Effectiveness of E-Learning-Based Teaching and Learning Materials in the EAP Field

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of e-learning-based teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in enhancing academic language skills in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. A mixed-methods design was employed, involving 120 undergraduate students from various proficiency levels and 10 EAP instructors. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-course EAP proficiency tests and a student satisfaction survey, while qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews with students and instructors. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' overall proficiency, particularly in listening and speaking skills, with interactive e-learning features and video-based resources showing the greatest effectiveness. However, challenges emerged in teaching academic writing, where the lack of real-time feedback limited student progress. Instructor feedback highlighted the need for a blended learning approach, combining e-learning with face-to-face instruction to improve the teaching of complex skills. The findings suggest that while e-learning tools offer considerable benefits, particularly in engagement and accessibility, there are limitations in areas that require more personalized guidance. The study contributes to the growing body of research on e-learning in EAP and provides practical implications for course designers and educators aiming to optimize digital resources for academic language learning.

Keywords: Effectiveness, E-Learning-Based, Teaching and Learning Materials, EAP Field,

Introduction

The integration of e-learning in educational contexts has become increasingly prevalent, driven by advancements in digital technologies and the global shift toward more flexible, accessible learning environments. English for Academic Purposes (EAP), a specialized branch of English language teaching, plays a critical role in preparing non-native English speakers for academic study. EAP courses focus on developing skills such as academic writing, reading, listening, and speaking to enable students to function effectively in academic environments. However, despite the growing adoption of e-learning tools, the effectiveness of e-learning-based teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in EAP remains underexplored, especially in terms of how these materials influence student engagement, language acquisition, and overall academic performance.

In an ideal educational setting, e-learning materials for EAP should provide students with interactive, engaging, and comprehensive resources that meet their specific academic language needs. E-learning platforms have the potential to offer personalized learning experiences, enabling students to learn at their own pace, revisit complex concepts, and practice language skills in a supportive digital environment. However, the reality often falls short of this idealized scenario. A significant gap exists between the intended effectiveness of e-learning-based TLMs in EAP and their actual outcomes. Common challenges include a lack of interactivity, insufficient adaptation to individual learner needs, technical issues, and a failure to fully integrate these materials with traditional teaching methods. This gap highlights the need for a thorough examination of the effectiveness of e-learning tools in delivering EAP content in ways that truly benefit students.

Further scrutiny reveals several contributing factors to this gap. Many e-learning materials are developed with a one-size-fits-all approach, which may not cater to the diverse needs of EAP students. EAP learners often come from various linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds, and as such, they

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require tailored materials that address their specific challenges in academic language acquisition. The lack of teacher-student interaction and peer collaboration in some e-learning platforms can also hinder the development of critical skills such as academic discussion, presentation, and argumentation (Zhu et al., 2021). Moreover, students may encounter difficulties navigating e-learning platforms, detracting from their learning experience and reducing the overall effectiveness of the materials (Ammar & Hassan, 2020).

Several educational theories and models underpin the design and implementation of e-learning-based TLMs. Constructivist theories, for instance, emphasize the importance of active learning, where learners construct knowledge through experiences and interactions with their environment. In the context of EAP, this suggests that e-learning tools should not only provide content but also facilitate activities that allow students to apply and practice academic language skills. Social constructivism, which highlights the role of collaboration and social interaction in learning, further suggests that e-learning platforms should incorporate features that encourage peer interaction and teacher feedback, thus simulating the communicative aspect of academic environments (Selwyn & Aagaard, 2021).

Recent research on e-learning in language education has produced mixed results. While some studies show that e-learning can enhance motivation, increase access to learning resources, and allow for self-directed learning, others suggest that e-learning alone is insufficient to achieve desired language learning outcomes (Yoon & Kim, 2020). For example, Ammar and Hassan (2020) found that although e-learning improved EAP students' access to learning materials, it did not significantly enhance their academic writing skills compared to traditional classroom-based instruction. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2021) reported that the lack of interaction in many e-learning platforms negatively affected students' engagement and performance. These findings suggest that e-learning materials, while valuable, need to be part of a broader, blended learning approach that combines both digital and face-to-face instruction (Ahn & Lee, 2022).

Moreover, the rapid development of new digital technologies offers promising opportunities for e-learning in EAP. Recent innovations such as artificial intelligence, adaptive learning systems, and interactive multimedia content have the potential to provide more personalized and effective learning experiences (Ahn & Lee, 2022). However, the implementation of these technologies is still in its early stages, and their effectiveness in EAP contexts requires further investigation.

This study seeks to address the gap between the theoretical potential of e-learning-based teaching materials in EAP and the practical outcomes observed in educational settings. While substantial research has focused on e-learning in general language education, fewer studies have specifically examined the EAP context, where the demands on learners are more rigorous and specialized. The objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of e-learning-based teaching and learning materials in enhancing EAP students' academic language skills. The research aims to explore the strengths and limitations of current e-learning tools, identify areas for improvement, and propose innovative solutions to optimize their use in EAP courses.

By investigating the effectiveness of e-learning-based TLMs, this study contributes to the ongoing discussion of how digital tools can be better utilized to meet the specific needs of EAP students. The findings of this research will provide insights for educators, course designers, and policymakers, helping to improve the design and implementation of e-learning resources, ultimately enhancing student outcomes in academic language acquisition.

Method

The research employed a **mixed-methods design**, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of e-learning-based teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context. The mixed-methods design was selected to enable both statistical analysis of measurable outcomes (e.g., language proficiency) and an in-depth understanding of student and instructor experiences with e-learning platforms (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

The study was conducted at three universities with established EAP programs in provinsi Bengkulu. The population consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in EAP courses during the 2023–2024 academic year. A **stratified random sampling** method was used to select participants (Bryman, 2016). The population was divided into strata based on language proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) to ensure representation across all proficiency levels. A total of **120**

students were selected, with 40 students from each proficiency group. Additionally, **10 EAP instructors** from the three universities participated in semi-structured interviews to provide qualitative insights into the teaching experience with e-learning materials.

The study used three primary data collection instruments: an **EAP proficiency test**, a **student satisfaction survey**, and **semi-structured interviews** with both students and instructors. The EAP proficiency test was administered to assess the language skills of participants before and after the study to measure any improvement attributable to the e-learning materials. The test covered key EAP competencies, including academic writing, reading comprehension, listening to lectures, and speaking in academic contexts (Cumming et al., 2016). This test was adapted from widely used standardized EAP tests to ensure its validity and reliability (Storch & Tapper, 2019).

The **student satisfaction survey** measured engagement, ease of use, and perceived effectiveness of the e-learning materials. The survey used a **5-point Likert scale**, with questions ranging from technical issues encountered to perceived improvement in academic language skills (Bandalos, 2018). This survey was administered twice—once at the beginning of the semester and again at the end—to capture changes in student perceptions over time.

The **semi-structured interviews** were conducted with both students and instructors. Interviews with students focused on their experiences using e-learning materials, particularly challenges faced and benefits gained (King & Horrocks, 2019). Interviews with instructors aimed to explore how e-learning materials were integrated into the EAP curriculum and their perceptions of its effectiveness in fostering student learning. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was recorded for transcription and thematic analysis.

The study was conducted over one academic semester, from **September to December 2023**. In the first two weeks, baseline data were collected from students via the EAP proficiency test and the initial survey. During the semester, students used a **dedicated e-learning platform** that provided access to digital learning materials, including interactive reading exercises, writing assignments, listening practice, and academic discussions (Reinders & White, 2021). These materials were designed according to **constructivist learning theories**, encouraging students to actively engage with the content through peer collaboration and feedback mechanisms (Selwyn & Aagaard, 2021).

The e-learning platform tracked student activity, including time spent on tasks, completion rates, and participation in discussion forums. This data, combined with self-reported survey results, formed part of the quantitative analysis. Students were encouraged to interact with their instructors and peers on the platform's forums, which simulated real-time academic discussions and provided opportunities for feedback on academic writing tasks.

To ensure the **validity** of the instruments, the EAP proficiency test was piloted on a smaller group of students not involved in the main study. This process helped refine the test to align it more closely with the expected academic outcomes (Cumming et al., 2016). Similarly, the satisfaction survey was reviewed by a panel of EAP experts to ensure its relevance and comprehensiveness in capturing student experiences with e-learning tools (Bandalos, 2018). For **reliability**, internal consistency of the survey responses was checked using **Cronbach's alpha**, aiming for a value above 0.7 to confirm the reliability of the instrument (Field, 2017).

The interviews were also subjected to **member checking**, where participants were given the opportunity to review their transcribed responses to ensure their views were accurately represented. This helped increase the credibility of the qualitative data (King & Horrocks, 2019).

Quantitative data were collected through the pre- and post-study EAP proficiency tests and student surveys. The **paired t-test** was used to compare the pre-test and post-test scores to determine if there was a statistically significant improvement in academic language skills (Field, 2017). Survey data were analyzed using **descriptive statistics** to assess student satisfaction and engagement levels. Differences between proficiency groups (beginner, intermediate, advanced) were analyzed using **ANOVA** to explore whether the effectiveness of the e-learning materials varied by proficiency level (Pallant, 2020).

Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically using **NVivo** software. Themes such as perceived benefits, challenges, and recommendations for improvement emerged from the data, providing insights into how e-learning materials affected both teaching and

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learning in EAP courses (Saldaña, 2021). These qualitative findings complemented the quantitative results, offering a holistic view of the effectiveness of e-learning-based TLMs in EAP education.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study provide important insights into the effectiveness of e-learning-based teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) field. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, we can draw connections between the study's findings and established educational theories, while also contrasting and comparing them with previous research.

a. Improvement in EAP Proficiency

The **statistically significant improvement** in students' overall EAP proficiency, as demonstrated by a mean score increase of 12%, aligns with the principles of **constructivist learning theory**. Constructivism, as proposed by Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge through meaningful engagement with content. The e-learning platform utilized in this study, which featured interactive exercises and peer feedback mechanisms, provided students with opportunities for active learning. This allowed them to apply academic language skills in context, leading to improved outcomes.

This finding is consistent with prior studies, such as Yoon and Kim (2020), who reported that students using interactive e-learning platforms in language learning environments showed marked improvement in their academic language skills. The results further support the idea that **self-paced learning** combined with interactive resources can promote deeper learning, especially in the domain of listening comprehension, which saw the greatest improvement (mean increase of 18%).

However, the **variation in proficiency gains** between advanced, intermediate, and beginner students underscores the importance of adapting e-learning resources to different skill levels. Advanced students experienced the greatest improvement, particularly in writing and reading, which may be attributed to their existing familiarity with academic tasks and greater autonomy in navigating e-learning materials. Beginner students, on the other hand, struggled to match this improvement, particularly in areas like writing, which require more direct guidance. This finding is supported by the work of Storch and Tapper (2019), who found that lower-proficiency learners benefit more from instructor-led activities than from autonomous e-learning tools.

b. Student Satisfaction and Engagement

The **high levels of student satisfaction** with the e-learning platform, particularly regarding the **interactive elements**, reinforce the value of **social constructivism** in learning environments. Social constructivism emphasizes the role of collaboration and dialogue in the learning process (Selwyn & Aagaard, 2021). Features like discussion forums and interactive quizzes encouraged students to engage actively with the material and with their peers, fostering a learning environment that mirrored real-life academic interactions. This is reflected in the **72% of students** who stated that these features helped them stay motivated and engaged throughout the course.

However, the technical issues reported by **65% of students** highlight a significant barrier to engagement. Prior studies, such as Zhu, Peng, and Xu (2021), also identified technical difficulties as a common obstacle in e-learning environments, which can detract from the overall effectiveness of the platform. These findings suggest that **usability** is a critical factor in determining the success of e-learning tools, as technical issues can frustrate students and impede their ability to focus on learning.

Moreover, **students' preference for interactive over static text-based resources** aligns with findings from Ahn and Lee (2022), who noted that e-learning materials with interactive, multimedia elements were perceived as more engaging and effective by language learners. This supports the need for future e-learning design to focus on developing more engaging, interactive learning experiences rather than relying solely on static documents and reading materials.

c. Instructor Feedback and Integration Challenges

The **instructor feedback** gathered from semi-structured interviews revealed concerns about the **limited effectiveness of e-learning in teaching academic writing**, which aligns with previous research on the challenges of teaching writing in digital contexts. Instructors in this study echoed findings from Ammar and Hassan (2020), who noted that while e-learning tools provide valuable support for receptive skills like reading and listening, they often lack the nuanced, personalized feedback required for improving productive skills like writing.

The instructors' recommendation to adopt a **blended learning approach**—combining e-learning with face-to-face feedback—is supported by the literature. Storch and Tapper (2019) found that the most effective writing instruction often involves direct, personalized feedback, which can be difficult to replicate through digital platforms alone. The gap in real-time feedback, particularly for writing tasks, is a recurring theme that highlights the limitations of purely digital learning environments for teaching complex academic skills.

d. Correlation Between Engagement and Performance

The **positive correlation between student engagement and performance** in this study is a key finding that is well supported by existing literature. Students who spent more time on the platform and participated actively in discussion forums saw greater improvements in their proficiency scores, particularly in listening and speaking. This reinforces the principles of **active learning**, which posits that students learn more effectively when they are actively engaged in the learning process (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

The finding that **active participation in forums led to a 20% increase in speaking and listening scores** further supports social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and dialogue in language acquisition. This is consistent with research by Reinders and White (2021), who found that online discussion forums can significantly enhance students' speaking and listening skills by providing opportunities for authentic communication in an academic context.

e. Challenges in E-Learning Platform Usability

The **usability issues** identified by students, particularly those in the beginner proficiency group, highlight the importance of designing **user-friendly interfaces** for e-learning platforms. As previously mentioned, **65% of students** encountered technical difficulties, which detracted from their learning experience. This finding echoes earlier research by Ammar and Hassan (2020), who identified technical barriers as a common issue in e-learning environments.

For beginner students, the complexity of navigating the platform posed an additional challenge, suggesting that **adaptive learning pathways** may be necessary to accommodate different skill levels. The absence of such pathways is a significant limitation of the current e-learning design and has been noted as a barrier to success in previous studies (Zhu et al., 2021). Incorporating adaptive learning technologies that can tailor content and support to individual students' needs may help to address these challenges.

Effectiveness of Specific E-Learning Tools

The **success of video-based materials** in improving listening and speaking skills is another important finding of this study. Video lectures, combined with interactive listening exercises, were particularly effective, leading to a **22% improvement in listening test scores** for students who engaged with these materials frequently. This supports earlier research by Ahn and Lee (2022), who found that multimedia resources, particularly video, are highly effective in helping students develop listening skills in academic contexts.

Conversely, the dissatisfaction with writing tasks reported by **55% of students** reinforces the findings of previous studies that have identified writing as the most challenging skill to teach through e-learning platforms (Storch & Tapper, 2019). The lack of personalized feedback was the most commonly cited issue, with students noting that automated feedback or peer reviews were not sufficient for addressing the complexities of academic writing. This highlights the need for more interactive, feedback-driven approaches to writing instruction within e-learning platforms.

f. Trends in Student Preferences

The **clear student preference for interactive features**, such as quizzes and discussion forums, aligns with the findings of Selwyn and Aagaard (2021), who argued that the most successful e-learning platforms are those that incorporate features promoting active participation and peer interaction. The fact that **80% of students** found these features highly effective suggests that future e-learning platforms should prioritize these interactive elements to enhance student engagement.

The **lower effectiveness of static text-based resources**, with only **30% of students** rating them as "very effective," further supports the argument for incorporating more multimedia and interactive tools into e-learning design. This is consistent with findings by Zhu et al. (2021), who noted that static resources, such as PDFs and text documents, are often perceived as less engaging by students in online learning environments.

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g. Implications for Future E-Learning Design

The findings from this study have several important **implications for future e-learning design** in EAP. First, the need for **real-time feedback mechanisms**, particularly in writing instruction, is clear. Writing is a complex skill that requires personalized, iterative feedback, which can be difficult to achieve through current e-learning platforms. As suggested by both students and instructors, blending e-learning tools with in-person feedback sessions may be a more effective approach for teaching academic writing. Second, the **technical challenges** identified in this study highlight the need for platforms to be more user-friendly and reliable. Reducing platform downtime, improving navigation, and providing real-time technical support are essential steps to ensure that students can fully engage with the learning materials. Finally, this study underscores the importance of designing **adaptive learning pathways** that cater to the diverse needs of EAP students. While advanced students benefitted greatly from the self-paced nature of the platform, beginner students struggled to keep up, indicating that e-learning platforms must be more flexible in their approach to support learners at different proficiency levels.

Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of e-learning-based teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in enhancing the academic language skills of students in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. The results revealed that e-learning materials significantly improved students' proficiency, particularly in listening and speaking, with interactive features and video-based resources proving the most effective. However, challenges were identified in teaching academic writing through e-learning, where the lack of real-time feedback limited student progress. Additionally, technical difficulties and usability issues hindered the learning experience, particularly for beginner students, highlighting the need for more adaptive learning pathways.

The findings of this study contribute to existing knowledge by demonstrating the strengths and limitations of e-learning tools in EAP instruction. It underscores the importance of integrating interactive elements and real-time feedback, particularly in teaching complex skills like academic writing. Moreover, the study suggests that a blended learning approach may be more effective, combining the flexibility of e-learning with the personalized support of face-to-face instruction.

Acknowledgments

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Instruments of the Research

1. EAP Proficiency Test

The proficiency test assesses students' abilities in the four major skills: academic reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Each section focuses on skills required for academic contexts.

Reading Section (30 minutes)

Task: Read the following academic passage and answer the questions. **Passage Title:** "The Impact of Climate Change on Coastal Ecosystems"

Questions:

1. What is the main argument of the passage?
2. Identify two key pieces of evidence the author uses to support their argument.
3. According to the passage, how do rising sea levels affect biodiversity?
4. What does the term "mitigation strategies" refer to in the passage?
5. Summarize the passage in 3-4 sentences.

Writing Section (40 minutes)

Task: Write an academic essay on the following topic:

Topic: "Discuss the role of technology in improving academic language learning for non-native speakers. Support your answer with examples."

Instructions:

- Your essay should be approximately 250-300 words.
- Organize your essay clearly with an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Use appropriate academic vocabulary and structures.

Listening Section (20 minutes)

Task: Listen to a short academic lecture on the topic of "Renewable Energy and Its Impact on the Global Economy" and answer the following questions.

Questions:

1. What are the main types of renewable energy discussed in the lecture?
2. According to the speaker, what is the economic benefit of investing in renewable energy?
3. What challenge does the speaker mention regarding the transition to renewable energy?
4. How does renewable energy affect job creation according to the lecture?

Speaking Section (15 minutes)

Task: In pairs, discuss the following topic and respond to your partner's ideas.

Topic: "What is the most important skill for academic success, and why? Support your opinion with examples."

2. Student Satisfaction Survey

This survey measures student satisfaction with the e-learning-based teaching and learning materials in their EAP course. Each question uses a **5-point Likert scale** (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

Part 1: General Experience

1. The e-learning platform was easy to navigate.
2. I found the e-learning materials engaging and interactive.
3. The materials were well-organized and easy to understand.
4. I was able to access the materials without technical issues.
5. The platform helped me stay motivated throughout the course.

Part 2: Academic Skill Development 6. The e-learning materials improved my academic reading skills. 7. The writing tasks provided in the e-learning platform enhanced my academic writing ability. 8. The listening exercises were helpful in improving my understanding of academic lectures. 9. I felt more confident in my speaking skills after using the platform. 10. The feedback I received on the platform helped me improve my academic performance.

Part 3: Areas for Improvement 11. I would have benefited from more real-time feedback on my written assignments. 12. The platform should include more interactive, peer-based learning opportunities. 13. I experienced technical problems that interrupted my learning. 14. The platform should provide more multimedia resources (e.g., videos, podcasts). 15. Overall, I am satisfied with the e-learning materials provided in this course.

Part 4: Open-Ended Questions 16. What features of the e-learning platform did you find most helpful? 17. What areas of the e-learning materials could be improved? 18. What suggestions do you have to improve the overall e-learning experience?

3. Semi-Structured Interview Questions

These interview questions are designed for both students and instructors to gain qualitative insights into their experiences with e-learning TLMs in the EAP course.

For Students:

General Experience:

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the e-learning materials?
2. What aspects of the e-learning platform did you find most helpful in improving your academic skills?
3. Were there any challenges you faced while using the e-learning materials? If so, please elaborate.

Skill Development: 4. How did the e-learning materials affect your reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills? 5. Did you feel that the e-learning platform provided enough opportunities for practice and feedback on your academic writing? Why or why not? 6. In what ways did the platform support or hinder your ability to improve your listening and speaking skills?

Engagement and Motivation: 7. How did you stay motivated throughout the course when using the e-learning materials? 8. Were there any features of the platform that you found particularly engaging or motivating?

Suggestions for Improvement: 9. What changes would you suggest to improve the e-learning materials for future EAP students? 10. Do you think a blended learning approach (combining e-learning with face-to-face instruction) would be more effective for your learning? Why or why not?

For Instructors:

General Feedback:

1. How effective do you think the e-learning materials were in helping students improve their academic language skills?
2. Were there specific skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) that were better supported by the e-learning tools? Which ones and why?

Integration with Teaching: 3. How did you integrate the e-learning materials into your EAP curriculum? Did you encounter any challenges in this integration? 4. In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the e-learning platform in supporting academic writing instruction?

Student Engagement: 5. Based on your observations, how engaged were students with the e-learning materials? Did you notice any differences in engagement across proficiency levels? 6. Did you find that students struggled with any technical or content-related issues while using the e-learning platform?

Suggestions for Future Implementation: 7. What improvements would you recommend to make the e-learning materials more effective for EAP students? 8. Do you think incorporating more face-to-face interaction alongside the e-learning materials would benefit students? Why or why not?