

The Effectiveness of ESAP and EGAP in ESP Teaching

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Abstract: *The study compares a distinct between English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) to explore the real needs of students and help students and teachers choose proper learning and teaching strategies to improve the effectiveness of English learning and teaching. Literature review is used as a research method and offers an overview of the definitions, pros and cons, case study of EGAP and ESAP. It is concluded that both EGAP and ESAP contribute to the academic English learning, while EGAP focus on academic language study for specific English proficiency tests like IELTS/TOFEL and ESAP focus on academic language study for postgraduate and professional work.*

Keywords: *EGAP, ESAP, ESP*

1. Introduction

English is undoubtedly considered as one of the most popular and universal languages around the world, which not only plays an important role in English-speaking countries but also in those countries which regard English as second language^[11]. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is believed as one of the most important directions and branches for both teachers and students to teach and learn English, which also plays an important role in understanding the language use^[13]. ESP has become one of the most important areas and practices in second language teaching and learning after the last decade of twenty centuries^[11]. ESP can be divided into more specific branches and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is one of the representative branches^[11]. EAP is subdivided into two different types which are English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) and English for General Academic Purpose (EGAP) According to the statement of Blue, he also classifies the EAP into ESAP and EGAP. ESAP and EGAP are the focus that will be discussed in the essay, it is suggested by the first given topic that EGAP is more practical and achievable than ESAPJ however, this essay will illustrate the equal importance of ESAP and EGAP by analyzing their advantages and limitations in ESP teaching. The essay would be divided into six parts which are introduction, the strengths of ESAP the limitations of ESAP, the strengths of EGAP, the problems of EGAP and conclusion.

2. The Strengths of ESAP

This chapter is going to introduce the importance of ESAP in theory and analyze the effectiveness of ESAP in English learning and teaching.

2.1. The Importance of ESAP in Theory

Rob Anderson who carries a study before and tries to proof the importance of ESAP in second language teaching. The first reason why Anderson supports ESAP is that students in different study areas requires different linguistic features and communicative practice in their own disciplines and he also believes ESAP approach is beneficial for students to develop those specific discipline skills and study effectively in their own subjects^[2]. The second reason for supporting ESAP is that language teachers might lack of sufficient time and ability or expertise to teach professional knowledge that students needed in their specific majors or careers, therefore, it would be easier for ESAP teachers to pay more attention to teach those subjects which are applicable in different disciplines in order to achieve the aims of ESP courses for second language learners^[2]. It is suggested by Hyland that there are many different ways in ESAP can engage more students at class because there are some attractions and appeals for students to learn due to the background knowledge they have and different approaches to establish the truth^[14].

Language teachers may be unaware of the needs of basic language and textual mechanics from different disciplines that are needed by module requirements for students, and the teachers might also lack of the assumptions about the disciplines which are regarded as part of disciplinary exercise and practice. The third reason is about the motivation. Anderson suggests that students feel motivated and inspired if they are given lessons about the disciplinary texts and tasks rather than giving some general instructions and tasks^[2]. The last but not least reason put forward by Anderson is that he states if teachers do not focus on the disciplinary subjects but only on the language of linguistic features like vocabulary, grammar and coherence, students might feel unsatisfactory and unfulfilled because they might think that learning general disciplines is not their priority and they could not focus on the disciplines they are really interested in^[2]. According to my own learning experience, the situation does happen in Chinese university. If teachers are giving a lecture about the major what I am majoring in, I might pay full concentration on it because I know it is useful and helpful for my career and I could benefit from it. However, if teachers are giving some common language courses, I might feel less challenging and unmotivated because it has little connection with my major study. The last but not least reason put forward by Anderson is that he says if teachers do not focus on the disciplinary subjects but only on the language of linguistic features like vocabulary, grammar and coherence, students might feel unsatisfactory because they might think it is not their priority and it might not relate to their future career, which students may lack motivation to study.

2.2. The Case Study of ESAP

In order to demonstrate that ESAP is not only important in theory but also in practice, there are lots of scholars have carried out different studies to show that ESAP is achievable and beneficial for teachers and students to apply into their teaching and study.

There is a case study about the effectiveness of ESAP in Iran education. Participants are consisted of 218 undergraduates, 33 graduates and 10 short-term teachers in School of Law. The first finding agreed and acknowledged in the study is that some general academic knowledge is necessary for students to have a overall understanding to every topic. For example, some general words and technical terms are needed for tackling the basic blocking information might occur in ESP learning. However the result shows that focusing on the specific curriculums could achieve the targets of modules and develop the abilities of students to study their own different major study^[10]. In addition, BA students in the study response that ESAP classes are especially useful for improving their specific academic skills because they think they are in a low-level of language proficiency compared with graduates, therefore, they need to receive more ESAP classes to help them to save time to improve their language and specific academic fields at the same time^[10].

Apart from the study given by Esfandiari to demonstrate the importance and necessity of ESAP classes in Iran, there is another research which also emphasizes the significance of ESAP about The International English Language Testing System (IELTS). IELTS is regarding as one of the most universal and popular English language test for oversea students. According to the study result from Kuzmina and Golechkova that participants who take part in the ESAP courses get better grades in IELTS test compared with those who participate in EGAP courses, and the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing do improve after taking related ESAP courses^[15]. ESAP is not only having positive effects on education but also on finance^[2]. Ataei carries out an study in Iran about the position and status of ESAP and how ESAP is able to complete the gap between the general and overall English reading competence and their authentic discipline-specific texts in their real academic world^[2].

2.3. The Limitations of ESAP

Although there are lots of researchers and scholars who put forward some ideas to support the significance and importance of ESAP also the limitations and shortcoming of ESAP cannot be ignored. There is research studying the reflections of ESAP courses from the views of students in a university in Cyprus^[8]. The survey shows that most students are highly appreciating ESAP courses provided by their university, and they think their professional knowledge and skills are improved during those ESAP courses. However, there are some limitations are put forward by both students and teachers. One of them is that it takes much longer time to prepare the ESAP course than EGAP courses because English teachers need to make efforts to talk to those experts from different discipline to make sure the content they prepare and what they are going to teach is correct^[8]. Therefore, lots of time and efforts are needed in order to prepare better EGAP teaching materials. Secondly, what concerns teachers and students is that some technical program and tools might apply to in their teaching. For example, teachers are required by

students sometimes to show and give example how does a software or computer tool used, which needs the language teachers to take lots of time to learn in case of making wrong example for students or inappropriate usage. If teachers are not familiar with those professional tools needed by students, they might lose confidence to students and students might lose interest for the class owing to the insufficient proficiency of teaching^[9].

3. The advantages of EGAP

3.1. The position of EGAP in ESP Teaching

There are some arguments which in favor of EGAP which shows the equal importance of ESAP both in theory and practice. The first reason why the position of EGAP is equal to the status of ESAP is out of considering the heavy workload of teachers in second language teaching. It is suggested that it is not necessary for teachers to be specialists in specific academic areas and it is advised that EAP courses usually focus on common language across various disciplines^[7], therefore, It is reasonable that teachers should not be required and requested to learn the expertise and professional knowledge of different disciplines because the teaching would be so stressful because they need to learn a lot before they teach in order to make sure the content they teach and the techniques they use are correct if they are needed to teach ESAP courses^[7]. It is said by Hutchinson and Water that EAP teaching should put more efforts on target activities rather than language^[12]. It is true that language is sometimes regarded as a tool for people, in which people could take advantage of it to get better known about the world. The second reason for carrying out EGAP rather than ESAP is about qualification and ability of teachers to teach the specific content in one area or discipline. As they might not be the experts in their teaching areas, therefore, they are suggested to teach some general principles across disciplines that they are familiar with rather than something they are not familiar with^[12]. It cannot be denied that ESAP teachers need more training in specific disciplines if they want to teach professional terms or contents. It is true that ESAP teachers do need more training from the observation to those teachers in universities. When I was doing my bachelor's degree in university, linguistic teachers were required to teach the knowledge about business direction like international business and business negotiation^[3]. Therefore, before they began teaching, they needed to learn from other professors from other disciplines to make sure what they teach is correct. The third reason why we should give more focus on EGAP is that the courses that EGAP are more common in almost every discipline like plagiarism and note-taking. It is understandable that it would be more convenient and easier for teachers to give lessons and students to understand. The fourth reason that why people in favor of EGAP is about the benefits that students get from the learning of EGAP. Some scholars suggest that students need more general and broad education and competence than specific discipline education^[18]. It is suggested by Raimes that the academic writing teach in universities should be more related to liberal arts curriculum rather than specific discipline or subject^[17]. Besides, it is admitted that most students can read and write well in most tests, however, they are not very good at EGAP listening. Those who are not good at listening are usually shown in the following three aspects: students could not understand the whole structure of the listening materials, some of them could not recognize the key information and they are in need of note-taking skills. It is shown on the study that some students in China are having difficulty in understanding lectures and reluctant to watch open classes and attend lectures due to lack of training in EGAP listening. Therefore, some colleges and universities are beginning to put more efforts into preparing EGAP courses.

3.2. The Case Study of EGAP

There is a case put forward by Iranian scholar about the study process and improvement under using EGAP approach. He compares two groups of students from traditional teaching group and experimental teaching group who are taught in EGAP approach. It can be shown from the study result that EGAP approach does improve their vocabulary gap-filling competency in their exams and tests in both study groups although there is a difference between groups in terms of speed^[4].

And there is another case study carried out in an English language teaching center of a private university in Indonesia. It is said by the author of the research that promoting and developing EGAP in Indonesia is very important for both English and non-English department for improving motivation for study. According to the questionnaires and interview collected by the research it could be summed up that most students who participate in the research are intermediate level students, and students respond in the questionnaire and interview that they are not very satisfied with their language proficiency and they give their suggestion about the topic they want to learn in future could be more related to general

topics among different areas like technology and education, The result of the need analysis from both teachers and students encourage the English language teaching center in that university to formulate a new English courses to fit the need of students. Under that consideration, they decide to apply EGAP approach into their teaching^[10].

There is a study carried out by a famous Chinese university which tries to examine the study effect of reading and writing under the teaching approach of EGAP, there are near one thousand questionnaires are collected in the survey, most students in the survey response that they agree the positive influence what ESAP have on their major study which does motivate them to learn more about their majors. However, they do admit that they do need some academic general knowledge which used to improve their academic aspects of reading, listening, speaking and writing from EGAP courses, and most students agree that EGAP helps to have better understand of general academic English^[6]. It is very helpful for us to learn EGAP courses which might help us to have a better understand and comprehension of ESAP courses. And it is said by Zarei and Rahimi that EGAP writing insurrections help not only students but some people in their areas in academic programme much better^[19]. And the study result of them shows that EGAP courses are getting much more improvement not only in the forms but contents which is really helpful to the success of prospective writers because those EGAP courses amended giving much more emphasis on the transfer of certain learning outcomes^[19]. There is another research which looks into the beliefs from the aspects of both students and teacher in second language study and teaching, in which the survey shows that all learners change their simplest beliefs and opinions about the general courses and realize the importance that EGAP have on their major study^[16]. Taking one EGAP in my university for example, there is a module called research methods for every student among almost every major. It is true that the techniques that teachers taught at class are suitable for most students because they do not involve the specific knowledge in certain areas. For example, we are taught about how to avoid plagiarism and how to quote properly, and we are also taught the different research methods we could use in our studies like classroom observation, questionnaire and interview.

3.3. The Limitations of EGAP

There are some negative aspects that EGAP might occur during the process of second language teaching. One of the limitations is that EGAP is becoming less popular among second language learners sometimes because EAP is changing its direction to different practices involved in different subject, which gives more emphasis in the ESAP approach rather than EGAP approach^[5]. And there is another worry put forward by Blue, he argues that there is not a general academic study which is suitable for all general academic courses because, by which he means that different disciplines might have different specific requirements even in the same EGAP course. Taking note-taking skill of EGAP course for example, science-related subject of EGAP courses might have different requirements compared with the art-related subjects of EGAP courses. It can not be denied that some general knowledge and common sense that are available for everyone to study like English vocabulary, English grammar or sentence structure, although those aspects mentioned are common in academic field, it is still difficult for teachers to teach EGAP courses because teachers still need to make some changes to their teaching plan to cater for different needs of students and requirements from universities^[1]. EGAP courses is aiming at providing students with a wide range of academic source rather than specific interest to students^[5]. Due to the characteristics and purpose of EGAP, it is possible to conclude by another scholar that there might be three problems which are required to solve. Firstly, EGAP might not be very encouraging and inspiring and motivating for students because it is not related to their major study or specialism. Secondly, it might be a waste of time for students to learn some general knowledge that are not necessary and useful for their lives and works^[3].

4. Conclusion

What discussed about the advantages and disadvantages of ESAP and EGAP: from which it can be seen that there are many interests and benefits are mentioned in the essay but also negative influence from both sides from both sides discussed above, it is able to say that although ESAP needs more professional knowledge and skills for teachers to carry on a lesson, but it is still practical and useful for students in many ways. In the meanwhile, although EGAP is easier for teachers to teach however, it needs to be admit that there are limitations of EGAP which should not be neglected and should try some methods to improve the shortcomings of them.

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