



EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAMS IN PREPARING ENGINEERING GRADUATES FOR WORKPLACE DEMANDS

R. Dewangan¹

¹Assistant Guest Lecturer (English), Naveen Government College, Rampur (Korba), (C.G.), India.

ABSTRACT

As a result of globalization, communication skills in English have become increasingly important. To meet organizational expectations, one must be able to communicate effectively in a variety of professions, including aviation, nursing, medicine, hotel management, business management, engineering, pharmaceutical sciences, etc. Due to the abundance of work options, engineering degrees are in high demand among many other areas. Professional engineers and students alike must develop their presentation skills, attend interviews, create resumes and CVs, write business letters, write technical reports, and more. The majority of the time, employers are dissatisfied with their workers' communication abilities. This occurs as a result of English being taught and learned for General Purposes (EGP) from elementary school through junior college. The demands of the employer cannot be met by advanced EGP learning. At a higher level of education, it is therefore recognized that language proficiency should be developed within the framework of "English for Specific Purposes" (ESP). It is really necessary to concentrate more on enhancing the particular abilities needed for the workplace. These requirements can be met using the ESP technique. The learner-centered approach is used to teach ESP. In order to help engineering students have a bright future, this study aims to clarify the significance and applicability of ESP.

KEYWORDS: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Proficiency, Engineering Students, Language Programs, Needs analysis, Communication, Curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

English has been increasingly important in recent years in a variety of sectors, including corporate management, engineering, medical, and aviation. There has been interest in creating English language programs tailored to academic and professional goals. In their social and professional lives, engineering students mostly communicate in English. Engineering students must learn specialized English skills, such as LSRW. Due to its widespread exposure, English has become more well-known than other languages. Even though the majority of students in India attend English-medium schools, their proficiency in the language is still lacking in both academic and professional settings. Here, English is taught in schools and colleges to fulfill the general aims. This is the cause of students' inability to fulfill the demands of organization following their education. Their proficiency levels were not raised by the scholarly publications they had read or by any additional language-related classes they had taken.

Much progress is not seen despite taking English language-related classes for a variety of reasons, such as to prepare for competitive examinations, interviews, or higher education overseas. The topic of what type of English should be taught to engineering students now emerges. The significance and applicability of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) now became apparent. Prior to understanding the significance and applicability of ESP for engineering students in India, it is critical to understand its history, definition, and distinctions from General English (GE) courses. ESP, according to Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters, was a phenomena that developed from several overlapping tendencies rather than a deliberate and cohesive movement.

Three Primary Factors were found to be involved in the development of all ESP courses

- (a) The Challenges of a Courageous New World
International scientific, technical, and economic activity increased at an unparalleled rate after World War II ended in 1945. A worldwide language, such as English, became necessary as a result of this growth. The motivations behind studying English were not previously specified. English proficiency was seen as an indication of a well-rounded education. However, the growth of commerce and technology led to the development of new generations of learners who were able to examine their motivations for learning a language. Additionally, the early 1970s oil crisis led to a huge influx of Western knowledge and money into oil-rich nations. As a result, there was an enormous demand for English course design. Given the foregoing, English has evolved into a topic that satisfies people's wants, desires, and demands.
- (b) Linguistics Under Radical Change
New concepts in language learning started to appear at the same time as there was an increasing need for English courses that were customized to meet particular requirements. That is, new research has moved away from teaching grammar, the conventional norms of English use, and toward finding ways to teach English for authentic conversation.
- (c) Pay Attention to the Learner
The third characteristic is that, as education psychology advanced, learners' needs and learning attitudes—rather than linguistics—were prioritized.



Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters assert that ESP is not a specific language or approach, nor does it include a certain form of instructional resource. It is a method of teaching languages that is centered on the requirements of the students. Additionally, it is a way of teaching languages where the learner's motivation for learning informs the choice of instructional strategies and content. The definitions of ESP were the subject of several disputes. Despite the misunderstandings, Dudley-Evans provided a revised definition.

ESP DEFINITIONS (DUDLEY-EVANS, 1997)

Absolute Qualities ESP is designed to address the unique demands of the students. ESP uses the fundamental practices and methods of the field it works in. ESP focuses on using language that is suitable for these tasks in terms of discourse, genre, grammar, lexis, register, and study techniques. Variable Characteristics: ESP may be connected to or tailored for particular fields. It may employ a different technique than General English in particular teaching scenarios.

ESP is probably intended for adult learners, whether they are enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution or are employed in a professional setting. However, it could be intended for secondary school students. ESP is often intended for students who are intermediate or advanced. A rudimentary understanding of the language systems is assumed in the majority of ESP courses.

THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN GENERAL ENGLISH AND ENGLISH FOR SPECIALIZED PURPOSES

The English Language Teaching (ELT) tree diagram, created by Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters, divides English as a foreign language (EFL) into two categories: GE (General English) and ESP (English for Specific Purpose). GE wants to focus more on broad uses, such as for school, college, and university exams. ESP seeks to focus more on particular requirements. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) are the two subcategories of ESP. ESP is a method of teaching languages that tries to accommodate each learner's needs. ESP instruction places a high value on creating a variety of courses that are suited for the students. Since we are unable to directly address the needs of GE learners, less emphasis is placed on course design while teaching GE. "In theory nothing, in practice a great deal" is how ESP differs from general English. The ESP learner has unique requirements. Additionally, there is some way to identify the demands of general English learners. ESP concentrates on specialized terminology, grammatical constructions, and topic matter associated with a particular area. GE concentrates on applications in broad contexts. Needs analysis is crucial to achieving the desired outcome while creating ESP courses.

ENGINEERING STUDENTS' GOALS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

According to the placement officer, English faculty, technical faculty, and students, the following abilities are necessary to pass interviews and meet workplace requirements. Speaking and listening abilities: the capacity to take part in official or

informal discussions, technical seminars, technical presentations, group discussions, and interviews. Writing abilities and the capacity to create business letters Technical reports, emails, memoranda, and meeting circulars vocabulary: to write an eligibility exam and to understand the definitions and applications of technical and business terminology for the aforementioned goals; IELTS, GRE, etc. Grammar proficiency: to increase one's ability to communicate in everyday contexts. For the reasons listed below, ESP classes can serve all of these objectives more effectively than regular English courses.

ANALYZING NEEDS

Needs analysis is the most crucial component of ESP course design. A needs analysis includes:

1. Target circumstance requires. (What the student must accomplish in the intended scenario)
2. Learning requirements. (What must be done by the student in order to learn)

We take into account a learner's demands, goals, and deficiencies in the target setting. We may obtain the following data using the Target situation analysis framework.

1. Do students require language for academic objectives, employment, promotions, etc.?
2. Do they utilize language for speaking, writing, or reading?
3. Settings where the language is utilized, such as workplaces, workshops, and meetings.
4. The following details about the learner may be obtained using the framework for learning needs analysis:
 - (a) Motives for enrolling in the course, such as promotions or mandatory or elective goals.
 - (b) Their learning background, the relevant technique, etc., may be used to estimate the learning process.
 - (c) Personal information about the learner, such as age, gender, knowledge, hobbies, and topic knowledge, among other things.

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND PERTINENCE OF ESP FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Bloor and Bloor (1986) assert that teaching a particular dialect of English may begin at any level, even novices. Furthermore, acquiring specialized forms of English—such as English for engineers, surgeons, etc.—is very beneficial. The goal of ESP is to get students ready to utilize English in professional, academic, and workplace settings. The syllabus is based on a study of the learners' requirements, which is the main characteristic of ESP course design. Because the syllabus is created with the requirements of the students in mind, the classes will be engaging and inspiring. Group discussions, oral presentations, simulated interviews, vocabulary exercises, conversation scenarios, and other activities are created with the student's actual requirements and capacity to achieve the aforementioned goals in mind. Learners may sense the clear relevance of the material they are studying through the ESP course, which also helps them achieve the desired outcomes. For instance, appropriate activities and instruction will be given when students are learning business English terminology, meeting protocol, letter writing, etc. Therefore, learning a language is not done in ESP in order to have a general education. It is learned to be used in certain circumstances. Here, engineering students may raise their level of skill to



succeed in both their coursework and careers. It creates a clear route to meet the desired goals. Furthermore, time must be used efficiently because the majority of ESP courses have time constraints (West, 1994). Most ESP classes have a time limit. Teachers are essential in instructing ESP courses. They are responsible for creating the curriculum, organizing appropriate exercises, and preparing the course materials. It seems appropriate to teach ESP students just the necessary English since teachers frequently have limited time to educate. Teachers serve as guides, facilitators, creators of materials, and more. Therefore, determining the learner's needs and creating a course that meets them is the responsibility of the ESP course creator. Its focus is on the learner. The learner-centered method is used. Teachers that are aware of their students' requirements are better able to provide engaging lessons.

Based on everything mentioned above, we can conclude that ESP courses, particularly for engineering students, should be promoted and developed in the Indian context since they are significant and pertinent.

REFERENCES

1. Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters. *English for Specific Purposes- A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Dudley Evans Tony. *Developments in English for Specific Purposes. A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Helen Basturkmen. *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. University of Auckland, New Zealand.