

Teacher-Perceived Views on Social Responsibility Teaching and Learning in the ESP Classroom

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Abstract—In spite of the prominence of research on social responsibility teaching as a skill for today, managing social responsibility in foreign language teaching settings is still not a very well explored territory, and the ESP classroom is not an exception. The purpose of this paper is to report on a study that examined the ways social responsibility is integrated into ESP classrooms as perceived by the teachers, with a particular focus on their considerations of socially responsible pedagogy that can potentially contribute to students' linguistic and socio-cultural advancement. The study used qualitative interviews with 43 English language teachers from Oman's higher education institutions who shared their understanding of social responsibility and how it is incorporated and addressed in their credit and foundation ESP courses. Data analysis was conducted using a method of rhizo-textual analysis (Honan, 2007). Findings reveal that teachers place social responsibility high in terms of its ethical value and importance for students' future employability. They also indicate that despite the perceived importance, administrative support, ESP curriculum content development, and implementation, social responsibility is on average moderately managed in the ESP classrooms due to a lack of social responsibility perspective in some pre-service teaching courses and in-service professional development, perceived issues with time, design and implementation of in-class and extra-curricular activities. The findings of this research contribute to the literature about the importance of social responsibility and direct further developments, leading to effective social responsibility teaching and learning.

Index Terms—ESP classroom, social responsibility, teachers, higher education, Oman

I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a significant development in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) over the past few decades as it has become a vital force in English language teaching and research (Savas, 2009). Savas (2009) pointed out that in the 1970s, Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters offered teachers a new perspective when introducing the idea of including the content of a subject in teaching language classes. Concerned about effective learning and how this can best be achieved, they highlighted the significance of implementing the subject's content for teaching purposes in a foreign language classroom. Few studies have specifically looked at the importance of learning a language and using it for 'meaningful' purposes (Krashen, 1981). So far, the evidence suggests that the most effective way is learning a language skill and using it in authentic situations (Savas, 2009; Krashen, 1981).

Globalization has demanded a major job market change over the last few decades. This change has affected the 21st-century skills teaching and learning movement, which resulted in new trends emerging in global English language pedagogy and locally contextualized linguistically and socio-culturally diverse English language teaching and learning practices. One of such trends is the expansion of the English language teaching framework. This major trend involves, for example, changes in English language teaching goals and dimensions related to global community recognition of the growing importance of encouraging a sense of social responsibility in students and fostering their social conscience development in addition to maturing competent language use (Sun, 2014). The views are changing, and more language educators globally and locally realize the importance of turning students into constructive agents of social change. However, little research has focused on examining their views about pursuing the development of social responsibility in their teaching and learning contexts. This paper discusses the ways social responsibility is integrated into higher education ESP classrooms in Oman as perceived by the teachers. Particular attention is given to teacher-provided considerations of socially responsible pedagogy that can potentially motivate and further develop students' aptitudes and competencies, respond to their needs, improve their ethical and sensitive behavior, and contribute to their linguistic and socio-cultural advancement and social responsibility.

The insights captured by recent research on social responsibility show that this concept has emerged as a constituent of the social responsibility ethical framework in response to the increasing demand of modern societies to have individuals who are more responsible towards family, workplace, community, and environment (both ecological and

social), do what is just and fair, avoid harm, and are good corporate citizens (Carroll, 2016). The concept has been a success in every aspect and sphere of life, and has undergone significant refinements, applications, and developments (Jakab & Rázi, 2019). According to Venugopala (2015), personal social responsibility is the moral responsibility of every citizen to do the right thing. It is voluntary and about personal integrity, ethics, commitment, and ownership. It is about giving, taking, and striving toward the continuous betterment of society. The aim of this moral principle of an individual engaging in activities, as emphasized by Pacea (2018), is “to improve the lives of others in society” (p.17). Davis et al. (2017), who construct their understanding of personal social responsibility focusing on the concepts of corporate and consumer social responsibility, argue that personal social responsibility describes “the individual's behavior toward and the effects on his/her social and ecological environment through his/her daily decisions” (n.p.). Along the same lines, Yabro and Ventura (2019) believe that social responsibility can be “broadly defined as taking responsibility to behave ethically and with sensitivity toward social, cultural, civic, and environmental issues” (p.4).

From a scholarly perspective, there is a preponderance of studies on social responsibility in different realms and contexts; however, as emphasized by Dyck and Mulej (2014), there is growing awareness of the need to develop a proper understanding of social responsibility “as a vital requirement ... to open new horizons to development” (p.i), especially in a situation when the contextual nature of social responsibility is evident with differences in different contexts (Pompper, 2018). Another prerequisite for examining social responsibility is imbalanced research on the topic with a vast body of research in developed countries. In contrast, lesser attention is given to the developing world, for example, Gulf countries (Murphy et al., 2019), and Oman is not an exception. In this sense, this study contributes to the literature, providing evidence from Omani reality and enriching social responsibility debates.

II. STUDY

Education in Oman functions to develop the Sultanate's cognitive and creative capacity and sustain the political status quo, thereby promoting social cohesion and stability (Wajeha, 2017). It is also tasked to transmit and reinforce Islamic norms and values, stratify learners based on meritocratic beliefs about success and failure, and promote social solidarity through notions of a shared Omani identity. It is “served as a vehicle for social, political and economic mobility” (Al-Wahaibi, 2020, p.1770). Moreover, its purpose is to produce an educated workforce equipped with high-level technological, collaborative, and thinking skills who can contribute to the nation's economic well-being. The core areas of Oman's education, for example, the language content area, are constructed on such pillars as a breadth of knowledge, critical thinking, integration of knowledge and social responsibility (Tuzlukova et al., 2018). Acknowledging the importance of preparing “a generation armed with awareness, knowledge and the abilities required for worthwhile work” (From the speech of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said at the Council of Oman in 2012, as cited in The National Strategy for Education 2040, 2018, p.3), and the significance of social responsibility as a core pillar of Oman's education, this study particularly focused on curriculum, teaching and learning practice in the context of the foundation and credit (ESP) courses at tertiary education institutions in Oman, to explore how social responsibility teaching and learning are integrated and addressed in the classroom as perceived by teachers.

According to Gueye (1990), in developing countries all over the world, ESP teaching through English for development purposes should be necessary. Students should have a better understanding of their roles in their nations' educational and social development. Therefore, Gueye (1990) argues that there is a crucial need to expand more specialized foreign language teaching. This study particularly mainly focused on curriculum, teaching, and learning practice in the context of the foundation and credit (ESP) courses at tertiary education institutions in Oman, to explore how social responsibility teaching and learning are integrated and addressed in the classroom as perceived by teachers. Dyck (2014) contends that “as with all complex systems problems, those of us concerned with education and communication for more social responsibility must begin with points of the system where we have influence for change” (p.2007), and teachers do have it. As stated in Flores (2004), English language teaching is charged with social responsibility, and, therefore, the goal was to give voice to English language teachers and obtain their insights and views.

Recent research emphasizes the role institutions of higher education play in developing social responsibility in students, especially in the extra-curricular activities they are engaged in (Symaco & Tee, 2019). It should be noted that social responsibility in higher education, as stated by Severino-González et al. (2022), “is highly important due to its social impact, which is linked to the role of the institutions of higher education as protagonists or forgers of transcendental changes in society” (p.10). In the current condition of the higher education system, there are highlighted changes in the priorities and requirements of social responsibilities (Rababah et al., 2021).

Regarding the points mentioned earlier, it is necessary to indicate that in response to the Oman 2040 vision that stipulates the unique nature of the Omani society, and the firm belief in balanced and inclusive development, well-being, and prosperity (Moving forward with confidence, 2020), there is need for a continuous rethinking of higher education to implement a paradigm where students' social responsibility will meet the 21st-century workplace requirements.

A. Study Methodology

This was an exploratory study. To investigate the problem and provide details, it was designed and conducted using the qualitative research method of interviews with the English language educators from Oman's institutions of higher

education. The goal was to explore social responsibility teaching and learning practices within foundation and credit ESP courses. It also involved the advancement of understanding of social responsibility construct and effective strategies of social responsibility teaching and learning.

The data selection and analysis were informed by the spatial theory of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and the philosophical rhizome conceptualized by them. Dillon (2016) asserts that “by mapping learning with linear connections, we can make pedagogical assertions regarding what factors and practices promote learning. Alternatively, approaching learning as a rhizome raises new considerations as we trace lines of flight” (p.94). The rhizome, according to Sellers (2005) involves mapping in which a map is “open and connectable in all of its dimensions...[with] multiple entryways” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.12). Rhizomatic analysis was used to consider “dynamically interconnected and continuously changing relationships” (Sellers, 2005, p.34) among identified expressions of pedagogy related to social responsibility in curriculum and teaching practice. Taking a rhizomatic perspective, “a tentative map rather than linear or binary associations” (Dillon, 2016, p.91) was considered.

All participation in this study was voluntary. Ethical approval for the study was received from the Research Committee at the Center for Preparatory Studies at Sultan Qaboos University. Participants were recruited via several emails. They were English language teachers representing the multicultural English language teaching community in Oman. Decisions regarding subject selection for interviews were based on the research questions, theoretical perspectives, and evidence informing the study (Sargeant, 2012). At the stage of teachers’ interviews, we were seeking the verification of support from curriculum documents in guiding teachers in skill-centered pedagogy and applying methods of 21st century-skills’ teaching. Hence, the subjects sampled were able to inform important facets and perspectives related to the study. The representative participants were considered by their role (instructors) and experience in teaching ESP courses at the tertiary education level in Oman. To achieve the appropriate size of the subjects in our study, the concept of saturation that occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information being used (Sargeant, 2012). Forty-three English language educators at governmental and private institutions of higher education across the Sultanate were interviewed. During the interviews, the participants were asked to reflect upon their teaching experience and practice and share encounters on social responsibility teaching and learning in their respective Oman’s higher education institutions.

Deleuzian thought is a “complex system of organic encounters, whose interconnection is creatively interwoven” (Suk, 2016, p.iv) that has been used as “an apparatus of social critique” (Honan, 2004, p.268) in educational research (Clarke & Parsons, 2013; Dugan, 2009). The qualitative data included forty-three teachers’ words in transcribed qualitative interviews with a sub-sample of participants. Viewing these words (episodes) and themes identified in curriculum analysis as rhizomes, a tentative map to visualize lines of the flight was created. These lines of flight led us to individual teaching experiences and teaching episodes.

Through qualitative interviews, large data sets were acquired. To provide detailed data accounts, a method of rhizo-textual analysis that mapped the connections between the individual responses and encounters under analysis was applied (Honan, 2007). The analysis involved such procedures, as data management, description, and searching for discursive plateaus or themes understood as abstract entities bringing meaning. Most of the plateaus or themes matched the interview questions and the researchers’ interest in a more detailed analysis of the aspects related to social responsibility teaching and learning practice in ESP classrooms.

B. Study Findings and Discussion

Understanding participants’ responses and encounters as rhizomatic, enabled producing an account of the linkages and connections between various discursive plateaus or themes, such as, for example, pre-service teacher education, individual views on social responsibility, institutional approaches to teaching social responsibility and English language classroom impact, curriculum and social responsibility teaching, effective strategies and best practices for teaching social responsibility in the ESP classroom, in-service teacher professional development. These themes connected substantial portions of the data and appeared to be significant (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000) concerning the study participants’ perceptions and experiences of teaching and learning social responsibility in the ESP classroom.

Below is a detailed account of each theme.

(a). Pre-Service Teacher Education

In their book *Skills for today: What we know about teaching and assessing social responsibility*, Yarbo and Ventura (2019) contend that “primary and secondary schools have traditionally been charged with developing social responsibility through character education. Colleges have also taken up the call to help their graduates be responsible citizens, listing associated skills as key graduate outcomes” (p.4). However, some participants mentioned a focus on using English language teaching as a tool of positive change in society and the world in most teacher training programs today”, this was not the case with many pre-service teacher education institutions some time ago. Most of the study participants were not introduced to the concept of social responsibility during their pre-service English language teaching education. To exemplify, one study participant noted that social responsibility “was never a topic of discussion.” Some teachers’ encounters included words used to describe uncertainty, for example, ‘yes, but that was a long time ago,’ meaning ‘far in the past, ‘not at all recently,’ ‘something that happened a long time ago. Others noted capturing the idea of social responsibility from the courses not related to their teaching profession. To exemplify, one

participant remembered taking some business courses during her undergraduate studies, and one of the courses discussed “the public goodwill that can be generated when corporations act in socially responsible ways.” Another group of study participants mentioned implicit teaching of social responsibility in pre-service teacher education. For example, one study participant is of the opinion that ‘the very idea of education carries the idea of application of learning in a social context. Often, this social context may be narrowly restricted to an academic frame of reference, but ultimately all learning is social in nature’. Savas (2009) made a similar observation that language teachers should go through a pre-service training program after graduation. Savas (2009) contends that a language teacher should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and proper tools to deal with students in a particular field of study. This, therefore, confirms the study findings where the majority of the participants believe that developing the essential knowledge and skills will greatly significantly help them move forward in the essential topics they will introduce.

(b). Individual Views on Social Responsibility and Managing This in Teaching

Social responsibility means a lot for the English language educators in Oman. The concept involves “acting as an ethical, global citizen who’s interested in creating a better world”, “developing interest in students about the society in which they live and thereby owning responsibility towards the society”, “being a good citizen of the world”, “being aware of social consequences of individual actions and how these actions affect local and wider community including the natural environment, and using that awareness to guide our actions to contribute towards the welfare of our society”, “following ethical code which helps in understanding the difference between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’”, “being an active citizen and the one who is responsible for social issues and concerns in the society”, “thinking about the welfare of the society we live in”, “thinking, learning and behaving beyond one’s own self-centered box to care for oneself, for the others and for the environment”, “thinking about the common good and trying to make a difference in society and worldwide”, “working together to make a positive difference”, “being a global citizen, i.e., being aware of issues at both local and global level, namely, issues related to the environment, human rights, intercultural relationships, socio-economic issues, etc.”. “being able to ‘live in other’s shoes’ to the process of working towards world peace without sacrificing integrity”, “following the law, not being an unnecessary burden on society, helping others when possible”, “being a critical thinker and enabling use of education skills and talent to further support and initiate the change required for the well-being of the community and society to the highest possible degree”, “reflecting equally seriously on anything that needs to be bettered”, “contributing to the development and reform of the society with your knowledge, skills and expertise”, “setting a good example to students and being a good role model for them”, “treating them fairly and equally and showing them respect (which must be reciprocated) and respect for each other”, taking responsibility for one’s actions”, “being culture-sensitive and aware of a wide range of local and global issues and addressing them through teaching”. Even if diverse in wording, these self-perceived views on social responsibility have shared values and give thought to its importance for students’ present and future employability.

Though many of the participants think that they come across as ethical and socially responsible teachers in the sense that they “try to conduct themselves with personal integrity” and “hope all their teaching is based on making students more socially responsible” and do their best to “make each learner think carefully and logically” and “promote self-study”. They also think that they “may fall to some degree” and not often “draw attention to the concept of social responsibility to the students in a larger societal sense”, or integrate it into their classes “to a certain extent only” by incorporating “various activities and approaches”, for example, “when using a problem-based learning (PBL) approach where students are engaged in researching socio- scientific issues in team-based projects”. Other participants believe that “teachers are preparing members of the society, so every teacher does this consciously or subconsciously” and do their best to manage social responsibility in their language classrooms. To illustrate, one of the study participants contends, “I do manage social responsibility to the best of my capabilities. My lesson always has an element that transcends the classroom and relates to the real world outside. This element is usually NOT pre-planned; it is by and large imposed by and improvised during classroom interactions. It often consists of reminding students of their duty towards themselves as individuals, their families, and their community, drawing their attention to positives and negatives in daily practices, providing hints to handle different situations, and pushing towards collaborative ways of thinking and togetherness”.

In the opinion of the participants, though there is always ‘not enough time’, teaching English should not be limited to “teaching subject per se because teaching is educating”. English language teachers have many hats, and “one of them is the progression of students’ minds”. They think that social responsibility is “never too late to be taught”, and “including it in a curriculum at the university level would make students so much more thoughtful, considerate, and of critical thinking”. Teachers also believe that they “try to conduct classes fairly, justly and with integrity” which are “at the root of social responsibility”. Flores et al. (2004) note that for English teachers to regard social responsibility as integral to their teaching and learning environment, this should be reflected directed to the institution they are teaching at. They indicated that the principles of social responsibility should be embedded in the institution's vision, mission and values. For example, one participant shared the following individual experience related to managing social responsibility in her ESP foundation program class: “I try to make my teaching activities varied to cater to multiple intelligences and learning styles as well as a group centered on giving students the feel of a group. Students are encouraged to participate in whatever way they can, but they have to respect and support each other. They are allowed to express their opinions about the effectiveness of teaching methodologies, classroom activities and assignments”.

(c). *Institutional Approaches to Teaching Social Responsibility and English Language Classroom Impact*

Worldwide there has been a massive focus from governments on their education and development policies to reinforce the important role that the higher education sector plays in the development of their individuals concerning socioeconomic advancement (Symacom & Tee, 2019). According to the study participants, their home institutions of higher education do their best to introduce the idea of a student owning social responsibilities through identifying social problems and exploring the issues in detail to find out remedies, focusing on the impact of actions on the community, encouraging and promoting extra-curricular activities and peer support. In the words of one study participant, social responsibility “is embedded implicitly in the mission that states the delivery of quality student-centered learning methodologies that prepare students for the contribution to the national labor market, with strong academic, technical and personal skills”. As specified by this participant, “professionalism, teamwork, creativity and innovation and communication are among the values that the institutions value and try to get across to the students”. In the academic context, there is a strong understanding of the importance of the courses, including ESP courses, to incorporate social responsibility to prepare students for meaningful lives of academic, civic and ethical engagement. To illustrate, as specified by one study participant, the outlines of the ESP courses specify that graduates should “relish good citizenship qualities, be conscious of their national identity and be socially responsible, engage in community affairs and be mindful of contemporary issues.” However, in conformity with the views of the participants, their ESP classes contribute to this approach only to a minimum extent by “following the problem-based and project-based principles and approaches in finding out the issues and exploring feasible solutions to these real-time issues” as encountered by one of the participants. There is also a reference to social responsibility, for example, in the study skills component of the foundation program ESP courses, e.g., how to be a responsible person, how to be accountable for your own education, and how to be a part of the community and be responsible for the community. As claimed by another teacher-participant, the concept of social responsibility “is a very complex one and needs to be discussed and defined”. Consequently, in the opinion of this participant, perceptions and beliefs “are different,” thus impacting teaching practice that “requires a clearer understanding of the concept of social responsibility and the attributes of a socially responsible person”.

(d). *Curriculum and Social Responsibility*

Strong supporters of the role of ESP courses in nurturing students’ individual and social responsibilities, the majority of the participants agreed that “the curriculum will not be the only influence on students’ perceptions of socially responsible issues because many will have been exposed to the influence of the media, political debate, and peer pressure; yet the real vehicle of understanding and change will be the teaching and learning strategies implemented in the higher education curriculum” (Wade, 1999, cited in Barber & Venkatachalam, 2013, p.393). One participant noted that “the end result depends on the implementation of the strategies or approaches”. According to this participant, it is also important to consider how we approach students, the environment in which teaching is taking place and the administrative support that is provided. As explained by one study participant, teachers may not always be aware that they are communicating social responsibility to students in the classroom by playing a part, setting a good example and being a good role model for the class as a whole and for individuals in the class, which “ultimately spreads into society as a whole”. This corroborates with Barber and Venkatachalam (2013) who consider the development of curriculum, pedagogy, and delivery methods best practices as key components of training students in social responsibility.

In the teacher-participants’ opinion, well implemented strategies by higher education institutions can have a profound impact on the personalities of students and cultivate social responsibility. This is because these institutions can play a major role in creating socially enlightened and responsible citizens who think for the good of society and the world and try to make a difference by “modelling social responsibility through their policies, interaction with the public, attitude towards employees and students and teaching and research activities”. In regard to students’ understanding, it is worth highlighting that, as stated by Irwin et al. (2019) the institutions of higher education have to encourage students to be involved in social matters and to volunteer as this will increase in return their strength, community engagement, and their future job opportunities. In likewise manner, “developing a curriculum which features corporate social responsibility will nurture a new generation of entrepreneurs who leave a positive impact on society, thus forging cultural change on a global level” (The rise of social responsibility in higher education, 2019, p.11).

The participants believe that the concept of social responsibility is embedded in the ESP curriculum of higher education institutions; however, the extent of this incorporation is minimal, for example, through problem-based projects in credit ESP courses and work on 500-word reports in foundation ESP courses. Also, one participant talked about the reading component of the ESP courses. Some texts, for example, “involve fostering the skill of community building, teamwork, and social learning” thus helping develop students’ “communication skills that can be a crucial part of social responsibility”. According to this participant, they are also helpful “to show empathy, build a collaborative learning community and provide caregiving”. In the opinion of another participant, social responsibility entails problem solving that “is emphasized in the curriculum through problem/project-based learning, teamwork, peer evaluation, ethical considerations, e.g., academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, and promoting discipline, e.g., punctuality, class attendance, meeting the deadlines, respecting and following rules and regulations”. It also involves problem spotting for social growth, and this aspect, as explained by this study participant “requires critical literacy and is on the margin”.

(e). *Effective Strategies and Best Practices for Teaching Social Responsibility in ESP Classroom*

Honan and Sellers (2006) contend that understanding texts as rhizomatic does not only enable the production of an account of the linkages and connections between discursive plateaus operating within a text but also involves mapping the connections between these plateaus and those operating within other texts. Yarbro and Ventura (2019) highlight a number of effective strategies for enhancing social responsibility “including problem-based learning, case-based instruction, interacting with diverse groups of people, and providing structured opportunities to practice and engage with real-world situations relevant to social responsibility” (p.4). The analysis shows that these strategies are also described as effective by the study participants. To exemplify, such methodologies, as interactive seminars, group discussions, team learning through projects and assignments “to promote team spirit, communication and respect of each other's work”, self-learning through library reference; community-based projects, audio-visual (based on learners' exposure to audiovisual materials), guest lectures; workshops and portfolios could be helpful for students' development as socially responsible individuals. According to the account of one of the participants, no matter what activities are chosen, they should be compatible with the cultural set-up of the local community to lead to meaningful teaching and learning of social responsibility. For example, project work that is an integral part of foundation and credit ESP courses “seems to be the most effective instructional approach because it involves activities like group work, group discussions, collaborative reading and writing and self-directed library research and helps in development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills and social responsibility”. Also, “selection of reading and listening activities, which focus on national and global issues give students opportunities to explore real world problems similar to investigative field trips, collaborative writing and portfolios”. In a similar way, study participants emphasize the importance of situating the instructional approaches that support social responsibility teaching and learning in student and community needs, including learning objectives that are explicitly associated with both language proficiency and the development of skills, attitudes and ethics necessary for the job market, and extending such widely used activities leading to inculcating a sense of social responsibility, as group work, project work, student-led inquiry and self-directed learning outside the classroom. They believe that community-based projects, field trips, charity-focused events, and extracurricular activities, such as competitions, contests, clubs, e.g., social club, entrepreneur club, as well as environmental activities, e.g., beach cleaning, designing posters about the world and its safety, serving as tutors, holding important places in the student council, helping peers and families, social gatherings, volunteering, community service and peer teaching improve students' social skills and help them realize their role in constructing their future, and the future of economic and social development in their community.

According to the participants' teaching experience, it is important for the ESP courses and out of class activities to incorporate social responsibility to help students to better prepare for meaningful lives of academic, civic and ethical engagement. With reference to incorporating social responsibility teaching and learning, one study participant noted that “our students will need to naturally fit into the future social paradigm and become caring citizens”. Consistent with this view, another participant contended that “an important objective of English language teaching is to cultivate good social attitudes and skills in youth to make them good members of their nations and the world; therefore, they should be enabled to think across boundaries and for the common good”. Literally, English language teaching should not be neutral and should not be limited to mainly training students as a future workforce. In addition to helping students to gain the language and academic skills they need skills for vocational purposes, and social responsibility should be instilled in them as explained by one study participant.

(f). *In-Service Teacher Professional Development*

When asked about the support (academic/professional/administrative) that teachers would like to have as educators to prepare students to be socially responsible citizens in the future, the majority emphasized the role of administrative support, e.g., encouragement of active learning by providing support for enabling engagement in community-based projects or with guest speakers, professional development, and in-service teacher training, e.g., workshops /courses to instill deeper understanding of educating for social responsibility, engaging students in critical thinking and active learning, using teaching strategies and techniques that can promote social responsibility. Despite its significant importance, previous research confirmed the study findings that ESP teachers are “the least lucky ones of this profession; they are generally much less informed about the content of what they are expected to teach than even their students, who have been studying their subjects all through their school years” (Savas, 2009, p.398). Regardless of the approach or aim, “social responsibility has become an increasingly important concept globally” (Alzyoud et al., 2015, p.123). Therefore, language teachers need to have specific background knowledge, and teaching strategies skills to determine how language is practiced in the classroom and the topics are handled.

III. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study demonstrate that it is important for the university's ESP courses to incorporate social responsibility. There should be a commitment to social responsibility approaches that empower the students and affect the right kind of change necessary for development in the local community. According to the ESP teaching community in Oman, social responsibility stems from the belief that an individual's success and happiness rely heavily on the success and happiness of the society they live in. It is about thinking, knowing, being aware, acting and seeking success

not solely on an individual level but on a societal level through making contributions to the growth of their society. In addition, the findings exhibit the relevant role played by HEIs in stimulating students' understanding of their social responsibilities. These findings can contribute to the theoretical discussion on social responsibility and its link with higher education institutions, in association with the value that can be formed in the learning and teaching processes. In the context of tertiary education, teaching and learning need to go beyond book learning by extending the application of knowledge into the larger social context. This can help to prepare students for meaningful lives of academic, civic, and ethical engagement.

It is essential to indicate that the current study has a limitation that can be solved in future investigations: the sampling process. The sample is non-probabilistic. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized. However, as mentioned earlier, it provides crucial findings that can contribute to the literature.

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