

Differences in EAP Versus EGP Reading Comprehension in ESP Students

Zaynitdinova Nafosat Abdunaimovna

Independent researcher of the Kokand State Pedagogical University, Senior teacher, Tashkent Vatan University, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: Language acquisition is an integral part of academic achievement, as it promotes communication, enhances content comprehensibility, and develops language skills. Throughout this academic process, students are required to be actively involved in language learning to meet the growing competencies of psychology and pedagogy education. Reading comprehension in academic reading and general reading is considered one of the essential factors for future progress in education. This paper focuses on how first-year psychology and pedagogy students acquire both academic and general reading comprehension through their learning stages. Several factors, such as student background knowledge, interests, and language skills, are related to the comprehension of the material they are encountering in academic studies. A study was conducted at Vatan University in Tashkent with first-year psychology and pedagogy students to identify the difficulties in reading comprehension, both in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EGP (English for General Purposes). Data was collected through a student survey, and the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The data analysis revealed an engagement of reading comprehension skills, elevating the overall reading competency.

Keywords: Academic reading comprehension, general reading comprehension, lexical content, syntactical content, reading competency, language skill, student proficiency.

Introduction: Aware of the fact that the rapid pace of cultural globalisation processes entails teaching ESP students how to express themselves internationally and get involved in intercultural activities. This opportunity enhances every student's language competency, creating a competitive environment in the job market and across any given career. This requires a well-balanced set of professional and linguistic skills as a vital language component in the training of professionals in a specialised field. Providing language learners with adequate, specific knowledge helps them better digest the target language, thereby enhancing their general, professional, and academic success. To promote communication, Shivani, V, et al. suggest that creating comprehensibility of content along with expediting knowledge acquisition requires students to be actively involved in the language learning process.[7]. Throughout academic performance majority of students encounter persistent challenges while being engaged in academic settings.

As these difficulties could be outlined from a lack of background knowledge, complex lexical settings, including complex syntaxes, in academic sources. According to Kostenko. V. H. & et.al. [8] claim that the use of unfamiliar terminology and specialised linguistic structures increases cognitive load and impedes comprehension for non-native English speakers.

The main objective of this study is to explore, support, and evaluate reading comprehension in academic and general reading contexts within English for Specific Purpose (ESP). The research aims to investigate ways in which students in the ESP sphere can perceive, engage with, develop, and master academic, as well as general reading skills essential to their future academic careers. By conducting a survey among psychology and pedagogy students, the research aims to tailor English language learning to target 'learners' particular requirements, enhancing their competency in perceiving not only general reading skills but also academic reading comprehension. This requires

creating a curriculum that specifically addresses student needs, interests, and language performance competencies using data gathered through surveys, discussions and observations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Shewangizaw, G. & Haile, W. [1] state that technical terms are mostly used in Garment and Apparel Fashion texts, as descriptive, instructional, and analytical words can be focused within the context. Whereas communicative English texts contain more everyday language to comprehend. The researchers highlight that ESP materials contain more complex sentences and that the passive voice is used to convey information clearly. The structure in the ESP context is usually expository and aims to build skills, while general English materials often include stories for entertainment or education, which match their different purposes. This awareness is highlighted in subsequent research papers that claim ESP materials in Mechanical Engineering contain a high load of technical vocabulary, often with meanings distinct from those in general language, whereas general reading materials use everyday language [2]. Writers reported that, syntactically, ESP context-based materials feature more complex sentences and more passive voice to support readers' comprehension of technical processes.

Lexical density differences between EAP textbooks and research articles are explained by highlighting that EAP materials use more familiar, earlier-acquired, and higher-frequency vocabulary, whereas research articles use less familiar, later-acquired, and lower-frequency vocabulary [3]. Nasrabady, P., et al. address the importance of corpus-formed EAP curricula to bridge the lexical gap, ultimately enhancing educational goals and learner readiness in academic contexts, rather than focusing on syntax or discourse structure.

There are various discussions regarding reading comprehension in the ESP and EGP contexts, one that can be broadly promoted to improve teaching reading skills in the ESP sphere. Xiaobin Ren claims that ESP textbooks should be lexically more sophisticated than EGP ones. However, most ESP textbooks were found to be lexically easier. The author explains that discourse structures in ESP are typically expository, focusing on professional development, in contrast to the narrative style often found in general reading materials that aim to entertain or educate.

The paper focuses on vocabulary profiling in science magazines, highlighting that ESP materials often contain specialized vocabulary suited for non-expert audiences, contrasting with everyday language in

general reading. While general materials may prioritize narrative structures for entertainment, ESP texts like science magazines typically employ expository discourse to educate. Syntax in ESP can be more complex, utilizing passive voice to emphasize processes. The primary goal of ESP materials is professional development, equipping learners with the necessary vocabulary and comprehension skills for specific fields.

Several studies highlight that research on second language acquisition often shows that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials contain unique language and functions compared to general reading texts. According to these studies, mostly specific vocabulary related to certain fields is encountered throughout ESP texts. Mainly, science magazines and texts for specific professions use technical and semi-technical terms suited to fields like engineering and medicine. In science news articles, though, this specialised language is often simplified, making the content easier for non-experts to comprehend, creating a mix of expert and general language.

According to several studies in general reading materials, the usage of common, everyday vocabulary is employed to deliver comprehensive and engaging content. This variation in vocabulary arises from particular goals: based on general texts it aimed to entertain or inform a broad audience, whereas English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials are designed to facilitate the development of professional skills and specialized knowledge.

In terms of sentence structure between ESP and English for general reading, a clear difference can be identified. According to many studies, ESP texts usually provide more complex sentences, often delivering longer sentences and more passive voice to focus on processes and stay objective. This content is mainly developed in research articles to keep academic accuracy and formality. On the other hand, general reading materials and science news articles tend to provide shorter, more active sentences to enable readers easily catch the material and be engaged in comprehending it.

In terms of the purpose and text structure, ESP reading features focus on expository content setting up to explain, analyse, and present facts in a clear and organised way, especially in academic and research texts that follow strict rules. In contrast, general reading materials mostly deliver stories or a mix of storytelling and information to keep readers interested. Throughout science news articles, readers face a main challenge in mixing stories with facts to both teach and entertain people with different

backgrounds.

It is essential to point out that comparing science news articles and research articles highlights these differences. Research articles deliver a lot of technical terms and complex sentences, whereas science news articles provide simpler language and storytelling to make the information easier to read and comprehend. The audience should be considered when writing and applying ESP-related texts.

Overall, the reviewed studies demonstrate that differences between ESP and general reading materials are significant. In summary, studies show that ESP and general reading materials differ in many ways, including vocabulary, sentence structure, and text organisation. These differences align with their goals: ESP texts help people build specialised knowledge and skills, while general materials focus on being easy to read and engaging for a wide audience. Still, more research is needed to understand how learners experience these different types of texts, especially in less-studied educational settings.

METHODS

The purpose of the study

This study aims to identify the reading habits, comprehension, and difficulties tertiary-level students encountered in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for General Purposes (EGP). Specifically, this paper analyses the frequency and types of reading materials students mostly engage with, explores their attitudes toward academic and general reading, and

compares the difficulty of comprehension, their application to their studies, and their motivation for each type. The study also focuses on basic challenges, including vocabulary limitations, syntactic complexity, and a lack of background knowledge that students face as they develop academic proficiency.

A quantitative survey method was employed to systematically collect and analyse students' responses within the concept of second language acquisition. Structured questionnaire items were used to identify patterns, indicate student comprehension, and compare EAP and EGP reading experiences. The participants of the study include two first-year students of the 68 psychology faculty. They are from different backgrounds, and their language skills range from A1 (Basic user) to C1 (Competent user) levels according to the CEFR. The English courses prescribed for participating students, "Communicative English" and "Technical English," follow the language-skills pattern.

RESULTS

Our questionnaire consisted of 17 questions focusing on students' EAP and EGP reading comprehension. Only the 1st year students were involved in this survey performed during the 2025 – 2026 academic year; 58.8 % of the respondents are female and 41.2 % are male; 52.9 % of students reported that they read texts, news articles and social media posts every day

Based on the diagram below, we can conclude that significant number of students find academic reading difficult to comprehend. 75% of students

How often do you read in English?

68 ОТВЕТОВ

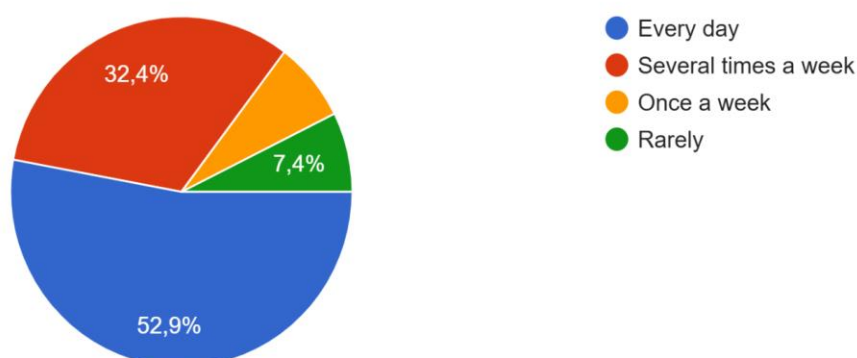


Figure 1

Reading comprehension/ EAP reading

68 ОТВЕТОВ

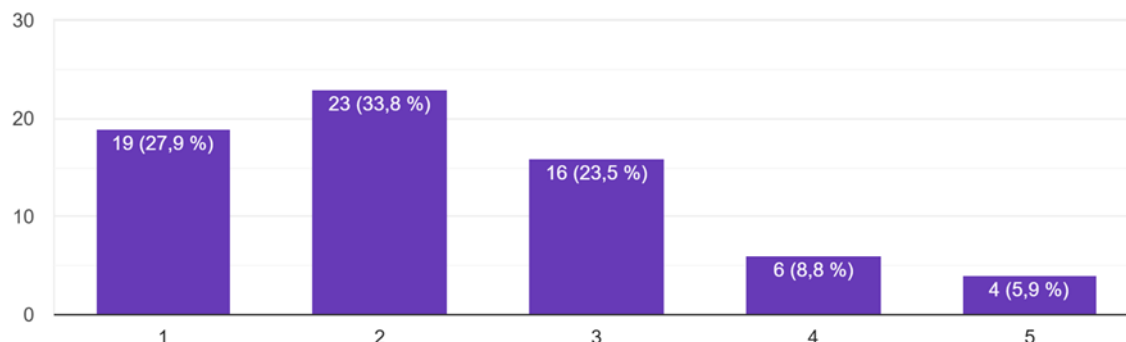


Figure 2

When asked about the reasons for difficulties in academic reading, the majority of respondents, 76.4% students, reported difficulties with lexical and complex

grammatical structures. While the proportion of respondents who find difficulties in long sentences and lack of background knowledge indicates a small percentage.

What difficulties do you face when reading academic texts? (Choose all that apply)

68 ОТВЕТОВ

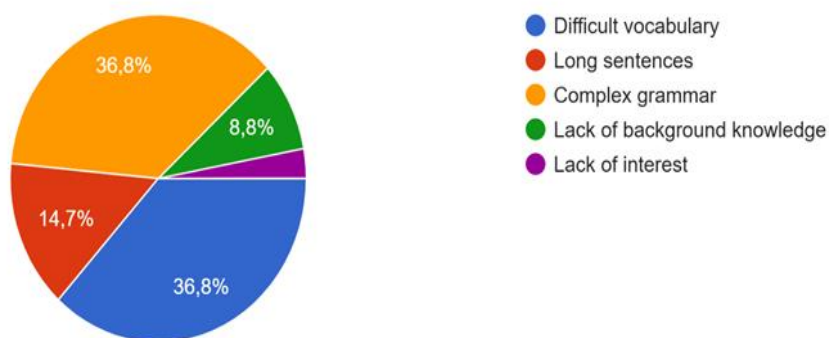


Figure 3

DISCUSSION

The findings of a survey delivered among first-year students in the faculties of psychology and pedagogy identify some significant difficulties associated with academic reading comprehension. This in-depth research helps us better understand how these students approach to the EAP course and their language capabilities. Specifically, target learners struggle to comprehend complex texts and to apply effective reading strategies in their reading performance. The data demonstrates a lack of strategic reading awareness among students in their academic

context.

This suggests that target learners do not have sufficient exposure to explicit instructions in reading strategies, which are a key factor in improving students' reading comprehension in academic content. The lack of strategic awareness could affect the traditional reading approach, highlighting comprehension outcome mostly rather than process-oriented skills.

These findings are consistent and accurate, showing that tertiary-level students generally struggle with reading comprehension in academic settings due to insufficient practice of reading strategies. However, the

study demonstrates research suggesting that developing reading strategies requires constant exposure, as learners can develop accurate strategies through self-practice. Reading exposure in general reading depends on access to and involvement with general texts. Compared to academic reading, general reading uses language that is easier for students to understand. Regarding outcomes highlighting primary vocabulary challenges for academic reading comprehension, there is a need for support for lexical content.

CONCLUSION

Apart from the contextual academic needs, research should focus on highly exposing students to a wide selection of materials as content conveyors for psychology and pedagogy English, as students' linguistic needs range from mastering effective reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, and summarising to practising linguistic cues associated with the proper lexicon, word order, and text structure to enhance both general reading and academic reading comprehension.

Overall, this research paper aims to help students apply reading strategies to decipher, synthesise, sort out, classify, and link massive volumes of information when tackling long, extensive technical engineering texts and to exercise critical thinking skills to either apprehend technical English vocabulary or to develop and produce academic sentences or responses that explicitly cover psychology and pedagogy content-based English vocabulary. Suffice it to say that matching syllabus content, resources, and teaching methods to learners' requirements improves motivation and accomplishment.

This research paper outlines the importance of acquiring reading skills in the context of academic reading and general reading content. Furthermore, highlighting the role that new approaches to technological development can have in language education. Internet-based technologies are being significantly applied in daily life, with new web-based goods, tactics, and theories being produced regularly, making it a beneficial instructional tool in language teaching classrooms, as evidenced by the current study's findings. However, since this study relied mainly on self-perception surveys to assess students' language abilities, the results should be interpreted with consideration.

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