academic learning and market demands. These parallels highlight a theoretical and practical consensus on the importance of contextualization and authenticity in ESP instruction.

6.4 Teaching Methods and Learner Engagement

Student dissatisfaction with traditional teaching methods aligns with constructivist and learner-centered pedagogies, which stress active engagement and experiential learning. The predominance of lecture-based approaches described as "boring" suggests a lack of interactive or project-based methods, which are central to modern task-based language teaching (TBLT) (Ellis, 2003). According to Del Rossi and Hersch (2008), student engagement and perceived relevance are directly linked to pedagogical variety and the incorporation of real-life communication tasks.

The M'sila findings corroborate this theoretical stance: when learners perceive instruction as detached from authentic practice, motivation declines. Integrating case-based learning, simulations, and collaborative projects could therefore foster higher engagement and strengthen the communicative competencies required in professional settings.

6.5 Job Market Readiness and Employability Theory

The finding that over 80% of students feel unprepared for the job market highlights the curriculum's failure to meet the employability framework proposed by Yorke (2006), which defines employability as the development of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes that enable graduates to gain employment and succeed in their chosen fields. The lack of workplace-oriented skills in the English–Business curriculum reflects an imbalance between academic knowledge and professional capability.

Comparable results from Pigden & Jegede (2016) and Mcdossi (2023) emphasize that interdisciplinary programs must embed career readiness components, such as internships, project work, and professional writing modules, to achieve their intended outcomes. From this theoretical perspective, the M'sila program appears to lack the structural mechanisms that link English language competence with business employability.

Taken together, these findings reveal that the English–Business curriculum at M'sila University reflects a traditional academic orientation rather than an ESP informed, skill-based, and industry-aligned model. Theoretically, this disconnect can be interpreted as a failure of curriculum alignment (Biggs, 1996), where learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment practices are not harmonized with students' professional objectives.

The convergence between students' quantitative responses and their qualitative feedback underscores the need for systemic reform grounded in ESP and CLT principles, promoting learner autonomy, situated learning, and transferable communication skills. Adopting such a framework would not only increase satisfaction and engagement but also align the program with both theoretical models of language learning and labor market realities.

7. Conclusions

This study set out to evaluate the adequacy of the English curriculum within the English–Business double major at M'sila University, a pioneering initiative in Algerian higher education. The results showed a clear gap between the curriculum and the professional needs of students. While the double major itself is innovative, the English program remains rooted in traditional literary and linguistic studies. Students reported dissatisfaction with modules such as Literature and Civilization, which they found academically interesting but professionally irrelevant. In contrast, they valued courses focused on writing and speaking, which are more useful for their career goals.

These findings confirm what ESP scholars emphasize: language learning must connect to the learner's professional context (Paek, 2025; Maharani, 2025). Without such alignment, students struggle to see the value of their English studies in relation to business. The case of M'sila University illustrates this problem. The program promises interdisciplinarity, yet the lack of integration between English and Business creates fragmentation. As a result, students earn two degrees but do not gain the full advantage of combining them.

The study also highlights the need for curriculum reform in Algerian higher education. The Double Licence initiative of 2023 was designed to modernize programs and improve employability. However, innovation at the structural level is not enough. Content and teaching methods must also evolve. For the English–Business track, this means introducing Business English modules, using authentic materials, and applying interactive teaching approaches.

Such reforms would make courses more engaging and more relevant to real workplace demands.

Collaboration across departments is equally important. English and Business faculties should work together in designing and delivering the program. Joint efforts could ensure better integration of knowledge and provide students with coherent learning experiences. Regular feedback from students should also be built into the process, helping the program remain responsive to changing academic and market needs.

More broadly, this study shows that language education must include employability training. Today's students require more than general knowledge. They need practical skills such as professional writing, negotiation, and presentation. Embedding these into the curriculum would prepare them more effectively for international markets and local business contexts.

While this study offers valuable insights into students' perceptions of the English–Business double major at M'sila University, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was confined to a single institution with a relatively small sample of 53 students, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Broader studies involving other universities would help determine whether similar issues exist nationally. Second, data were collected exclusively through student questionnaires. Although these provide useful perspectives, self-reported data may be affected by bias or subjective interpretation. Complementary methods such as classroom observations or teacher interviews would yield a more balanced understanding. Finally, the study was conducted during the early stage of the Double Major initiative, capturing only initial experiences. As the program evolves, future longitudinal research could assess whether curriculum adjustments enhance student satisfaction and professional preparedness.

In light of these limitations, future research should adopt a broader and more comprehensive approach. Studies should extend to multiple institutions and larger populations to enhance the generalizability of findings. A mixed-methods design combining survey data with interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis would yield richer insights into the complex dynamics of interdisciplinary learning. Longitudinal research could further illuminate how students' linguistic and professional competencies develop over time. Additionally, incorporating performance-based assessments would allow for a more accurate evaluation of both language proficiency and applied business skills. Including teachers' perspectives would also provide a more holistic understanding of curriculum implementation and challenges. Finally, comparative analyses across different double major programs could highlight best practices and contextual differences. Addressing these dimensions would strengthen the evidence base for curriculum reform and help Algerian universities ensure that double majors not only broaden academic knowledge but also cultivate the applied skills essential for success in today's competitive job market.

In conclusion, the English–Business double major at M'sila University represents both a progress and a challenge. It demonstrates Algeria's effort to align higher education with global trends. Yet its success depends on meaningful reform of the English curriculum. If redesigned around ESP principles and professional communication, the program can achieve its promise. It can produce graduates who are not only linguistically competent but also ready to compete in a global job market. By taking these steps, M'sila University in particular and other universities across Algeria offering the same training, can propose a more responsive and professionally enriching English program that prepares students not only for academic success but also for competitive participation in the global job market.

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