

## **A New Outlook on EAP Literacies: General and Specific English Territories**

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In designing an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) course it is necessary that we consider several factors: students' objectives, needs, levels and interests, course and institution's goals, and availability of resources. In this paper it is strived to elucidate the differences between EGP (English for General purposes) and ESP (English for Specific purposes) courses. The experience of teaching in EFL situation indicates that our students largely need general English rather than specific English. Also, it is endeavored to discuss the role of EAP teachers and learners. Meanwhile, we will try to illustrate the crucial role that common core, content-based instruction, needs analysis, materials, and classroom activities serve in EAP syllabuses. It is discussed that before embarking on teaching, we need to take heed of students' levels, aims and needs. This paper can have significant implications for EAP teachers, graduate students, syllabus designers, material developers, and researchers in the field of EAP.

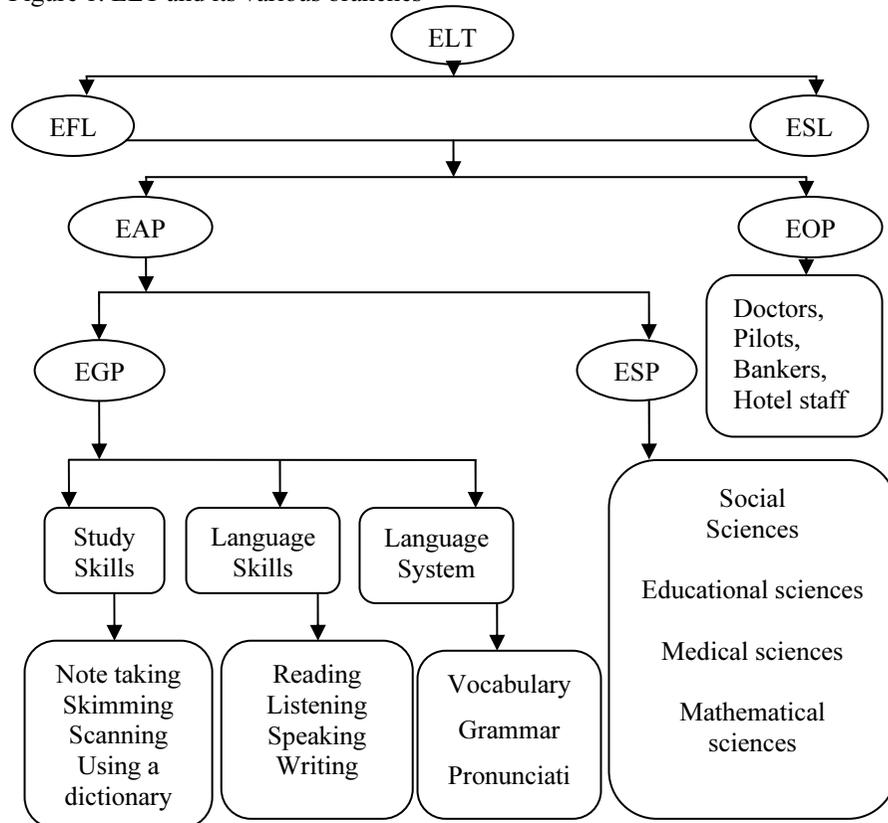
**Key Words:** EAP, EGP, ESP, CBI, common core, needs analysis

### **1 Introduction**

Every year many students enter schools and universities and study the EAP courses (i.e. EGP and ESP) in EFL situations. A great amount of money, resources, time and energy are spent on these courses. However, the end results of such programs are less than satisfactory. Hyland (2002) believes that it is "probably because of gaps in school curricula or the insufficient application of learners themselves" (p. 386). Based on the present writer's experience on teaching EAP courses at university, this paper attempts to shed some fresh light on the EAP programs and intends to study the virtues and weaknesses of the EGP and ESP courses especially in EFL situations. The following figure illustrates the diversity of the ELT domain and its various branches. Based on this figure, ELT is divided into two broad areas: EFL and ESL. Then, EFL and ESL are further divided into EAP and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). Each of these broad domains has its own various

subdivisions. It can be added that EST (English for Science and Technology) is one of the main subdivisions of ESP. In this study we only deal with the EGP and ESP programs. The EOP is itself a broad domain which is illustrated in this figure for the sake of clarification.

Figure 1. ELT and its various branches



## 2 EAP Goal and Syllabus

EAP is a vast and varied area and there are various factors involved which need to be elucidated in designing an EAP course. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001b) contend that syllabus designers need to consider the goals and “potential difficulties” (p. 179) that learners might face in dealing with those specific goals. Stoller (2001) believes that the EAP courses must “prepare students for the demands required of them in subject-matter classrooms” (p. 209). Mainly, an EAP course might be designed based on students’ needs, course goals and the objectives of a particular institution (Richards, 2007).

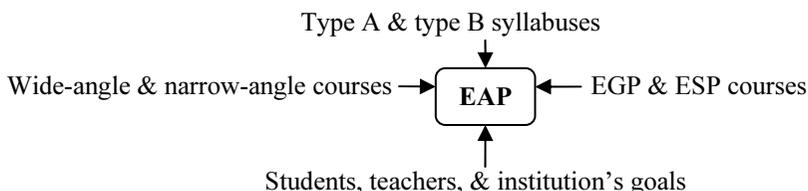
Overall, each institution has its own specific particularities and requirements. Therefore, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001b) note that “the methodologies and approaches valid in any other area of ESL are not necessarily the most appropriate for EAP” (p. 177). In this regard, Stoller (2001) believes that we can hardly find a unique pattern for EAP course design because of the diversity of the perspectives on language learning and diversity of the institutions. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001a) divide EAP courses into two main parts: *wide-angle* [EGP] and *narrow-angle* [ESP]. The wide-angle EAP courses are similar to Widdowson’s (1983) *education* and the narrow-angle to *training*. Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Spack (1988), and Widdowson take side with a wide-angle and education courses because they believe that this kind of EAP develops broader competencies in the learners. It is surmised that narrow-angle or training courses such as ESP are limited in their nature and can barely create competent learners. However, other researchers such as Hyland (2002) severely stick to a narrow-angle approach. Mainly, Robinson (1991) categorizes EAP syllabuses into three parts: type A (structural), type B (functional) and type C (process). She believes that any syllabus needs all these types because of their selection of materials and their classroom situation. However, recently syllabuses are divided not into three but into two main parts: type A (structural) and type B (functional). Moreover, Robinson (ibid.) further divides the EAP into the following areas:

- Content-based syllabuses: language form, language notion, language function
- Content-based syllabuses: situation, topic
- Skilled-based syllabuses
- Method-based syllabuses: processes
- Method-based syllabuses: tasks

(Robinson, 1991, p. 41)

The important point that any institution needs to consider in its design of EAP syllabuses is whether students need to develop their general English, special English, or both of them. Meanwhile, the important factors that need to be considered are the students’ goals, proficiency level, lacks and wants. It is a mistake to expose students to ESP while they still lag far behind general English. Most of the students’ problems in EFL situations are their deficiency in language system (vocabulary and grammar), the four language skills, and correct and appropriate use of language. The EAP students in EFL situations mostly need to acquire general English and harness language in order to deal effectively with the requirements of their subject-specific courses. Therefore, in designing EAP courses the following factors need to be considered carefully:

Figure 2. EAP goals and syllabus



### 3 English for General Purposes (EGP)

Generally, the EAP courses could be categorized into two main sections: EGP and ESP. The EGP is rather the major trend in any EFL setting. Unfortunately, some students, teachers, and administrators assume that General English is not important and cannot develop students' linguistic and communicative competence. They assume that EGP is a general course which can barely teach useful things to the students. However, as Widdowson (1998) emphasizes "simplicity of language is not to be equated with accessibility of meaning" (p. 5). Mainly, EGP should assist students to function effectively in their specific field of study. This branch of ELT is a means to help learners to fulfill their academic requirements (Dudley-Evans & St John, 2000). The EGP is intended to provide an efficient problem-solving and solution-oriented way to different groups of students by attending to their specific needs (Hyland, 2006). This branch tries to equip students with necessary communicative skills and strategies to perform effectively at university and achieve their objectives. The major premise for inclusion of the EGP course in any educational program is to assist weak learners to obtain adequate ability in order to tackle academic courses. Overall, the EGP should prepare students to acquire "the skills and language that are common to all disciplines" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 2000, p. 41). In this way, the skills related to study purposes are picked up in order to present and practice them in the classroom. To this end, Hyland (2006) suggests three main roles of the English for academic purposes: skills, socialization and literacies. Through the *skills* approach, students learn the general skills and strategies such as note taking, listening to lectures, reading textbooks and articles, writing essays, answering examination questions, and referencing. The *socialization* approach makes students familiar with their particular fields and disciplines. Ultimately, through the *literacies* approach students become involved and engaged in the written and spoken discourse of their field more deeply. Therefore, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) prefer general English to specific English and emphasize the learning process instead of focusing on specific texts and passages.

#### 4 EGP and Common Core

EGP is not limited to a particular discipline. It attempts to teach language system (vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation), study skills, and language skills and prepare students to tackle their university courses and communicate appropriately in their field. Benesch (2001) maintains that teachers need to teach the general English because learners can acquire the ESP through individualized project works. Karimkhanlui (2005) argues that EAP students' problems are largely informal everyday vocabularies, phrases and idioms rather than specific or academic words. Basturkmen (2006) holds that ESP is not independent in itself and makes use of every part of EGP at any time. The most prominent issue in any EGP course is the common core hypothesis put forward by Bloor and Bloor (1986). This hypothesis asserts that there is a common core of grammar and vocabulary in any discipline. The basic set of structural and lexical items need to be internalized by students before embarking on their ESP courses. The important tenet of common core hypothesis is that the communicative elements of most disciplines are rather the same. Therefore, the EAP should concentrate on presenting and practicing common core rather than specific subject matter. Mainly, it is believed that scientific and technical texts have particular type of rhetorical structure and vocabulary which are common among different disciplines (Wood, 2001). Overall, by acquiring common core knowledge learners can use top-down (world knowledge) and bottom-up (textual clues) processes to comprehend an unfamiliar topic or word (Clapham, 2001). It is interesting to know that specialist words only comprise very limited number of a specific text. Generally, Coxhead and Nation (2001, p. 252) divide the English vocabulary into four parts:

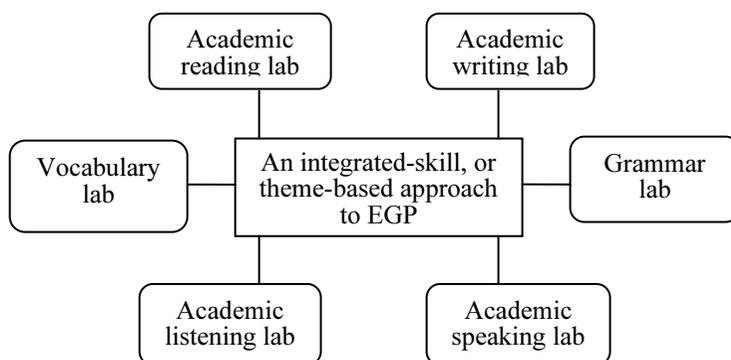
- 1- The high frequency words (80 %)
- 2- The academic vocabulary (8.5% - 10%)
- 3- Technical vocabulary (up to 5%)
- 4- The low frequency words (very narrow range and low frequency).

The above-mentioned percentages indicate that technical vocabularies hardly pose any threat to the students. The specific academic words are rather internationally known and students can comprehend unfamiliar words through the context or their background knowledge. Also, in the domain of structure students need to acquire different language forms in addition to the passive form which is prevalent in scientific and technical texts. Although the passive form is prevalent in some disciplines, students need to become acquainted with different forms of grammatical structures in order to be able to use them in their reading, writing and speaking. Therefore, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) surmise that "there is little justification for a subject-specific approach to ESP" (p. 166). The point is that students need more general English knowledge in order to develop appropriate ways of improving their

grammar, sentence composition, reading strategies, vocabulary and so on. However, Hyland (2002) severely criticizes a general approach to ESP and maintains that students should be exposed to their disciplines' special genre. He opposes common core hypothesis and argues that it can barely help students to become familiar with the special features of their particular discipline.

Stoller (2001) describes the Northern Arizona University's (NAU) EAP program. In this program learners receive 26 hours of instruction per week. The curriculum consists of seven modules, combining content with language skills. Therefore, drawing on Stoller's proposal, the following figure illustrates an ideal and optimal approach to presenting and practicing general English at the secondary or tertiary level. This program is rather comprehensive and caters to every aspect of students' academic needs. It prepares the students to deal with their academic courses.

Figure 3. An integrated-skill based approach to EGP



### 5 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

ESP is a form of language rather than an independent language in itself. Hyland (2002) approaches ESP as follows: “Essentially ESP rests on the idea that we use language to accomplish purposes and engage with others as members of social groups” (p. 391). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) contend that “ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning” (p. 19). When asked: ‘What is the difference between EGP and ESP?’ Hutchinson and Waters (ibid.) answer: “in theory nothing, in practice a great deal” (p. 53). Clearly, the boundary between EGP and ESP has become quite blurred. Hyland (2002) insists that there are huge differences between different disciplines so general English cannot help students to function effectively in their field of study. Thus, he (ibid) remarks that “The discourses of the academy do not form an undifferentiated, unitary mass but a

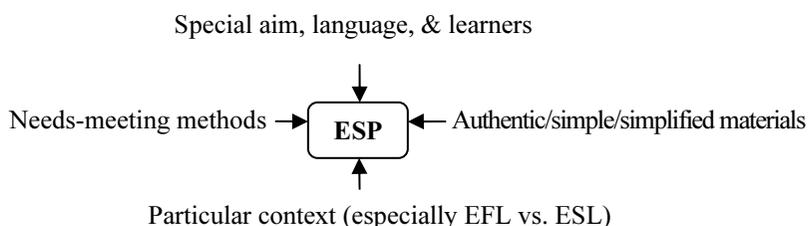
variety of subject-specific literacies” (p. 389). Based on Carter (1983) the main characteristics of the ESP are purpose-related orientation, authentic material, and self-direction. The purpose-related orientation is concerned with presenting and practicing particular communicative tasks in the classroom which are required in the target situations. The first characteristics (purpose-related orientation) is tenable but the latter one (authentic material) needs to be treated cautiously. This is because the ESP students’ proficiency level may be low and not ready to absorb authentic material. Meanwhile, self-direction refers to the students’ readiness, i.e., ESP attempts to turn students’ into language users. Notably, ESP is constructed based on some absolute characteristics: to meet learners’ needs, to be relevant in its subject matter to a particular discipline, occupation, or activity, to serve lexical and grammatical requirements of related fields, and to be different and distinctive from general English (Strevens, 1988). Therefore, ESP is restricted in its scope, is intended for academic and occupational purposes, and emphasizes specific topics and themes. So, Mackay and Mountford (1978) deduce that “a restricted ‘language’ would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situation or in contexts outside the vocational environment” (p. 4-5).

Meanwhile, based on Gatehouse (2001), the key issues in ESP include: appropriate interaction in the intended settings, mastering of subject matter rather than general English, different proficiency group of learners, and development of appropriate materials. More importantly, the overarching issue in ESP is the meaning of the word *Special*. We can deduce two different meanings from this word: special language (lexis, structure, and register) and special aim. The specialized aim refers to learners’ goal of learning language. Gatehouse (2001) emphasizes that specialized aim should be restricted to the learners’ objective of learning language not to the language. However, it is clear that special can refer to both meanings (language and aim) and it is context and situation which can determine which one is applicable. Furthermore, we can add the third meaning to the notion special which can refer to special learners’ who have special needs.

ESP is not theory-free rather it is eclectic in its application of different theories to language learning and teaching. As Hyland (2002) observes “ESP is, in essence, research-based language education...” (p. 386). In fact, critical pedagogy, ethnography, and genre theory, especially corpus linguistics, have contributed tremendously to material development, curriculum design, and needs-meeting methods. The point is that ESP is in constant state of flux because of the advancement of science and technology. As Widdowson (1998) argues “the language is regulated by the requirements of the profession, and as the requirements change, the language will change accordingly” (p. 9). Therefore, it seems that teaching ESP is difficult and can hardly meet the students’ needs. Sager et al. (1980) assume that ESP is “derived from general English” (p. 69) and is used by the specialists in the similar or pertinent contexts. Dudley-Evans and St John (2000) emphasize

that ESP students try to use and apply their general English knowledge in understanding lectures, reading and writing. However, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001a) state that the ESP proponents reject the EGP because “the specific language associated with the specific skills might just as well be the target of learning” (p. 18). Also, Dudley-Evans and St John (2000) argue against the EGP courses and purport that most of the ESP courses can develop students’ competence. Whether it is ESP or EGP which can better equip students to tackle their academic needs is a slippery, tricky, and controversial issue. Overall, it is the particular context, students’ proficiency level, and objective which determine whether EGP or ESP can be useful and helpful. Therefore, in designing any ESP course, we need to consider the following factors:

Figure 4. Factors to be considered in ESP course design



## 6 Content-based Instruction (CBI)

One of the classroom realizations of the ESP and its application is the content-based instruction (CBI). CBI is, in fact, the teaching and learning of language through content or subject-specific materials. In CBI the stress is on the students’ subject matter. CBI is based on the premise that meaning is carried via content which consequently enhances language acquisition. However, Bell (1999) argues that language and content are firmly interwoven and it is erroneous to separate them. Wesche (1993) holds that in CBI “the selection and sequence of language elements [are] determined by the content ...” (pp. 57-58). In this approach students are presented and asked to use academic subject matter. The proponents of CBI believe that content or carrier language which is related to learners’ goals can motivate them to learn language indirectly. The CBI course is organized based on “academic content or academic tasks as foundations for curriculum development” (Stoller, 2001, p. 213). The subject matter presented and practiced in the classroom comprises topics or themes which are related to students’ field of study. However, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that the reasons for using content materials is only related to their “face validity and their familiarity” (p. 166). Brinton and Holten (2001) hold that the origins of CBI can be found

in Mohan's (1986) work. Mohan was of the opinion that language should be taught through authentic texts. The emphasis of the CBI is on the subject matter rather than on the forms of the language (Brinton et al., 2003).

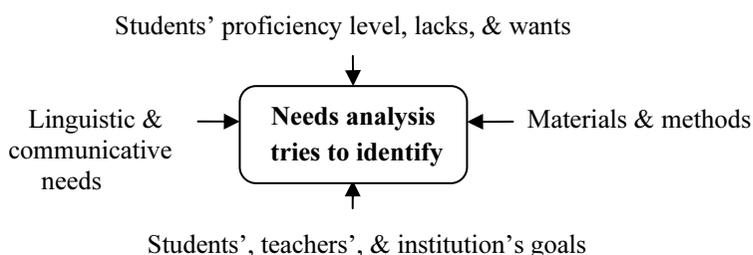
CBI is useful in an ESL setting where students can compensate for their EGP weaknesses outside the classroom. However, in EFL contexts learners need more grammar, vocabulary and how to put language into use in real communicative situations. Also, CBI might be more useful to advanced learners who already have a high grasp of core or general language: nurses, pilots, graduate students, and so on. For low-level learners it is a waste of time and energy because they need more general English in order to acquire structural and lexical knowledge. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) rightly emphasize, ESP is an approach not a product. The main problem with CBI is that most of the class time is spent on helping students to comprehend the content. Therefore, the class time is devoted to content rather than language. The students consequently barely learn language and how to deal with reading, speaking, writing, and listening. In CBI there is rarely any time for or coverage of structure and language forms. That is, students learn their subject matter topics rather than the language forms and functions. Meanwhile, CBI courses are usually taught by non-native subject teachers who barely have any mastery over language.

## **7 Need Analysis**

Needs analysis is one of the most important elements of any EAP curriculum. As Belcher (2006) states, "needs assessment is seen in ESP as the foundation on which all other decisions are, or should be, made" (p. 135). It is necessary that the needs of students be specified before and even during the course. Since target situation analysis did not help identify learners lacks, "needs analysis evolved (in the 1970s) to include 'deficiency analysis,' or assessment of the 'learning gap' ... between target language use and current learner proficiencies" (Belcher, 2006, p. 136). The main reason that many EAP courses fail to meet students' expectations is that some of the institutions do not conduct needs analysis at the beginning of their programs. Barbazette (2006) emphasizes the importance of being aware of needs, i.e. the reason why learners are studying English rather than merely trying to identify the course content. However, Stoller (2001) claims that every institution has its own requirements and that the linguistic and academic needs of learners should be identified. The reason that Munby (1978) was criticized for his suggested needs analysis proposal was that he only tried to analyze students' target situation needs and neglected their wishes, wants and lacks (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Therefore, needs analysis should not be limited merely to students' target uses of language. It should specify learners' lacks (i.e. the areas they need help) and their wants (i.e. what they like to acquire).

In general, the problem that is widespread in any EAP classroom is the false expectation of learners that the materials should be relevant to their discipline. Therefore, some learners assume that what they need is to study only subject-specific materials. However, needs analysis can determine different dimensions of the course, learners' proficiency level, needs, wants, lacks, institutions' objectives and expectations, teachers' goals, and other related information. For instance, by conducting needs analysis and applying strategy studies, students' language learning strategies can be analyzed in order to help them augment their learning process. Tudor (1996) reasons that as learners' and teachers' cultural backgrounds might differ, strategy analysis can help enhance the acquisition process. EAP classrooms usually consist of different levels of proficiency, so that needs analysis should also consider this aspect in designing materials and methods. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001b) hold that learners should be involved in the planning of EAP courses in order to be acquainted with the course objectives. As Edwards (2000) notes "student input is crucial to the successful design of an ESP course in any context" (p. 292). Also, Belcher (2006) points out that "learners, as reflective community members, should be empowered to participate in needs assessment ..." (p. 137). Therefore, by involving students in the needs analysis process, they can become more intimate with the program and participate diligently in implementing exercises and activities. In this regard, Peacock (2001) deduces that if students' needs and wants are not met, they might become "frustrated and disappointed" (p. 383). Gatehouse (2001) contends that it is teachers who are in the best position to identify learners' needs and provide them with an adequate amount of language. In order to carry out needs analysis, we need to gather adequate amount of information on students and the course. Therefore, the necessary information can be obtained through several instruments: administering questionnaires, conducting interviews, classroom observations, and investing course documents. Meanwhile, the information can be gathered from different sources: students, teachers, sponsors, administrators, program developers, and so on. The following figure depicts different functions of needs analysis:

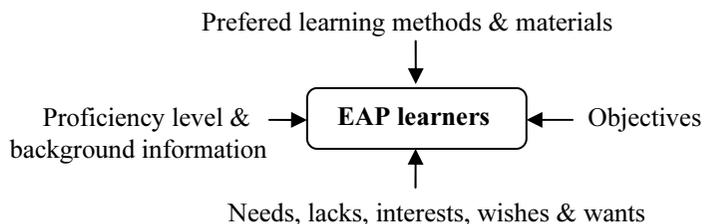
Figure 5. The goals of conducting needs analysis



## 8 EAP Learners

The overall goal of EAP is to design a syllabus based on students' purposes, demands, needs, and wishes (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The attention in ESP should be on learning and the learners' learning process rather than on delivery of language. Commonly, EAP learners have different proficiency levels and come from different cultural backgrounds so that it is indeed difficult to expect to have homogeneous classes. Clapham (2001) maintains that students "acquire this knowledge not only from their recent academic work but from other sources including their leisure reading and earlier scholastic studies" (p. 99). The point is that because of students' and courses' limited time, curriculum designers "attempt to identify and teach the lexis, syntax, functions and discourse patterns most commonly used in a domain" (Cobb & Host, 2001, p. 315). Clearly, this kind of instruction produces learners with rather limited capacity and knowledge in English language. The most prominent problems of EAP students relate to their weaknesses in general English, study skills, lack of adequate learning strategies, and excessive dependence on teachers. It can be seen that most of students' English proficiency is low in EFL situations so at the first stages they need more general English instead of ESP. This is because they lack adequate exposure to English outside the classroom. The point is that some students do not appreciate the true value of study skills and language skills. Therefore, they do not properly realize that language proficiency is needed for them in reading, writing, speaking and listening and especially in tackling their academic needs. Nonetheless, if students want to be able to function adequately in English language, they need to develop necessary skills to study independently. This is because the EAP courses usually have limited time. The teachers, therefore, are better to foster their learners' ability to study independently inside and outside the classroom. In this regard, Widdowson (1998) stresses that in order for learning to take place "There must be some scope for individual self expression" (p. 11). He means that learners should be allowed to produce language because it is through speaking and writing that language acquisition can emerge. Generally, our main goal is to teach learners to acquire adequate knowledge to deal with their academic requirements. Overall, in designing any EAP course, teachers and course designers need to consider the following factors in order to enhance the learning process:

Figure 6. Different information on EAP learners



### 9 EAP Teachers

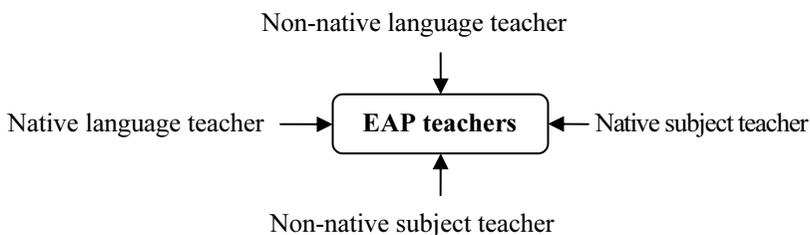
The EAP teachers have to deal with different types of students who have different expectations of their courses, teachers and materials. However, the problem is that “instructors in a CBI context often lack training” (Brinton & Holten, 2001, p. 249). That is, teachers who teach the EAP courses have not been trained to teach these courses. As Master (1997) observes “ESP teacher education ... can thus be said to be minimal at best ... In most cases, professional ESP practitioners train themselves, learning as they go” (pp. 32-33). To this end, Chen (2000) suggests action research as a means for self-training to improve ESP teachers to function effectively. The proposed theories for practice barely help teachers because the contexts differ. However, the fact is that we are language teachers and not subject teachers and our main responsibility is to teach language rather than subject specific materials. Farhady (2005) emphasizes that ESP teachers are not required to know subject matter. They only need to develop optimistic views, be familiar with the basics of the subject and be informed about their previous knowledge on the subject. Spack (1988) argues that language teachers often lack confidence and expertise to teach ESP courses so these courses should be taught by subject teachers. Belcher (2006) maintains that the amount of content knowledge that ESP teachers need to know is open to question. However, Brinton et al. (2003) believe that language teachers should know the subject materials in order to use them effectively in the classroom. Also, Bell (1999) points out that “It may therefore be necessary for EAP trainers to possess a certain level of background knowledge in their students’ academic subjects ...” (p. 2). Meanwhile, Chen (2000, p. 396) remarks that “ESP teachers need to know the concepts and presuppositions involved if they are to understand specialist texts properly.”

On the other hand, subject teachers are required to know the language needs of their students and should not merely focus on content. The point is that language teachers can hardly gain enough understanding of the different ESP courses that they teach. By the same token, subject teachers are rarely familiar with their students’ linguistic needs and lack necessary expertise to teach literacy skills. It is suggested that language teachers familiarize

themselves with only one discipline. Also, it is proposed that language teachers only need to know the genres, values, and epistemological knowledge of a given field. Overall, language teachers are outsiders who can only teach language and can help their students to master language through content. Ultimately, language teachers can try to learn from their students' discipline by engaging in decoding texts and participating in discovering meaning. The main question is: Are language teachers supposed to teach language or subject specific material? If we answer this question, then our problems are solved to some extent. Of course, it depends on many factors, but the important element is the students' and the course's objectives. Very simply, if our focus is on language, then we need a language teacher. However, if the focus is on content, then it is a subject teacher who is eligible to teach it.

In order to solve and balance the problem of subject knowledge and linguistic ability of teachers, some researchers (Robinson, 1991) propose team teaching: cooperation of language teachers with subject teachers. The point is that organizing and implementing team teaching is very difficult in most institutions. Mainly, language teachers need to adjust their methods based on the students' needs and try to know a little about the students' subject. Swales (1985) prefers to use the expression ESP practitioner instead of ESP teacher. He justifies that in addition to teaching, ESP teachers have to carry out needs analysis, design a syllabus, develop materials, and evaluate students and the whole course. Gatehouse (2001) notes that in order to carry out these tasks, teachers need adequate skill, enough time and support. Overall, it cannot be expected that language teachers who have been trained in language teaching to teach subject matter. Furthermore, language teachers are supposed to teach language skills rather than content materials. Students might learn subject-specific materials in their other related courses. The following figure depicts that there are four different types of EAP teachers: non-native language teacher, non-native subject teacher, native language teacher, and native subject teacher. Therefore, if we intend to have a productive class, we need to choose our teacher very carefully.

Figure 7. Four different types of EAP teachers



## 10 EAP Materials

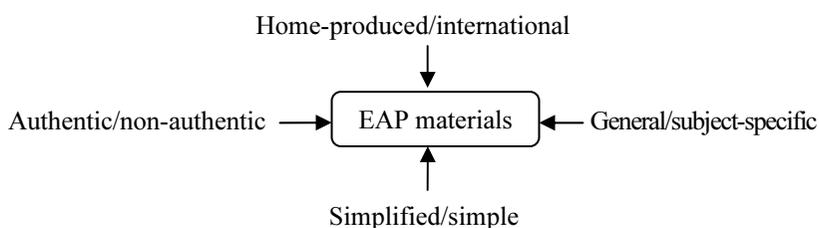
The most prominent debate on EAP is concerned with the selection and use of authentic vs. non-authentic, general vs. subject-specific, and simple vs. simplified materials. The problem is that in the real world teachers barely save any time to research and develop appropriate and useful materials. Therefore, it is believed that many teachers have become slaves of the published coursebooks available. Gatehouse (2001) notes that “no one ESP text can live up to its name” (p. 10). Clapham (2001) states that finding appropriate materials is indeed difficult and the appropriateness of these materials cannot be determined in advance. Clapham also reasons that since students have different background knowledge and come from different disciplines it is preferable to teach common core or general materials. Hirvela (2001) also emphasizes that teachers had better employ different types of general materials in order to prepare students for their academic courses. He believes that using subject-specific materials bores most of the students and do not develop their competence effectively. He suggests that teachers use different types of literary texts and when students gained enough knowledge in reading and writing, then they become eligible to move toward the narrow end, i.e. the learners’ discipline.

In the main, the rather thorny issue in the EAP is the use of either authentic or non-authentic materials. In this regard, Widdowson (1998) is against the use of real materials and remarks that “what is real or authentic to *users* is not authentic to *learners*” (p. 10). Barnard and Zemach (2003) maintain that being authentic cannot guarantee that a text is appropriate. The crucial issue, in fact, is the appropriate selection and use of materials. Also, the important point is the proper use and presentation of materials within appropriate context and their implementation through meaningful activities and exercises. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001b) argue that merely being authentic is not enough. The texts should be relevant and based on the learners’ level. Meanwhile, Widdowson (1998) does not prefer the use of authentic materials and proposes that “the pedagogy of ESP, therefore, requires us to devise different textual versions of generic structure, beginning with realizations in simple language and gradually complexifying in the direction of genuine, actually occurring language use” (p. 10). On the whole, the crucial point is the authenticity of purpose and use no matter whether the selected texts are authentic or non-authentic. More importantly, it is the context that makes a text authentic. Even an authentic text might lose its meaning and authenticity in vacuum. As Belcher (2006) puts “texts taken out of context are inauthentic” (p. 137).

Generally, some teachers might prefer to use simplified materials. However, it is argued that materials might lose some part of their meaning through the simplification process (Widdowson, 1983). However, it is the teacher and students who can make a text look real or unreal with creating

appropriate activities, situations and tasks. Also, if teachers try to authenticate the language, learners can be gradually initiated into the conventions of the English language use and acquire it. Most importantly, teachers need to familiarize themselves with different types of materials and opt for the best ones based on their own classroom experience and their learners' needs, objectives, levels, and interests. Therefore, Gatehouse (2001) emphasizes that "Familiarizing oneself with useful instructional materials is part of growing as a teacher ..." (p. 10). More importantly, teachers need to consider their students and their preferences and allow them "a voice in content selection" (Belcher, p. 139). It is suggested that teachers select a balanced amount of authentic/non-authentic, simple/simplified, general/subject-specific, and home-produced/international materials. The chosen materials should contain different types of exercises, activities, and tasks. The materials which are used should instigate communication among the students. Based on the students' needs and objectives, the materials had better treat the four language skills equally. Meanwhile, it is better that teachers use home-produced materials at the beginning stages because familiar topics and themes can motivate students and create a useful context for learning. Moreover, it will be helpful if teachers use more general topics at the beginning stages and then move to specific materials which are related to the students' discipline. The following figure illustrates different types of materials to be used in EAP classes:

Figure 8. Different types of EAP materials



### 11 EAP Teaching and Learning Activities

Certainly, lively and efficient classroom activities can motivate and accelerate the learning process. It is the teacher who should create a situation in which all the learners become engaged in the learning process through meaningful and interesting activities. Long (2001) holds that there is no particular and optimal methodology to be used in classroom. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) assume that the EGP and ESP methodologies are the same: "The classroom skills and techniques acquired in General English teaching can be usefully employed in the ESP classrooms" (p. 142). They believe that

the generic skills and forms of language are rather the same across a range of disciplines and occupations so practicing these forms and skills can benefit students more than specific material. Brown (2000) advocates the use of an eclectic approach because there is no one method which could effectively help implement classroom exercises and activities. However, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001b) argue for specific and innovative approaches to ESP/EAP settings. They emphasize that classroom activities should be purposeful and genuine and teachers need to employ different tasks to implement their methodology. In this regard, Richards (2007) points out that ESP methodology should be based on learners' purpose of learning language and the organization of these activities should be feasible and practicable. Hall and Kenny (1988) believe that methodology is more important than content: "Our syllabus is specified in terms of its methodology rather than in terms of linguistic items or skills" (p. 20). The point to ponder is that EAP and ESP classes have usually been conducted and dominated by textbooks rather than a particular method. Unfortunately, in EFL situations the particular type of materials have always dictated and determined the classroom activities and exercises. As Belcher (2006) notes "ESP is often seen as a materials-driven rather than methods-driven enterprise" (p. 137). It can be argued that EAP teachers need to use different types of tasks in order to activate the learning process. Therefore, the EAP teachers are better to take the role of a guide and advisor rather than a translator in approaching subject-specific materials.

The point to note is that in EGP classes, teachers and learners had better engage in different types of activities and exercises. There are different ways of putting language into action and enhancing the learning process. However, in ESP classes there is barely any maneuver on language and its practical use. That is, in ESP classes the only focus of attention is on decoding content and subject matter through translation. Therefore, the non-native language and subject teachers usually resort to translation in order to get meaning across. To this end, Widdowson (1998) emphasizes that "it would be counterproductive to instruct students in outdated generic conventions" (p. 10). Generally, engaging, relevant, and useful activities and exercises should be developed after considering local needs, objectives, and interests.

The main point is that at university learners confront a multitude of genres, so it is hard for teachers to decide to cope with them. To this end, Devitt (2004) proposes that instead of teaching various genres, it is better that teachers teach "critical awareness of how genres operate so that they [students] . . . learn the new genres they encounter with rhetorical and ideological understanding" (p. 194). This is a useful way to familiarize students with simple and familiar genres (e.g. wedding announcements, personal letters, etc.) and then with their own disciplines' rhetorical structure which can make them independent. It is better that teachers equip students with enough strategies to learn different genres. The students can be asked to

compile and analyze different reading and writing portfolios related to their discipline and their own performance. In this way, the students can realize that all the skills are related to each other for constructing meaning and approaching them as discrete modalities makes little sense. By encouraging reading-to-write activities and tasks, students can realize that reading at academic settings is the basis for writing. Meanwhile, when students are engaged in the writing process, they can pin point their deficiencies and become obliged to read more materials critically, purposefully, and analytically.

One of the overlooked genres in most EAP courses is the spoken discourse or speech genre. When students attempt to get their meaning across, they find themselves handicapped, so they feel frustrated. To compensate for this shortcoming, Flowerdew (2005a) asked his students at a university in Hong Kong to investigate a real problem and report on it in class. He maintains that this activity of real project motivated students to work in groups and discuss it in the classroom which further instigated more discussion through question and answer. Also, Starfield (2001) believes that it is necessary to present and practice spoken discourse in the classroom in order to enhance students' strategies and help them "develop their linguistic and critical abilities" (p. 146). In this way, the students can engage in different interactions and negotiate in complex situations especially in their professional community. One more way in which ESP students in EFL situations can benefit from is the use of technology in order to develop their communicative skills. They can be encouraged to surf the Internet and find English instructional sites which contain both texts and listening activities. In this way, they can become acquainted with informal and everyday idioms and expressions. Also, teacher can ask their students to write down expressions and idioms which they find in listening activities and then bring them to the class for further discussion.

## **12 Conclusion**

It can be surmised that in EFL situations because of the dearth of adequate exposure to general English EAP students need more EGP than subject-specific materials. Regrettably, undergraduate students are not provided with general English language for adequate period of time at university, i.e. EGP is only offered during the first or second semester. The students need to be exposed to general English language throughout the whole period of their studies. That is, it is better that EGP course to be offered to the students each semester. When the students obtained enough language proficiency, they could tackle their subject-specific texts more easily. However, because of the limited hours of the EGP classes at university, EAP instructors need to encourage their students to study independently, i.e. out of class at their free times. In this way, the students can try to learn for themselves and become autonomous. Making students independent seems the optimal way of

compensating for the inadequacy of EAP courses. More importantly, I would like to add that it is unproductive to take side with either general English or specific English. The reasonable and logical solution for me is the goals and proficiency level of the students. If our students' level is appropriate and high enough to absorb and digest general English, then, we can simply expose them to their disciplines' texts and discourse. However, if it was realized that our students already struggle with language forms and skills, then, we need to present and practice general English. The point is that General English is teachable. That is, it can be practiced through different exercises, activities, and tasks. Nevertheless, ESP is barely teachable. Non-native subject and language teachers usually resort to translation in order to ensure that learning takes place. As it is known ESP texts are dry and very technical and barely render themselves to different types of activities. Overall, it is the language teachers who need to use their experience in order to find appropriate materials and methods and implement the classroom activities with the help of the students.

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