

Efficacy of ESP in EFL Context: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The essence of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) is to provide a strong foundation of English required for specific professional disciplines, and the Preparatory Year Programme (PYP) in Saudi universities are designed to achieve the desired proficiency level required for various professional disciplines. The present study aims to delineate the efficacy of ESP vis-à-vis the PYP with special reference to Najran University. It intends to investigate whether PYP students' English proficiency conforms to ESP standards by analysing teachers' feedback and expert opinions. The research design makes methodological triangulation using both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire) methods. Forty teachers of PYP, teaching various courses of English, Najran University were randomly selected to elicit their feedback and opinion on various aspects of students' linguistic proficiency vis-à-vis ESP standards. The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions using Likert's 5 scales (Strongly Agree, Agree, Can't Say, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Semi-structured interviews were also used to acquire detailed perceptions of the teachers. Ten teachers were interviewed with four questions pertaining to the relevant research area. Based on the data analysis, it is observed that most of the students at PYP have language proficiency to learn ESP, but not up to the desired level. There is a need to enhance learners' proficiency level required for various professional disciplines. In the end, this study offers some remedial measures and suggestions aiming not only to raise the compatibility of ESP in the context of PYP in Saudi Arabia, but also to inject more ESP-oriented materials in the curriculum.

Keywords: EFL, ESP, ESP materials, professional disciplines, PYP

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