

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSE

Subhamay Sarkar

Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata

Abstract:

English for academic purposes (EAP) has emerged out of the broader field of English for specific purposes (ESP), defined by its focus on teaching English specifically to facilitate learners' study or research through the medium of English. English for academic purposes is differentiated from English for specific purposes by this focus on academic contexts, but among the applied linguistics and English language teaching fields more widely the view of English for academic purposes as a sub-discipline within English for specific purposes still holds. Both these views are valid, as the histories of English for specific purposes and English for academic purposes do not distinguish between a view of them as parent to child, or as sister fields. It is not unusual to find articles with English for academic purposes focus in the pages of the English for Specific Purposes Journal, but English for academic purposes work also appears in all the applied linguistics and English language teaching (ELT) journals from time to time. English for academic purposes entails training students, usually in a higher education setting, to use language appropriately for study. It is one of the most common forms of English for specific purposes. English for academic purposes is an eclectic and pragmatic discipline: a wide range of linguistic, applied linguistic and educational topics can be considered from the perspective of English for academic purposes, or drawn in methodologically to inform English for academic purposes.

Introduction:

English for academic purpose (EAP) entails training students, usually in a higher education setting, to use language appropriately for the study. It is one of the most common forms of English for specific purpose (ESP).

An EAP program focuses instruction on the skills required to perform in an English-speaking academic context across core subject areas generally encountered in a university setting.

Program may also include a more narrow focus on the more specific linguistic demands of a particular area of study, for example business subjects.

Objective of English for academic purpose

English for academic purpose (EAP) provide language instruction for academic study in the American universities. Language skills addressed includes: listening comprehension, fluency development, oral intelligibility, reading, grammar, writing, and vocabulary development.

Academic study skills addressed include: test taking and note taking skills, academic vocabulary usage, critical reading and writing, comprehending academic lectures, research and library skills, formal composition forms and development, including research paper. English is an international language and is learnt as the principal foreign language in most school in countries where the UK has historical had little influence. As an essential part of the curriculum, it becomes important to introduce English courses to student who aspire to take up international Bachelor's degree in and outside Thailand. Having an international bachelor's degree will open many door to new opportunities, which would not have reached the student without this qualification.

English for academic purpose course equips student with required speaking, listening, reading

and writing skill for a university environment.

The English courses mainly focus on language and academic study skills. Language skills include listening comprehension, fluency development, oral intelligibility, reading, grammar, writing, and vocabulary development.

The kind of exposure to the language greatly helps advanced level student who are interested in the under graduate or graduate study in the United States or other English-speaking countries. They overcome the language barrier and build their knowledge and confidence to pursue their international degree courses.

Academic skill comprises of test taking and notes taking skills, academic vocabulary usage, critical reading and writing, comprehending academic lecture, research and library skill, formal composition forms and development, including research papers

Context of English for academic purposes

The teaching and learning context of EAP is specific as both the environment and the aim and the scope of the courses are different from learning and teaching general English language.

EAP is goal driven. The main focus of any EAP course is to take the students where they have to get. This is because EAP is often related to a specific academic discourse. For most students of EAP, the most significant result is entry to or successful completion of university study. In an EAP context, the roles of the students and teachers are more equal than

The texts and tasks to be covered in EAP classes are chosen from degree study that the students are getting ready for. As academic discourse is quite different from writing or speaking in general English, academic writing takes a significant part in EAP. EAP includes an attitude to learning and teaching that believes that it is possible and also beneficial to specify what practices are required in that specific academic context. For this reason, EAP courses pay close attention to learners' aims and their fields, what they are studying or going to study. He also suggests that the initial stage of an ESP or EAP course is to find out the reason why the learners are learning English. EAP learners tend to be over 18 and they might be studying in an English medium university or they might be required to take EAP courses as they are researching, publishing or teaching in English.

Lecturers or course designers of EAP have the roles of finding out the needs of the learners, what they are required to do in their academic work or courses, and helping and guiding them to do this more sufficiently. Gillet (2011) believes that writing tasks are the most problematic but also the most necessary practices of EAP as the field and for EAP students. Writing tasks in EAP involve a wide range of genres.

He suggests that there had been a focus on summarizing, citation and referencing to avoid plagiarism recently. Students also need to do a large amount of reading, listening and note-taking and these require surveying the text, skimming for gist or general impression. Gillet states that the students also need to scan the text to locate the information required and intensive study of specific sections of the text.

Gillet (2011) also suggests that both reading and listening skills are essential in terms of understanding important points in a text, identifying the main ideas, supporting details, distinguishing unsupported claims from supported claims and following an argument. In addition to listening and reading, speaking has become important as teaching methods require more group work, making presentations and using notes.

In EAP, main emphasis is on reading and writing skills. Reading is emphasized to help the students to read in a fast and critical way and to understand the status of the text they are reading. Some EAP students might focus on writing for publishing or academic reading. The most valuable aspects in student writing in an EAP context are clarity and objectivity.

Development of English for academic purposes

EAP takes place in various settings ranging from an entirely English speaking context like the US or the UK to countries where English is not the mother tongue of the citizens like Turkey. There has been an increasing awareness among both native and non-native English speaking students that they need to assume new roles and interact with knowledge in various ways when they start university. They have challenges in writing or reading in different genres and adapting to a new speaking context. In addition, internationalization and globalization of research and education support experiences in EAP and EAP research holds a global context.

Hyland and Hamps-Lyons (2002) suggest as the following:

The growth of English as the leading language for the dissemination of academic knowledge has transformed the educational experiences of countless students, who must now gain fluency in the conventions of English language academic discourses to understand their disciplines and to successfully navigate their learning response of the language teaching profession to these demands has been the development over the past 25years of a new field, EAP. This development has taken a number of different forms and directions, but together these have reshaped the ways that English language teaching mand research are conducted in higher education.

They also believe that EAP has become a commercial endeavor and an enterprise around the world due to the program designed to help non-native student to prepare for English medium studies. Moreover, they say that users of English urgently need to acquire appropriate English as their subjects, textbooks; lectures or study groups require them.

Hyland and Hamps-Lyons (2002) also indicate that growth of EAP has become tremendous recently.

EAP has grown into an essential program for the countries that are trying to improve themselves economically and academically. They state that the rapid expansion in the number of EAP learners resulted in an expansion in the number of EAP teachers and -this means that many EAP teachers around the world are not native speakers of English. The need of non- native speakers is different from the needs of the native ones. They suggest that —this recognition has led to new developments in EAP materials and teacher training courses|.

As Hyland and Hamp Lyons (2002) indicate, EAP has a large range of levels today and they suggest as

The following:

The modern-day field of EAP addresses the teaching of English in the academy at all age proficiency levels, and it draws on a range of interdisciplinary influences for its research methods, theories and practices. It seeks to provide insights into the structures and meanings of academic texts, into the demands places by academic contexts on communicative behaviors, and into the pedagogic practices by which these behaviors can be developed.

Course design of English for academic purpose

Both EAP and ESP courses focus on the learners“ needs and aims in which they would need to learn English and practice English. Robinson (1991) states that EAP courses pay close attention to learners“ aims and their fields, what they are studying or going to study. He also suggests that the initial stage of an ESP or EAP course is to find out the reason why the learners are learning English. Thus, course design of EAP tends to be in accordance with students“ needs that the lecturer identifies. Gillet (2011) also suggests,

-The main objective of

EAP courses is to teach the language, both general academic language and subject specific language as well as language related practices such as summarizing and writing introductions. According to Alexander et al. (2008), a major aim of EAP practice is to help non-native English speakers to become academic „insiders“, meaning becoming a member of their academic community.

They also suggest that the main goal of EAP courses is to make the students of EAP well aware of the academic community. According to them:

The overall aim of an EAP course is to help students towards membership of their chosen academic community.

This requires EAP course designers to gain a broad understanding of the conventions, expectations and practices of the target academic communities as well as the expectations of EAP students. It also requires them to become familiar with the style and conventions of texts that students are likely to meet and the language they need to produce in their studies. Studying academic skills has always taken a big part of the learning process of English for non-native English speakers. To conduct research in English, the learners need to study academic writing, speaking in different contexts or get used to listening to the excerpts from different academic contexts. Jordan (1997) categorizes these skills in five; vocabulary development, academic writing, note-taking, speaking for academic purposes and research skills.

The journal of English for academic purposes

The JEAP is a major document in the field of EAP and it includes articles, book reviews, conference reports and academic exchanges. It has been published since 2002 and it has had 49 issues until the end of year 2014.

The JEAP provides a forum for the dissemination and interaction of information and views which enable practitioners of and researchers in EAP to keep current with developments in their field and to contribute to its continued improvement.

According to Hyland (2002), who is one of the two editors of the JEAP, the JEAP intends to make an increasingly important contribution to the international EAP community, both as a form for the exchange of ideas and in the development of the field through a body of theoretically sophisticated and pedagogically useful representations of academic issues of English.

According to the information by Elsevier (2013), the publisher, main fields that the JEAP focuses on are linguistics, applied linguistics and educational topics.

The topics of the JEAP claimed by Elsevier (2013) can be listed as follows;

classroom language, teaching methodology, teacher education, assessment of language, needs analysis, materials development and evaluation, discourse analysis, acquisition studies in EAP contexts, research writing and speaking at all acquisition levels and the socio-politics of English in academic uses and language planning.

Basic difference between English for academic purpose and academic purpose

English for general academic purpose is more usually known as study skill such as listening and note-taking, etc. English for specific purpose is the language needed for a particular academic subject together with its disciplinary culture.

English for specific purposes

ESP refers to teaching English specific to students' related professional area. ESP has various definitions and it is closely related to the reason why a student is learning English.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a learner-centered approach to teaching English as an additional language, which focuses on developing communicative competence in a specific discipline such as academics, accounting, agronomy, business, IT, teaching, and engineering. Students are also exposed to Canadian workplace or academic culture and real world

Communication practice.

ESP programs differ from general English language courses and contain the following characteristics:

1. Designed to meet the specific needs of the learners.
2. Related in content (themes and topics) to particular disciplines or occupations.
3. Use authentic work-specific documents and materials.
4. Promote cultural awareness and seeks to improve intercultural competency.
5. Deliver intermediate and advanced level language training

English for specific purposes (ESP) is a subset of English as a second or foreign language. It usually refers to teaching the English language to university students or people already in employment, with reference to the particular vocabulary and skills they need. As with any language taught for specific purposes, a given course of ESP will focus on one occupation or profession, such as Technical English, Scientific English, English for medical professionals, English for waiters, English for tourism, etc.

English for academic purposes, taught to students before or during their degrees, is one sort of ESP, as is Business English. Aviation English is taught to pilots, air traffic controllers and civil aviation cadets to enable clear radio communications.

Absolute characteristics

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

Variable characteristics

1. Restricted as to the language skills to be learned
2. Not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology
3. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
4. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
5. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
6. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
7. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

Teaching

ESP is taught in many universities of the world. Many professional associations of teachers Of English (TESOL, IATEFL) have ESP sections. Much attention is devoted to ESP course design. ESP teaching has much in common with English as a Foreign or Second Language and English for Academic Purposes.

Quickly developing Business English can be considered as part of a larger concept of English for Specific

Purposes can be also considered as an avatar of language for specific purposes. Is English for Specific Purpose different to General English? If we agree with this definition, we begin to see how broad ESP really is. In fact, one may ask 'What is the difference between the ESP and General English approach?' Hutchinson et al. (1987:53) answer this quite simply, "in theory

nothing, in practice a great deal". When their book was written, of course, the last statement was quite true. At the time, teachers of General English courses, while acknowledging that students had a specific purpose for studying English, would rarely conduct a needs analysis to find out what was necessary to actually achieve it. Teachers nowadays, however, are much more aware of the importance of needs analysis, and certainly materials writers think very carefully about the goals of learners at all stages of materials production. Perhaps this demonstrates the influence that the ESP approach has had on English teaching in general. Clearly the line between where General English courses stop and ESP courses start has become very vague indeed.

Rather ironically, while many General English teachers can be described as using an ESP approach, basing their syllabi on a learner needs analysis and their own specialist knowledge of using English for real communication, it is the majority of so-called ESP teachers that are using an approach furthest from that described above. Instead of conducting interviews with specialists in the field, analyzing the language that is required in the profession, or even conducting students' needs analysis, many ESP teachers have become slaves of the published textbooks available, unable to evaluate their suitability based on personal experience, and unwilling to do the necessary analysis of difficult specialist texts to verify their contents.

The Future of ESP

If the ESP community hopes to grow and flourish in the future, it is vital that the community as a whole understands what ESP actually represents. Only then, can new members join with confidence, and existing members carry on the practices which have brought ESP to the position it has in EFL teaching today. In Japan in particular, ESP is still in its infancy and so now is the ideal time to form such a consensus. Perhaps this can stem from the Dudley-Evans' definition given in this article but I suspect a more rigorous version will be coming soon, in his book on ESP to be published in 1998. Of course, interested parties are also strongly urged to attend the next Japan Conference on ESP, which is certain to focus again on this topic. English for occupational purposes

EOP is referred to the way English is taught in occupational situations. Kim (2008) suggests that EOP particularly concerns with adult language acquisition and with aspects of general training for adult learners. Enhancing the workplace performance with special attention to the way adults learn a language to communicate better in workplace-related context is the main purpose of EOP.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987).

EOP deals with two areas. English for professional purposes is the first and English for medical purposes can be an example of the field. The second area that EOP deals with is English for vocational purposes and English for prevocational purposes can be an example of a subarea related to that field. On the other hand, EAP deals with English for medical purposes or English for science and technology as main areas related to EAP.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) also include EOP under ESP along with EAP. Their classification suggests that EOP has two divisions, pre-experience EOP and post experience EOP. They believe that post-experience EOP can also include simultaneous, in other words in-service EOP.

Conclusion:

This chapter has provided a background context about EAP. Sub-headings are also included in the chapter such as EAP as the field, the context of EAP, the course design of EAP and the development of the field of EAP.

Writing skill and development of writing are other headings that were explained in this chapter as it is a necessary skill for EAP. The fields of EOP and ESP are also included since EAP and they are closely related to one another.

Works Cited:

- The journal of English for academic purposes (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.elsevier.com/>
- Farahzah, F. (2010). Reading-writing connections in English for academic purposes Courses: Implications and applications. *A Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(5), 596-604.
- Flower dew, J., & Peacock, M. (2001). *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fraenkel, J., & Wallen, N. (2009). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. New York: McGraw-Hill education
- Gillet, A. J. (2011). What is EAP? Retrieved from <http://www.uefap.com/bgnd/> Hutchinson T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centered Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hyland, K., & Hamps-Lyons, L. (2002). EAP: Issues and directions. *The Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1, 1-2.
- Hyland, K. (2002). Editorial. *The Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1, 83-84. Javid, C. Z. (2013). English for specific purposes: Its definition, characteristics, scope And purpose. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 111(1), 138-151
- Koester, A. (2012). English for occupational purposes. *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0381/abstract>
- Robinson, P. (1980). *ESP (English for Specific Purposes)*. New York: Pergamon Press Limited