

**THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES  
IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AN APPRAISAL OF  
COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH PROGRAMME IN  
THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION (NUC)  
NEW BENCHMARK MINIMUM ACADEMIC  
STANDARD 2014 DRAFT**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper appraises the content of Communication in English Curriculum in Nigerian Universities. English for Academic Purposes is taught in tertiary academic settings world-wide. It is, however, known by varieties of labels such as freshman's composition or writing within Disciplines in America, and communication skills in Ghana. In Nigeria, it is called the use of English, or communication skills, and communication in English in the draft of the NUC new bench mark. The result of the appraisal carried out revealed that the branch of EAP taught in Nigerian universities is English for General Academic Purposes(EGAP) This branch of EAP caters for the general linguistic needs of the students rather the needs of students of a particular discipline as in English for Specific Academic Purposes(ESAP). In addition, the syllabus is not based on formal needs analysis of the learners but on the informal which is highly subjective. This study recommends the integration of discipline specific tasks into EGAP contexts in order to meet both the general and specific English language needs of students in Nigerian universities.*

**Keywords:** English, Teaching, ESP, EAP, EGAP and ESAP.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

English language today is the medium of instruction in institutions of learning in many countries of the world especially in the UK, USA and the former British colonies. The demand for English language has resulted to the emergence of different approaches to its teaching. The communicative approach to teaching English language particularly brought a shift from the teaching of English as a subject to English as means of communication. The contents of English Language curriculum in tertiary institutions of learning in many countries have witnessed a dramatic change of focus. One of the obvious changes of focus is from the teaching of English as an abstract system, which is from the teaching of grammatical structures and language skills to the teaching of learners' communication needs. The advent of information and communication technologies which has shrunk the world to a global village with English language playing the principal role has also led to more demands for English language across the globe. It has especially, accelerated the spread of the teaching-learning of English for specific purposes of which EAP is a strand to many countries of the world. The teaching of English for specific purposes (ESP) which began after the Second World War in 1945 in order to meet the demands of the Brave New World has diverse branches today (Hutchinson & Water, 1987). This was illustrated by Hutchinson's and Waters' ELT tree as including English for Specific Purposes( ESP),English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Occupational Purposes(EOP),English for Business purposes(EBP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) English for Medical Purposes (EMP) etc.

According to (Mark & Nathaniel, 2014), English for Academic Purposes occupies a central role in English-medium universities and universities across the globe. They further asserts that the growth of EAP is derived from the awareness of ESP practitioners that tertiary level students possess different learning needs which cannot be met by teaching them the same type of English language. (Mark & Nathaniel, 2014) also identify two branches of ESP as English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational Purposes. EAP which is the focus of this paper has two divisions, English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). EGAP focuses on general communicative needs of students in formal education settings irrespective of disciplines. ESAP on the other hand focuses on discipline specific communicative needs of the students for such as English for legal purposes, English for engineering purposes, English for Agricultural purposes, English for business purposes, English for Economics purposes among others.

EAP in Nigeria is known by different labels such as 'the use of English, Communication skills and recently in the draft of the new NUC benchmark as 'communication in English.' Irrespective of nomenclature, EAP aims to improve the students' proficiency in English language in order to study and conduct research in English effectively. Proficiency refers to the ability to speak and write English effectively; interact effectively with English texts and explain scientific or technical concepts. EAP in Nigerian universities is presently known as communication in English (NUC NEW BENCH MARK 2014). It is a four unit course taken by the first year students of Nigerian universities in the first and second semester respectively. It is designed to improve the students' proficiency in English language having been exposed to English right from kindergarten to secondary school level.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD:**

The study was based on secondary data. The new NUC Bench Mark Minimum Academic Standard 2014 was obtained from the internet. Qualitative approach was adopted to scrutinize the contents of Communication in English Programme designed for the first year students of Nigerian universities. The contents were scrutinized to ascertain whether the programme is English for General Purposes or English for Specific Academic Purposes. In order to support claims in the discussions, detailed review of some ESP and EAP concepts deemed relevant to the study were carried out. Conclusion and recommendations were final drawn from the outcome of the review secondary data and the appraisal of the programme.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The study appraises the NUC New Benchmarks Minimum of Academic Standard 2014 draft. The following objectives were formulated to guide the researcher:

- (i) To review basic concepts in ESP and EAP deemed Relevant to the topic of study.
- (ii) To scrutinize the contents of the Communication in English Programme in the New NUC Bench Mark Minimum Academic Standard, 2014 draft.
- (iii) Draw Conclusion as to whether the Programme is EGAP OR ESAP oriented and make recommendations.

## **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND DEFINITION OF EAP:**

The history of English for Academic Purposes is inseparable from the history of English for Specific Purposes which emerged immediately at the end of the Second World War in 1945 based on three reasons: They are demands of the Brave New World (expansion of science, technology and economic), a revolution in linguistics, (placed new emphasis on language in the real world, a shift from traditional teaching of English language as an abstract system using audio-lingual approach to communicative approach), and a new focus on learners (studies in psychology placed emphasis on the learners and their attitudes such led to the recognition of the learners' needs and interests).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identify EAP and EOP as two branches of EAP but pointed out that there is no clear cut distinction between them. They observed that people can work and study simultaneously and it is likely also that in many cases, the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to work. The history of EAP is traced to the English language demands in the 1950s and 1960s. (Hamp-Lyons, 2001), for examples, asserts that in the 1950s and 1960s, Britain began to receive increasing numbers of international students funded by the British Council as part of the government policy of aid to developing countries. At the same time, Britain was responding to the rapid growth in many countries of English as a common language for business and science, and there was an explosion of need for English teachers to deliver language teaching at fairly low levels. ESP seemed to be the answer in the second context, while EAP seemed as the answer for the minority of these language learners who progressed to study in Britain. On the distinction between ESP and EAP, (Strevens, 1977) concludes that given the parallel history and close relationship between ESP and EAP, it is not surprising that for many years, EAP was seen by many as a sub-set of ESP. Issues of audience—or customers—may have seemed the only reason for differentiating ESP and EAP early on, but as time went by other explanations for different trajectories emerged.

EAP is an approach to the teaching of English language with the specific aim of assisting learners to study in higher/tertiary institutions effectively. This approach to English language teaching varies according to Geographical domain or situations. (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001) presented four geographical domains which exhibits different characteristics and purposes of EAP.

- (i) It is practiced in the major English speaking countries(UK, USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand) where large number of oversea students, whose first language is not English come to study.
- (ii) It is conducted in former British colonies (and less importantly the United States) where English is second language and is used as the medium of instruction at the university level.
- (iii) It is conducted in countries which has no historic links with English but which needs to access research literature in English (the countries of Western Europe, Japan, China, Latin America, Francophone Africa and others)
- (iv) It is now increasingly being offered in the countries of former soviet bloc as they seek to distance themselves from the influence of Russia and its language and position themselves as participants in the increasingly global economy and academic community

In situations i & ii above, EAP programme is designed to improve the learners' proficiency in English, while in iii & iv, it is designed to prepared the students to study in English.

The development of EAP as an approach to language teaching in Academic setting is associated with developments in applied linguistics which took place in Great Britain. (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001) point out that at the time English was trying to establish itself as a World Language in newly independent countries of Africa and Asia, following pioneer work by Firth, British linguists (most notably Halliday) began to view language and language teaching in a new way. In contrast to theoretical linguists who traditionally saw as an abstract system, these applied linguists started to consider it as a resource for communication, a resource which varied in its application according to the context or situation in which it was produced. This new approach to language teaching which brought revolution in linguistics was based on the notion that language varies according to situation of which the distinctive features can be identified and made the bases of a syllabus. The revolution in linguistics resulted to a new development in applied linguistics that had its roots from the works of (Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964). The point stressed here according to Pilar (1998/1999) is that language varies in relation to people who speak it and is in relation to the different purposes to which it is put. They considered language as a resource for communication, a resource which varied in application according to the context or situation in which it was produced. This was in contrast with the traditional approach which considered language as an abstract system. The approach was based on audio-lingual approach which was popular in the 1960 but could not prepare learners to communicate in a situation they find themselves.

The shift away introduced new approach to language teaching based on the descriptions of the language as used

in the context of situation. The rationale was set out in a seminal publication by (Halliday, McIntosh, & Stevens, 1964) entitled “*The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*”. The concept of register analysis concentrated on the description of language varieties used in particular discipline or occupations based on statistical differences in lexis and syntax.

(Zohoorian, 2015) opines that English for Academic Purposes is a subdivision of ESP which is often associated with text analysis from various disciplines. The texts analyzed are either drawn from existing texts on a discipline or developed by the EAP practitioner in collaboration with expert in the discipline. The texts are either selected or developed based on the identified language needs of the students. EAP programme is designed to assist students to prepare for study in English or to pursue academic goals in higher institutions of learning. It is an approach to the teaching of English language based the students’ needs of it for pursuing academic objectives. All the contents, methods, materials and tasks are based on the results of needs assessment conducted by a practitioner or specialist on the field.

(Hamp-Lyons, 2001) describes EAP as a research field as well as an area of English language teaching. HE asserts that there is a significant body of research into its effective approaches, methods of analysis of the academic language needs of students, and analysis of the linguistic and discourse structures of academic texts. The language structure (syntax), vocabulary, and language skills that the students learn, are all based on the academic content of a specific discipline such as law, Business, political sciences, Economics etc. (Brown, 2001) cited in Jouybar (2013) defines EAP as a term broadly applied to any course, module, or workshop where learners are taught to deal with academically related language and subject matter. He asserts that EAP is common at the advanced level of pre-academic programs as well as in other institutional settings. This definition considers EAP as an approach to language teaching that is prompted by the desire to assist the students of tertiary institutions to acquire English language competency. It can be at the initial stage to prepare them for their studies in English especially students from non-English countries that want to study in English. It could be geared towards building upon the general English of students from English speaking countries or ELS countries.

English for Academic Purposes as the name implies is defined from academic perspective. It is an English Language teaching programme designed to improve the learners’ proficiency in English language in order to enable him/her to study effectively. (Jordan, 1997) describes EAP as the teaching of English language with the aim of facilitating the learner’s study or research in that language. In a more elaborate definition, (Hyland, 2002) refers to EAP as a programme designed to focus instruction on the cognitive, social, and linguistic demands of specific academic disciplines. This takes practitioners beyond preparing learners for study in English to developing new kinds of programme that will equip the students with the appropriate communicative skills to participate in particular academic and cultural context.

EAP as could be drawn from the diverse views on its history and definitions is an approach to the teaching of English Language that is determined by the linguistic needs of students studying in academic institutions. The teaching programme is designed to assist the students to study and conduct research effectively in English Language. The demand for EAP in academic settings is based on linguistic need of the students and the institutional or sponsor’s needs. As pointed out earlier, the linguistic needs of students from non-English speaking countries studying in English speaking countries differs from that of students who are native speakers of English or who speaks English as a second language. Those from non-English Speaking Countries studying in English speaking countries needs pre-study English. It is usually one year programmed designed to equip them with rudimentary communication skills to enable them interact with English Prints effectively. Those from English speaking countries may need discipline specific English to enable them study and conduct research on the discipline. It is practiced in the major English speaking countries (UK, USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand) where large number of overseas students, whose first language is not English come to study. Examples are students from countries that have no historical link with English but which needs to access research literature in English (the countries of Western Europe, Japan, China, Latin America, Francophone Africa and others (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001).

### **STRANDS OF EAP:**

EAP is an approach to English language teaching designed to meet language needs of learners in academic setting. It is a branch of ESP which is a more approach that focuses on language teaching to meet the English Language needs of learners in any field of study or professional setting. EAP has two immediate division based on the level of specificity-English for General Academic Purposes and English for Specific Academic Purposes. On the level of specificity, (Flowerdew, 2016) relates that there is a long- standing debate within the field of EAP concerning the degree of specificity that should be the target of endeavor. He asserts that proponents of

English for General Academic Purposes(EGAP) argue for a broader–brush or wider angle approach, seeking to prepare students who have English as an additional language(EAL) in a general way for their academic studies, whatever, their field of study. Advocators of ESAP, in contrast promote more specific, or narrow angle, approach, taking into the particular disciplines that their students will be studying and preparing them with the specific language and skills needed in those disciplines.

(Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) point out that the EGAP presupposes that there are general skills and forms of language that are shared or common across disciplines. This entails that EGAP curriculum focused towards effective communication in specific discipline or professional setting. EGAP according to (Jordan, 1997) consists of “ a large proportion of the common core element usually known as ‘*Study skill plus other elements of a general academic English register, incorporating a formal, academic style, with proficiency in the language use*” He adds that these skills include areas such as effective lecture listening comprehension and note-taking, writing in the appropriate academic register, reading effectively for study purposes ,participation in discussion and library research. EGAP as Jordan further points out is not a subject –specific type of English and its objective is to equip learners with the necessary skills to complete tasks in a general academic setting.

English for Specific Academic Purposes focuses on local or specific needs of students a particular academic programme. In this case, the content and the materials are discipline-specific. (Sabariah & Rafik-Galea, 2005) opine- that the differences between the EGAP and ESAP lies in the level of specificity and the assumption made about them. They further explain that, in EGAP, student’s performance, whether good or bad, is not dependent on the topics(s) related to his/her discipline, while in ESAP, student’s performance will be different depending on the nature of the topic(s) included in the course. Similarly, (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) are of the view that ESAP courses focus on the actual task that the students have to carry out, while EGAP courses select more general contexts. (Blue, 1988) makes a very clear distinction by referring to EGAP as English language teaching programme which deals with the language and practices common to all EAP students, whereas, ESAP is concerned with the specific needs of the students in particular discipline.

EGAP and ESAP are two distinctive approaches to the teaching of EAP. Whichever is focused depends on the situation and the needs of the learners. There are some situations in which EGAP fits better, while there are some in which ESAP Fits better. Lyanage & Birch (2001) for example note that because of the variety of academic backgrounds of the students entering these courses, classes take the form of English General Academic Purposes (EGAP), which mostly comprise study-skill based approaches. They also point out that it is often difficult to relate such EGAP content to students’ academic disciplines or to address their academic needs in the classes which contain students from a range of academic background. In order to address this problem, discipline specific tasks were integrated into an EGAP context and the effects evaluated.

English for General Academic Purposes as the name implies is based on national situations rather than discipline specific. In Nigerian situation, English is an official language and language of instruction in schools (National policy on Education). The need for English at tertiary level is not to prepare students to study in English or to study particular discipline but to improve the students’ proficiency (the ability to speak and write English effectively). The course content is normally geared towards enhancing proficiency in the use of English language. In Nigeria, EAP is labeled the use of English and Communication Skills (current curriculum) and communication in English in the 2014 draft of the NUC Bench Mark Minimum Academic Standard). The course content is geared towards enhancing proficiency in both spoken and written English. Language skills and elementary grammar that enhances effective communication constitute the course content. EGAP courses are designed based on general assumptions of the needs of the students. ESAP courses on the other hand are designed based the needs assessment of students of a specific discipline. The program of study is usually designed in collaboration with specialist in the discipline. The aim is to assist interact with the texts on their discipline and carry out required tasks effectively.

#### **AN APPRAISAL OF EAP SITUATIONS IN NIGERIA:**

Nigeria was one of the British colonies in West Africa. It is a plain fact that one of the legacies inherited from British colonial masters in the country is English language. The English Language which was entrenched in the Richard’s constitution of 1945 as official language maintains its status till today. This is because the country has no active and adequate language policy. The sketch of language policy in the National Policy on Education (NPE) and the 1979 constitution as amended in 2011 did not favour the indigenous languages of Nigeria. Though the policy statement specifies Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba or language of the immediate community as language of instruction at the initial levels in primary schools, it has never been made practicable. English is used as a medium of instruction in the country from the kindergarten to the university levels. Nigerian students

are exposed to English as a subject and medium of instruction from primary school to tertiary levels (National Policy on Education, 1981/2011). It is also one of the two basic requirements (English and Mathematics) for admission into Nigerian universities irrespective of programme of studies.

The designing and teaching of EAP courses in tertiary institutions of the world are based on the linguistic situations or language policy of a country. (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) outline four types of EAP situations at the tertiary level: (1) An English Speaking country such as UK or USA; (2) An ESL situation, such as in former British colonies in Africa or in South East Asia; (3) A situation where certain subjects are taught in English and the remaining in the national language; (4) A situation in which all subjects are taught in the national language and English plays an ancillary role. These situations are synonymous with what (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001) describe as domain.

English for Academic purposes is offered in almost all English medium tertiary institutions of the world especially in the universities. (Afful, 2007) points out that EAP is literally located in English-medium universities worldwide with different labels. He says 'it is Freshman Composition or General Composition and lately a variant called writing in the discipline USA, while in the UK and Canada, it is usually referred to as English for Academic Purposes. He also notes that universities in Africa generally use labels such as communicative skills, communication skills, or the use of English, while many universities in India use the label communication Skills. At present, it is labeled use of English and communications in Nigeria. The NUC 2014 draft which is the focus of this study is labeled communication in English.

The EAP in Nigeria is geared towards enhancing effective communication rather than preparing students for a study in English as in the case of students from non-English speaking countries studying English medium universities. The emphasis, therefore, is on improving the students' proficiency in English by building upon the English for General purposes taught to them at primary and secondary school levels. In other words, the aim is to equip the students with macro language skills to function effectively in English during their study period and later on the job. The English language taught at the primary and secondary school levels is called English for General Purposes. It is often referred to as TENOR (teaching English for no obvious reason). The content and materials are geared towards passing school examinations and social purposes such as communicative situations. According to (Jordan, 1997), the purpose of such courses are not specific pointed out that the question of specificity generated heated among scholars on the Field of EAP.

(Flowerdew, 2016) points out that there is a long-standing debate within the field of EAP concerning the degree of specificity that should be the target of the endeavor. He is of the view that Proponents of English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) argue for a broad-brush or wide-angle approach, seeking to prepare students who have English as an additional language (EAL) in a general way for their academic studies, whatever their field of study. Advocates of ESAP, in contrast, promote a more specific, or narrow angle, approach, taking into account the particular disciplines that their students will be studying in the future or are already studying and preparing them with the specific language and skills needed in those disciplines.

The adoption of either of the two strands depends on the linguistic situations of the place of study. (Flowerdew, 2016) observes that there may be conditions where ESAP is not suitable and EGAP is the preferred alternative. This might be the case where there are no enough students in any single discipline or field of studies to make ESAP feasible from a resources point of view. It might also be the case that EGAP is to be preferred because the teachers involved are not adequately prepared or willing or able to put in the extra time necessary to target specific disciplines, or there may be problems of access to the relevant content courses. Nigerian situation at present cannot guarantee the use of ESAP. Many teachers of English particularly at the grassroots (primary and secondary school levels) do not have the knowledge of ESAP as an approach to English Language teaching. The teachers are trained in teaching EGAP which does not aim at discipline or occupational specific communication but proficiency in the use of English in general. The diverse academic, linguistic and cultural background of students entering Nigerian universities also constitutes serious problem meeting their needs.

By linguistic background or situations, Nigerian students only need additional English since it is taught in Nigeria as a second language. The English that they need for study at the university level is to complement their competence in the English they learnt at the primary and secondary school levels. The availability of teachers and resources and their cost implications do not guarantee the adoption ESAP at present. Implementing the teaching of ESAP in Nigerian universities requires training of EAP specialists. It also requires development of materials based on the language needs of the students of specific disciplines. These are some of the major factors militating against the teaching of English for specific Academic Purposes in Nigeria.

## THE COURSE CONTENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH COURSES:

Communication in English as labeled in the 2014 NUC new benchmark is four credit units spread over two semesters in the first year of study and it is coded GST 111&122) and titled communication in English 1 &2 respectively. They are core courses -they are basic requirements for the award of degrees in Nigerian universities. The primary objective of teaching communication in English in Nigerian universities is to equip the students-with both spoken and written communication skills that would enable them to interact with academic discourse successfully and function effectively when the job after graduation. English language plays two major roles in Nigeria. It is the official language of the country and language of instruction. It is taught as compulsory subject at the primary, secondary schools and the first year in universities. The idea is to help students to acquire proficiency in the language, that is, the ability to listen and comprehend spoken discourse as in lectures, speak and write good English with minimal grammatical and spelling errors, and generally function effectively in English during studies and while on the job after graduation. In order to achieve the above objective, the National Universities Commission (NUC) innovated the course to equip students with the required communication skills in order to function effectively in both spoken and written English. The following are the course structures as provided in the NUC benchmark of 2014.

**GST 111:** Communication in English I(2unit:LH 30)

Effective communication and writing in English, Language skills, Writing of essay answers, Comprehension, Sentence construction, Outlines and paragraphs, Collection and organization of materials and logical presentation, Punctuation(NUC Bench Mark Minimum Academic Standard, Draft 2014)

**GST 122:** Communication in English II (2 Units: LH 30)

Logical presentation of papers, Phonetics, Instruction on lexis, Art of public speaking and oral communication, Figures of speech, Précis, Report writing( NUC Bench Mark Minimum Academic Standard Draft, 2014)

The content of GST 111 as presented above is intended to improve the students' communication skills. The four language skills expose the students to the fundamentals of effective communication in both the spoken and written English. Aside the language skills, elementary syntax (sentence construction) and writing techniques form another level of exposure geared towards enhancing the students' proficiency in English. The objective stated in the NUC benchmarks is reflected in 'f' of the General Studies' objectives (Production of graduates capable of communicating effectively (both oral and written). The emphasis as could be inferred from the objective is on effective communication which is the major focus in the teaching of EGAP. According to Liyanage & Birch (2016) EGAP comprise study skills and based on approach which does not cater for specific language needs of the students. The contents of the programme as spread over two semesters are:

**GST 111:** Communication in English I

Effective communication and writing in English, Language skills, writing of essay answers, comprehension, and Sentence construction, outlines and paragraphs, collection and organizing of materials, logical presentation and punctuation.

Listening skills: listening skills are taught in order to enable the students to distinguish between the main or essential ideas from what a lecturer says. This requires the students to pay attention to the lecturer and apply different listening skills or strategies such as listening for gist of a story or for main ideas as in taking lecture notes.

Speaking skill: Speaking is a primary and practical exercise in the process of teaching and learning. Speaking and writing are two ways of putting linguistic competence (knowledge of a language that one has) into performance (the actual use of language in context). To improve students' speaking skills, oral drills and speech making exercises are very important.

Reading skills: Academic success depends to a large extent on a student's ability to read and interpret texts or materials on their course or field of study. Students are exposed to elementary reading skills and exercises such as skimming, scanning, questioning, modeling, and blank filling, sequencing and reading aloud, silent reading, matching, summarizing, dictionary skills etc. it is expected on mastering the essential reading skills and going through the tasks, the students ability to comprehend and retrieve required information from the print will be improved.

Writing: Writing is an everyday task in the life of university students. Students engage in varieties of writing tasks such as taking notes, dictations, class exercises, compositions, examination among others. The ability to relate ideas or thoughts and present them through visual or graphic symbols is essential for achieving academic success.

**GST 122:** Communication in English II.

The course is focused on the more practical communication skills in English which include: Logical presentation of papers, phonetics, instruction on lexis, art of public speaking and oral communication, figures of speech,précis and report writing. To prepare the students for the exercise, they are exposed to

phonetics of English to enable them have mastery of the sounds of English with the hope that their spoken English will be improved. In addition, the students are exposed to lexis associated different fields or disciplines technically referred to as register. This is also with the hope of improving the students' spoken and written English. More practical aspects of the programme are logical presentation of papers, the art of public speaking, the application of figurative expressions in speech, précis, and report writings.

Communication in English Programme in the new NUC Benchmark Minimum Standard as the appraisal revealed is clearly EGAP oriented. It is not geared towards achieving proficiency in specific discipline but towards language skills common to all EAP students. Scholars on the field of EAP have had heated debates over the benefit of either EGAP or ESAP Syllabus since the early days of EAP (Manning, 2011). (Bethlendy, 2012), similarly notes that the views of researchers in favour of EGAP or ESAP differ considerably in their evaluation of good practice using these groups' expertise in EAP teaching. According to her, (Spack, 1988) expresses doubts that EAP teachers can, or should master the teaching of subject specific features of authentic texts; she argues that these should be taught by subject tutors and consequently calls for an EGAP approach. Bethlendy also points out that Hyland (2006) on his part claims that most subject specialists have neither expertise nor the desire to do so. Rarely do lecturers have a clear understanding of the role that language plays in their discipline or the time to develop this understanding in their students. He thus strongly supports ESAP approach. In contrast, a decade later, Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St. John maintained that English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) was of crucial importance in order to address the students local needs. Looking at Nigerian context with students of diverse cultural background, and different local needs, EGAP seems to remain.

(Jordan, 1997) argues that promoters of EGAP would claim that the skills needed to read academic textbooks, articles and other relevant material effectively are common to all academic disciplines. As such, students regardless of their chosen subjects will need practice in skills such as predication, skimming, scanning, distinguishing between factual and non-factual information, important and less important items, and between ideas. (Jordan, 1997) also says that those in favour of ESAP, however, are likely to suggest that subject-specific courses, working with relevant texts, provide a much better source of motivation for students. But he asserts that this is not necessarily the case, a high degree of familiarity with a topic is likely to result in boredom, whereas the exact opposite is likely to prove to be difficult and, as such, demotivating for students.

Looking at different academic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the students in studying Nigerian Universities, EGAP approach seems to be the most appropriate. In order to meet the specific needs of the students. (Liyanage & Birch, 2001) clarify that is not easy to address the academic needs of students in classes containing students from a range of academic background. Considering the problems posed the diverse academic background of students and the need for discipline specific or professional skills, discipline specific tasks as suggested by (Liyanage & Birch, 2001) can be integrated into EGAP contexts.

## **CONCLUSION:**

EAP which was formerly labeled 'Use of English and Communication skills' in Nigerian universities is now labeled 'communication in English' in the 2014 draft of the UNC New bench Mark Minimum Academic Standard. It is a four unit course taught in the first and second semester respectively. English Language is the official language of the country and by extension, the language of instruction from Kindergarten to university or tertiary levels in general. This means that Nigerian students in tertiary institutions or outside the country do not need pre-study English like their counterparts from non-English speaking countries studying in English Medium Universities. English for General Academic Purposes is the type of EAP that is currently taught in Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions. The curriculum is not discipline-specific because it does not cater for the linguistic needs of the students based on their programme of studies. In other words, it does not cater for the needs of the students of particular discipline such as Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, computer science, law etc. but on proficiency in general (production of graduates capable of communicating effectively in both oral and written English. The emphasis of the programme is on achieving effective communication in order to enable the students to interact effectively in academic setting and with the texts (print) while on study and on the job after graduation.

## RECOMMENDATION:

This study recommends that EGAP approach be maintained but tutors should endeavor to integrate discipline specific tasks into EGAP contexts. This will enable the tutors to meet both the general and specific academic needs of the students. This entails that stake holders of the National Universities Commission (NUC) should encourage blending of the two approaches to meet both the general proficiency in English and in specific professional settings such as legal or medical fields.

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