**1.The Origins of ESP:**

According to Howatt (1984), the term ESP was coined in 1969 in the conference report entitled Language for Special Purposes. Whereas, Coffey (1984) cites 1967 as an arbitrary starting point for ESP. Since then, many researchers have conducted a lot of studies about the origins of ESP, but they do not agree on their findings.

On the one hand, some researchers contend that language was generally recognized as authentic .For instance, in one of the oldest ESP materials as early as 1498: A Little Treatise for to Learn English and French by Winkyn de Worde, learners were taught how to “ merchandise in France and elsewhere in other lands”(Pickett,1988:89). Other materials are cited by scholars such as a book of phrases for tourists that was published in 1576 and courses for science students that were subject specific( Strevens,1977).

On the other hand, other researchers, such as Tickoo (1976) grounded their opinions on the development of ESP in terms of linguistic analysis and in materials selection. They also see scientific language as literature, not complicated but different in terms of vocabulary and degree of elegance (Romo, 2006). Influenced by the work of Darwin, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:6) believe that ESP was not a planned and coherent movement but rather a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends from which they identify three main reasons to the emergence of all ESP: the demand of a Brave New World, a revolution in linguistics, and the focus on the learner. Each of these will be accounted for below.

**(a) The Demand of a Brave New World**

This refers to the historical background of ESP. Indeed, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:6) shed light on two main historical reasons which led to the emergence of ESP: the end of World War II and the Oil Crisis in the 1970s.

As to the first reason, the inflow of refugees and emigrants from Central Europe to England and the United States in the 1930s, all needing practical spoken English, incited the development of books and courses focusing on vocabulary that included basic words for daily life. These textbooks, which provided the tools for non-native speakers (in this case refugees) to function in an English-speaking environment, fulfilled a specific purpose (Pickett, 1989).Special Purpose Language Teaching (SPLT) courses in Japanese, German and English were devoted to the armed forces during World War II in order to track enemy movements (Strevens,1977). The early post World War II era saw an unexampled technological boom with the appearance of new teaching aids such as gramophone, radio and the language laboratory.The fact that English became the international medium of technology and commerce (due mainly to the economic dominance of the United States) and the unprecedented expansion of science and technology engendered “the need for English language teaching” (Munby, 1978).

In this respect it is worth mentioning the UNESCO report issued in 1957, which showed that two-thirds of engineering literature appeared in English but more than two-thirds of the world’s professional engineers could not read English. Thus; a new generation of learners of English emerged. Learners, learning, not just to be cultured, or well educated, but learners who needed English, and knew why they needed it.

\* The second reason accounting for the emergence of ESP **is the oil crises of the 1970s** which sped up the development of ESP as it led to a huge inflow of funds and Western expertise into the oil rich countries which in turn needed English. With the proliferation of great amounts of materials published in English covering almost all fields such as science, technology and particularly business, time and money constraints created a need for cost effective courses with clearly defined goals (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:7). As a result, Teachers of English became more accountable, subject to the needs, wishes, and demands of whoever was paying. English teachers started working not just in educational establishments, but in businesses, where results were expected, and paid for.

**(b) A Revolution in Linguistics**

With the great expansion of the demand for English courses based on learners’ specific needs, the “winds of change” were sweeping across the world of linguistics. Most language specialists turned their back to the traditional aim of linguistics (to describe the rules of English usage ,i.e., grammar).However the new studies shifted attention away from finding the formal features of language usage to discovering the ways in which language is actually used in real communication (Widdowson ,1978).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) indicate that the most important discovery of this research was that the variant of English will change according to the particular context in which English is used. They also argue that “if language varies from one situation of use to another, it should be possible to determine the features of specific situations and then make these features the basis of the learners ‘course.” (1987:7). Thus, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the greatest expansion of research into the nature of particular varieties of English – for instance, descriptions of written scientific and technical English by Ewer and Latorre (1969), Swales (1971), Selinker and Trimble (1976) and others. It is necessary to mention, in passing, that most of the work at this time was in the field of English for Science and Technology (EST) which was regarded as almost synonymous to ESP.

**(c) The Focus on the Learner**

The final reason that Hutchinson and Waters make reference to as having breathed life into ESP has more to do with the development in educational psychology which brought about the emphasis on the central importance of the learners and their attitudes to learning ( e.g. Rodgers , 1969 cited by Hutchinson and Waters ,1987 :8 ).

Similarly, Strevens (1977) makes mention of the existence of a major ‘tide’ in educational thought, in all countries and affecting all subjects. The movement referred to is the global trend towards ‘learner-centred education.

Learners were seen to employ different learning strategies, use different skills, enter with different learning schemata, and be motivated by different needs and interests.

Therefore, the tendency was towards the clear relevance of English courses to learners’ needs and interests that would improve the learners’ motivation and thereby make learning better and faster. The standard way to achieve this was to take texts from the learners’ specialist area-texts about Business to Business students, texts about Biology to Biology students and so on.

Designing such specific courses was a natural expansion of “learner-centred” or “learning –centred” perspectives on ESP.