**How is ESP different from English for General Purposes (EGP)?**

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that there is no difference between ESP and EGP in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice.

In his description of the absolute characteristics of ESP, Dudley-Evans and John (1998) differentiates EGP from ESP in terms of the teaching methodology and activities of the discipline it serves. Both the methodology and activities used in the ESP course therefore are different from that of EGP.

In addition, Widdowson considers both EGP and ESP as specific and purposeful but he distinguishes them in terms of learning purpose and language use. The difference, for him, lies in the way in which purpose is defined, and the manner of its implementation. EGP applies an educational concept where the learning purpose is not precise. Whereas, ESP constitutes an applied training which is designed to meet precise learning needs.

On this respect, Widdowson (1983) asserts that:

“…ESP is essentially a training operation which seeks to provide learners with a restricted competence to enable them to cope with certain clearly defined tasks. These tasks continue the specific purposes which ESP course is designed to meet. The course, therefore, makes direct reference to eventual aims. GPE, on the other hand, is essentially an educational operation which seeks to provide learners with a general capacity to enable them to cope with undefined eventualities in the future.”(Widdowson, 1983:6)

On the same vein Orr (1998) distinguishes ESP from EGP in terms of learning purpose as he clearly assumes that:

“English for General Purposes (EGP) is essentially the English language education in junior and senior high schools. Students are introduced to the sounds and symbols of English, as well as to the lexical/grammatical/rhetorical elements that compose spoken and written discourse…University instruction that introduces students to common features of academic discourse in the sciences or humanities, frequently called English for Academic Purposes (EAP), is equally ESP.”(Orr, 1998)

In other words, the purpose of EGP is more general while that for which learners learn ESP is more specific or specialized. Therefore, EGP is every day’s language used for ordinary things in a variety of common situations however, ESP is specialized language related to a particular field of knowledge or discipline.

Another factor that distinguishes ESP from EGP is needs analysis. It aims to specify the actual needs of learners as closely as possible so that it can meet those needs of the learners through the medium of English (Robinson, 1991).

In EGP courses, no needs analysis is conducted because of the general nature of these courses whereas ESP courses are designed to meet the specified purpose for the specific professional or academic needs of the learner.

Hence, EGP is typically viewed as a level that precedes higher-level instruction in ESP if ESP programs are to yield satisfactory results.