



## ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** *The fact that in recent decades English has become a lingua franca, the necessity of acquiring the language proficiency in a particular area is obvious. Consequently, educational establishments focus on ESP courses to make their graduates competitive in the employment market. The article considers various perspectives on the phenomenon, its place in the field of English language teaching, provides the branches of ESP and specifies the target learners.*

**Keywords:** *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), common core plus, general purpose language, academic needs, occupational needs.*

### I. Introduction

Over the last two centuries English has become the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising. It is also the most usual foreign language learnt in European schools and universities. (Graddol, 1997, p, 181) That reflects the need for English language proficiency in the context of personal and professional growth. Consequently, most educational institutions require from students a good command of the language at both entrance and final exams. That leads to increasing demand of learning English within certain specific areas.

The purpose of the article is to describe the term “ESP” from various perspectives, define its branches, and highlight the key features of the ESP course and the difference between ESP (English for specific purposes) and EFL (English foreign language). 2. Definition of ESP English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners, focuses on the necessary language, genres, and skills to address these needs, and assists learners in meeting these needs through the use of general and/or discipline-specific teaching materials and methods. [1] Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield claim that the term refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain. [...] The key feature of an ESP course is that the content and aims of the course are oriented to the specific needs of the learners. ESP courses, then, focus on the language, skills, and genres appropriate to the specific activities the learners need to carry out in English. [2] According to Bloor and Bloor (1986), there are two perspectives on the term language for specific purposes. One is that a specific-purpose



language is based on and extends from a basic core of general language (the common core plus): different varieties of English are based on a common set of grammatical and other linguistic characteristics. According to Coxhead and Nation (2001), it is wise to direct vocabulary learning to more specialized areas depending on the aims of the learners, when the learners have mastered control of the 2,000 words of general usefulness in English. [3, pp. 15-16]

The second is that all language exists as one variety or another and that there is no basic core ('generalpurpose' language): the core is, rather, an essential part of any one of the innumerable varieties of the language. [...] All languages are learnt in some context or another. [3, pp. 15-16] Bloor asserts that teaching a specific variety of English (ESP) can start at any level including beginners. Moreover, learning from the specific variety of English is highly effective, as learners acquire structures in relation to the range of meanings in which they are used in their academic, workplace, or professional environments. [3, p. 17]

Tony Dudley-Evans, Maggie Jo St John, Maggie Jo Saint John provides the following definition of the term:

1. Absolute characteristics:

- ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner;
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves;
- ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to the activities.

2. Variable characteristics:

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
- 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 used for learners at secondary school level;
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. Most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners. [4, pp. 4-5]

3. Branches of ESP and its place in ELT

According to Edward de Chazal, the field of English language teaching is (ELT) is diverse, global, and complex. Within the field many different sectors, approaches, and cultures coexist. These sectors include:

- General teaching English as a foreign language (known as TEFL, EFL, or ELT);
- Teaching English as a second language (TESOL, TESL, ESOL, or ESL);



- More specialized sectors including English for specific purposes (ESP), English for science and technology (EST), English for occupational purposes (EOP), and English for academic purposes (EAP). [5]

Two major branches can be divided further. EAP can be divided into English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), and EOP can be divided into English for Professional Purposes (EPP) and English for Vocational Purposes (EVP). These sub branches can be divided even further [...], including English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP), English for Business Purposes (EBP), English for Medical Purposes (EMP), Nursing English and Aviation English. [1]

According to Laurence Anthony, ESP focuses on meeting the specific needs of learners in various academic and occupational contexts. Academic needs refer to the needs of learners in a school, university, or other setting where the primary goal is learning. Occupational needs refer to the needs of learners in a workplace setting, such as factory restaurant, or hospital. The scholar considers English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to be the most inflectional branch of ESP. It focuses on ESP in academic settings. [1] In Oxford Learner's Dictionaries English for Academic Purposes has been defined as the teaching of English for people who are using English for study, but whose first language is not English. [7]

4. How is ESP (English for specific purposes) different from EFL (English foreign language)? The main distinction is of ESP is that the English thought caters for the needs of learners in specific disciplines other than the arts and languages. ESP teaching uses the methodologies and activities of the various disciplines it is designed to serve, and it focuses on the language, lexis, grammar, discourses and genres, of those disciplines rather than using the general grammar, learner's dictionaries and general public genres and discourses. ESP students are already assumed to possess some general knowledge of English. The purpose of learning the language is to communicate within a specific academic, occupational and professional domain. [8, p.12]

Dudley Evans (1997) claims that the main distinction of ESP is that the English taught caters for the needs of learners in specific disciplines other than the arts and languages. ESP teaching uses the methodologies and activities of the various disciplines it is designed to serve, and it focuses on the language, lexis, grammar, learners' dictionaries and general public genres and discourses. These absolute characteristics are broad and distinguish ESP from general English courses in that ESP students are already assumed to possess some general knowledge of English.

The purpose of learning the language is to communicate within a specific academic, occupational or professional domain. [4] According to Scott Thornbury, English for specific purposes (ESP) contrasts with general English in that the content and aims of the course are determined by the specific needs of the particular group of learners. These needs are normally identified by means of needs analysis. They might be occupational (as in business



English) or academic (as in English for academic purposes, or EAP) / Scott Thornbury p75/  
The major difference thus lies in the learners and their purposes for learning English.

ESP students are adults who already have some familiarity with English and are learning the language in order to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions. [8, p.7] However, there is a branch of ESP referred to as English for educational purposes, which is EAP for school age students.

ESP learners tend to have more focused goals than EFL learners. Each ESP course focuses on the needs of learners in a certain area, by providing them with a specific range of knowledge and skills, whereas an EGP course seeks to cover the whole range of grammar and lexis in the language with the goal of general language proficiency. [9]

ESP focuses on language in context rather than on grammar and language structures. It covers a subject matter area important to the learners. ESP program is not aimed at the development of four language skills which are listening, reading, speaking and writing. It is designed so that the learners could acquire essential language skills in accordance with the occupational context. ESP integrates subject matter and English language instruction. Such a combination is highly motivating because students can apply their language skills to their professional field. Conversely this reinforces the learning efficiency. Subject-matter knowledge enables students to better understand the English of the classroom. The ESP class takes the subject-matter content and shows students how the same information is expressed in English. [9, p.7]

#### 5. Conclusions.

Good command of the language is essential in a present-day world. It concerns not only General English for every day communication, but also ESP which has become essential for employees involved in various spheres of activity. That gives them opportunity to get a better job offer, and to be more sought-after specialists for employers, since fluency in English is a very marketable skill today. Since ESP is targeted to the specific needs of learners from various fields, it is a “multibranching” phenomenon. ESP differs from EFL as it focuses on certain vocabulary and skills needed in a chosen domain.

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