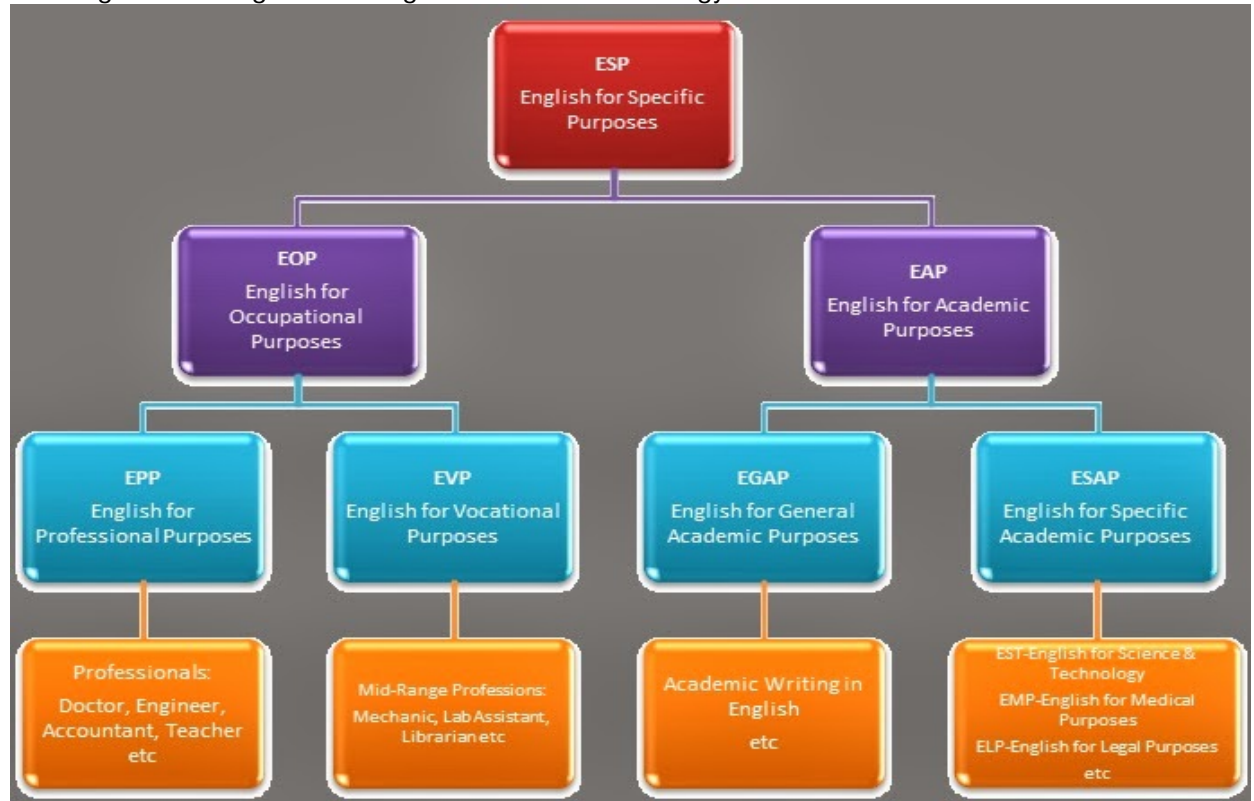


### Defining characteristics

Profession/occupation based English learning.

Practitioner driven field; needs based in orientation.

Full range of teaching methodologies – no one methodology is the focus.



### History of ESP

English was the emerging international lingua franca from 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It became the language of science, business, academia etc.

It was accelerated by globalization, population mobility and technology.

British colonialism, U.S. success on world stage contributed significantly.

ESP emerges in Britain, the colonies in 1920's.

### Evolution of Teaching in ESP

Register Analysis – Focus on linguistic features of the target discipline; grammar and lexical (60's & 70's).

Discourse Analysis – focus on dialogue patterns of the target discipline.

Target Situation – Needs analysis based; language and underlying thinking of target discipline (80's).

Skills and Strategies Analysis – Specific Reading and speaking skills focused; deducing new vocabulary meaning from context.

Learning Centered Analysis – moved beyond specific language use to reflect learning language processes.

### **Language Uses and ESP**

An ESP focus on the practical uses of language is used to bridge gap between knowledge of the language and the ability to communicate with others.

This involves investigation into the practical purposes of language in target situations.

Teaching is then focused on practicalities which enable students to perform functionally.

Four broad areas of research:

- Speech Acts

- Genres

- Social interactions

- Discipline specific word use

### **Speech Acts**

Speech acts are often the focus of ESP instruction.

It is focused on how language is used successfully for specific purposes in target environments.

Teaching is very context driven in this regard.

Needs analysis research in ESP identifies speech acts which occur in target situations and structures courses around the required speech acts.

Socio-pragmatics are commonly overlooked in ESP instruction or assumed to be universal Lack of correlation between language competency and communication competency – need for socio-pragmatics.

Speech acts operate at the individual level to achieve a purpose. Their form is not specific to any particular context; categories are understood to be universal – e.g. Making requests, offering advice.

### **Genres**

“a relatively stable class of linguistic and rhetorical events which members of a discourse community have typified in order to respond to and achieve shared communicative goals” (Swales, 1989)

Examples include: case studies (medicine), end of year reports (teaching), abstracts (academia) positioning statements (marketing).

Unlike speech acts (universally understood), genres are highly specific to environment.

Genres are the ‘rules of play’ within organizations, communities, professions etc.

They have consistent forms of communication with established practices.

Needs analysis identifies all genres used, deconstructs them to identify how structure supports objectives.

This helps create a social and cultural context for language use.

Genre based teaching best suited for students in one workplace, profession or academic discipline.

### **Social Interactions**

Linguistic interpersonal strategies are used to create and maintain relationships.

Positive and negative politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1988) identified; positive driven by desire for listener to feel good about speaker; negative driven by desire to avoid listener having negative reactions to speaker.

Hedging is another strategy intended to limit the belief or commitment to the idea expressed. E.g. “it may be time to act”.

Hedging softens the statement to reduce potential for direct conflict.

Corpus research can identify frequency of use of these strategies by profession, academic discipline etc.

Vassileva study (2001), showed Bulgarian academics use fewer hedges and many 'boosters' than English counterparts who demonstrate greater deference to academic colleagues by hedging.

This insight helps students communicate more effectively in context.

### **Discipline specific words**

Use of concordance software analyzes texts to identify words and structures in a given field

Identifies specific way general English is used uniquely in a field

Lexicostatistics is the term given to this sort of analysis. (Swales, 1985)

Examples – 'present' in general usage is a transitive verb (We presented the results) whereas in medicine it is used as, "The patient presented with severe weight loss"

In ESP, studies identify high frequency words/structures within a discipline and collocates of the word.

From this, concepts central to meaning in that discipline can be identified and taught.

### **Curriculum Development**

Comprehensive needs analysis is conducted amongst stakeholders including students to ensure organizational needs and student's needs are considered in curriculum development.

Stakeholder analysis includes shadowing in job context, data collection/analysis of language and skills, and English language history of students.

Speech acts, genres, social interaction and discipline specific words/structures may be the sole focus of instruction but more often, instruction involves a combination of these and/or addition of specific language skills like grammar.

### **Characteristics of an Academic Register:**

- High lexical density
- Nominal style (more names versus verbs)
- Impersonal Constructions

A common issue that teachers face in English for Special Purposes is what kind of English they should teach: English for a particular discipline or just English for general purposes. The pros and cons of each method are outlined in a table below.

Arguments for EGAP	Arguments for ESAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teaches generic skills that transfer to other disciplines.</li><li>• Teachers lack the training and expertise for ESAP.</li><li>• Subject specialists won't take time to attend to ESL learners.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Students can learn specific content and it doesn't detract from general English learning.</li><li>- Doesn't accommodate lower-level English learners.</li><li>- Encourages unimaginative thinking and doesn't prepare for unpredictable assignments.</li><li>- Subject specialists won't take time to attend to ESL learners.</li></ul>

Approaches to EAP:

1. **Study skills approach:** referencing, using a library, formatting, etc. Common generic reasoning and interpreting processes underlie communication. Emphasizes language learning rather than description.
2. **Disciplinary Socialization** (acculturation) links language, user and content (20)  
Discipline-sensitive and discourse-based approach  
Literacy as a more general understanding of the disciplines  
Focus on social and institutional context  
Each discipline has its own culture a student needs to learn
3. **Academic Literacies approach** links language with action and emphasizes context \ (practices change with context). Approach frames language as discourse practices, emphasizes context rather than particular skills of a discipline  
Patterned by social institutions and power relationships (22). Culture switch is necessary to join a particular institution. Discourse concerned with display of identity  
Context of culture and context of situation are important

Different views of EAP:

**Pragmatic View:** Sensitivity to contexts of teaching and learners' needs

**Critical EAP:** emphasizes students' shaping of the disciplines as much as their acculturation to it.

**Delivery Essentials:**

- Collaboration with subject specialist teachers.
- Appropriate feedback to students.

**Types of Feedback:**

1. Strengths and weaknesses.
2. Match between student's answer and the 'ideal' one.
3. Correct or edit students' work.
4. Engage in dialogue (rare, no opportunity).
5. Advice on next essay.
6. Advice on rewriting present one.

**Needs and Rights (Benesch 1999):**

- Needs analysis is a primary step in creating curriculum.
- Right analysis recognizes the classroom as a site of struggle and looks at how power and control is exercised in the classroom (EAP) students as active participants.

Coverage and student participation have an inverse relationship although participation is key (i.e. talking and writing). In effect, coverage is control for teachers and students. It limits communication opportunities and possibility of challenging status quo.

**Vocational ESL objective:** Reduces the amount of time for someone to meet his goal of obtaining job skills, while learning language and vocabulary.

*Pre-employment VESL:* Devoted to job readiness and general "soft" job skills. Students practice the language of general job functions such as responding to complaints, making requests, and answering the phone.

*Occupation-specific VESL:* Narrow-angled, focusing on a particular job such as a nurse. It narrowly identifies language, discourses, and pragmatics after the completion of a thorough needs assessment and target system analysis. Frequent communication between the VESL and vocational instructors before and during the class is necessary.

*Integrated basic education and skills training VESL*: ESL instructor pairs with a professional-technical instructor to provide students with literary education or workforce skills.

*Cluster VESL*. Wide/narrow-angled approach. Firstly, students from different vocations are in one classroom. Then, small-talk, conversation, and language specific to a chosen profession is used.

*Workplace VESL*: ESP classes are offered to employees at the job site. Goals are often higher productivity on the job, improved safety, and increased use of English. Not a common method.

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