

IN SEARCH OF RELEVANT MATERIALS FOR AN ESP CLASS

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<https://doi.org/10.24071/lltc.2022.10>

received 7 November 2022; accepted 22 December 2022

Abstract

English for Specific Purposes, which is commonly referred to as ESP, is a compulsory subject in the Faculty of Language and Arts (henceforth called FLA) most recent curriculum. Being a content course, ESP is taught to the 6th semester students whose English mastery has reached an Advanced level. The reason for including ESP in the curriculum is partly due to the fact that a great number of jobs or professions today require their employees or professionals to be able to communicate in English fluently in the related fields. Following Wijaya (2014) a large number of FLA graduates work in various workplaces which involve English communication and use. After several years of implementation, it was felt necessary to conduct an evaluation of the course with the focus on analyzing the students' needs. This study started by looking at the students' perception on the topics offered in the ESP syllabus. It also offered some new topics which were considered relevant to their future jobs and careers. Furthermore, Students were also given a chance to propose other topics of their interests. 37 students were involved in this research as respondents of questionnaires and some became interviewees. The data elicited from the survey were analyzed based on Descriptive Statistics using SPSS 25 and percentages. The results show favorable perception of the students on the existing syllabus of ESP. Besides, some valuable suggestions of new topics were given for the improvement of the future plans for ESP course.

Keywords: ESP, materials, needs analysis, perception

Introduction

Following Hutchinson and Lancaster (1986), needs analysis starts with the so called target needs analysis which requires the student to do the right thing in a particular situation. Therefore, it is very important to look at that situation and relates it to the concept of necessities, lacks and wants.

a. Necessities

Necessities are basically related to what students need to do in order to meet the target situation. In short, necessities mean the learners' needs to be successful in what they do (Allwright, 1982). He further stated that 'want' is the skill which a student considers relevant to his needs. For example, a secretary will need to know business letters in order to communicate effectively with the company's clients or partners.

- b. Lacks
Still according to Allwright (1982) ‘lack ‘is the discrepancy between what the students have and what they don’t. A teacher should make an analysis on this so that he can determine what his students need.
- c. Wants
According to Allwright (1982), ‘wants’ are the kind of needs which are prioritized by the students in the provided time. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ‘wants’ as the subjective needs of the students. In other words, students need to know what they have to learn.

Needs analysis is of paramount importance in curriculum design as stated by Brown (1989). He further stated that curriculum development should firstly begin with an in-depth analysis before proceeding with other procedures, such as, the designs of goals and objectives, choices of materials, and delivery of instruction. Furthermore, he stated that needs analysis has 3 main goals; it leads to a deeper and broader input into the content, design, and implementation of a language program; it can be used in designing goals, objectives and content while simultaneously also serving as a review and evaluation of an existing program.

ESP is a relatively new course in English Language Teaching and learning (Evans, 1998). Its existence and significance grow bigger as people start working in different fields of profession. They need to learn the types of English which is relevant to their jobs. The General English (GA) is no longer sufficient for their professional demands. Hence, they turn to ESP which covers various subjects ranging from Economics, Business, Arts, Law, Computer Science and so forth.

There are many views on ESP. According to Nikolov (2001), English for specific purposes (ESP) is a subject designed based on the belief that all language teaching should be adjusted to the specific needs of the students. Evans (1998) has a different perspective about ESP. According to him, ESP in English language learning should focus on Academic and vocational or professional purposes. He also stated that

1. ESP should be related to particular disciplines.
2. It has to apply different teaching techniques and methodologies from those of General English.
3. ESP is meant for adult learners, either at a tertiary level education or in a professional environment.
4. It is directed to intermediate and advanced students.
5. It requires basic knowledge of the language, such as the Grammar and Vocabulary of the target language.

In line with the aforementioned concept, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) proposed that ‘Learning ESP is not just dealing with a particular kind of vocabulary, nor a specific type of materials.’ If ESP is included in language learning, it is due to the fact that language learners have solid reasons to study it and it is mostly related to their professional needs.

The research questions of the paper are as follow:

- 1) What are FLA student’s views on ESP subject regarding its goals, and materials?
- 2) What kind of ESP materials are suggested to be added in ESP course?

The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To reveal the students' views on the goals and relevance of the materials used in ESP course to their needs.
- 2) To find out the kind of ESP materials proposed by the students.

Method

This research was helped by the 2017/2018 Students of The Faculty of Language and Arts Soegijapranata Catholic University as respondents. They just completed the ESP course when the research began. There were 37 students and all of them were asked to be respondents. Thus, the method used is that of sample equals to population (Vredendregt, 1984).

This study made use of 2 instruments. They were questionnaire and interviews. The questions in the questionnaire consisted of 2 types, Closed and Open – ended types. In the closed-ended type of questions, the responses were arranged following the Likert-Scale Method. A pilot study was carried out prior to the administration of the questionnaire. The second instrument used was interviews. 8 students were chosen as interviewees. They were the representatives of the ESP class. Findings of the questionnaire were then crosschecked with the results of the interviews. The data elicited from the closed – ended type of questions were analysed using SPSS 25.

Findings and Discussion

Part One

In this section, respondents' perception on the importance of the ESP course's goals was analysed

Table 1. Respondents' perception on the goals of ESP course at FLA

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students are able to recognize various English texts from different fields of study	37	2.00	4.00	3.3514	.53832
Students are able to recognize various English texts from different fields of study	37	2.00	4.00	3.3514	.53832
Students are able to understand various English texts from different fields of study	37	2.00	4.00	3.2703	.56019
Students are able to use English vocabulary from different fields of study both in oral and written forms	37	1.00	4.00	3.0541	.74334
Valid N (listwise)	37				

The figures in the above table show that the first goal in ESP course, i.e. "Students are able to recognize various English texts from different fields of study" is considered important as the mean score is 3.35. Goal number 2, "Students are able to understand various English texts from different fields of study gets a Mean score 3.27, which indicates the respondents' agreement to this goal as something significant to attain. The final goal, "Students are able to use English vocabulary from different fields of study both in oral and written forms." also gets a high Mean

score 3.05, which means that this objective is essential to attain. The standard deviation scores for these 3 objectives are all under 1,00 which means that the dispersion of the answers is not large. Moreover the 8 interviewees also supported such findings. They all agreed that those three objectives are relevant to their own goals in studying ESP.

Part Two

There were 5 types of material in ESP class. The respondents were supposed to justify the significance of the materials in connection with the goals of this course.

Table 2. Students' justification of the material significance

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
English for Medical Purposes	37	2.00	4.00	3.1622	.64608
English for Economics	37	1.00	4.00	3.2703	.65186
English for Business	37	1.00	4.00	3.3243	.66892
English for Science	37	1.00	4.00	3.0000	.66667
Legal English	37	2.00	4.00	3.1892	.70071
Valid N (listwise)	37				

English for Business happens to be on the top rank with a Mean score of 3.32 meaning important followed by English for Economics with a Mean score of 3.27, also means important. Legal English comes third with a Mean score of 3.18. This shows that Legal English is a significant topic in ESP class. Another important topic is Medical English as shown by the Mean score 3.16. English for Science which gets the Mean score 3.00 comes last but it still means important. Thus, all the materials taught in ESP course up to that time were regarded important. The results of the interviews also supported this fact. The 8 respondents agreed that all the materials in ESP course equip them with English Language skills and knowledge which will be important in their future jobs and careers.

Table 3. Other important types of ESP materials

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
English for Tourism	37	2,00	4,00	3,5405	,64956
English for the Hotels	37	2,00	4,00	3,2432	,83017
English for the Office	37	2,00	4,00	3,3784	,63907
English for Banking	37	1,00	4,00	3,1892	,81096
English for Secretaries	37	2,00	4,00	2,8919	,80911
English for Entrepreneurship	37	2,00	4,00	3,1622	,72700
English for the Nurses	37	1,00	4,00	2,3514	d,75337

English for the Flight Attendants	37	2,00	4,00	3,0270	,68664
English for Teaching	37	1,00	4,00	3,3514	,75337
English for Academic Purposes	37	2,00	4,00	3,2703	,65186
English for the Mechanics	37	1,00	3,00	2,2162	,67227
English for Automotive	37	1,00	4,00	2,1892	,81096
English for Advanced Technology	37	1,00	4,00	2,6486	,88870
English for Culinary	37	1,00	4,00	3,0000	,81650
English for Fashion	37	1,00	4,00	2,7027	,90875
English for Broadcasting	37	1,00	4,00	3,0541	,74334
English for Advertising	37	1,00	4,00	3,2432	,64141
English for Public Relation	37	2,00	4,00	3,5135	,60652
English for MC and Presenters	37	2,00	4,00	3,3784	,59401
English for Computer and Social Media	37	1,00	4,00	3,1351	,82199
English for Entertainment	37	1,00	4,00	3,3784	,68115
English for Religious Purposes	37	1,00	4,00	2,7838	,85424
Valid N (listwise)	37				

The above table presents 22 alternatives of ESP materials which are considered important to be covered in the next ESP class based on the respondents' interests or needs in relation to their future jobs or careers. From the above data, it can be interpreted that the most important material or topic is English for Tourism as indicated by the Mean score 3.54 which is the highest among all the other alternatives of topic. The second is English for Public Relation which gets the Mean score 3.51. Interestingly, English for the Office, English for MC and Presenters as well as English for Entertainment get the same Mean score, i.e. 3.37. English for Teaching occupies the next position with the Mean score 3.35. English for the Hotels and English for Advertising also get the same Mean score 3.24. The remaining topics in order of importance are English for Banking with the Mean score 3.18, English for Entrepreneurship with 3.16, English for Computer and Social Media, 3.13, English for Broadcasting 3.05, English for the Flight Attendants 3.027 and English for Culinary 3.00. All the previously mentioned topics can be interpreted as important to be covered in an ESP course as suggested by the respondents. The last few topics are regarded not very important, such as English for Secretaries (Mean score 2.89), English for Religious Purposes (Mean score

2.78), English for Fashion (Mean score 2.70), English for Advanced Technology (Mean score 2.64). The two least chosen topics are English for the Mechanics (2.21) and English for Automotive (2.18).

The following figure shows the respondents’ order of preference more clearly.

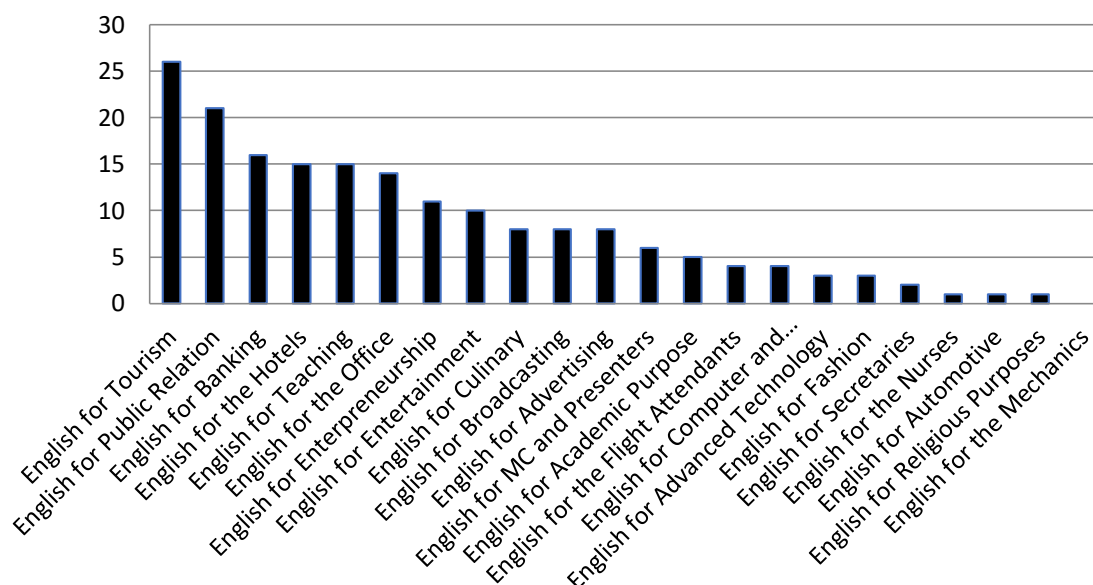


Figure 1. Rank of English materials for specific purposes

Part Three

In this part, the respondents’ suggestions on the types of materials or topics for an ESP course which are relevant to their interests or needs are revealed.

Table 4. Other topics for ESP course as suggested by respondents

	N	%
English for International Politics	5	13,51
English for Medical Purpose	3	8,11
English for Arts	2	5,41
English for Sport	2	5,41
English for Traditional / Culture	2	5,41
English for Science	1	2,70
English for Legal / Law	1	2,70
English for Transportation	1	2,70
English for Mass Media	1	2,70
English for Business	1	2,70
English for Movie	1	2,70
Number of Respondents	37	

Looking at the above table, we can consider some other materials or topics for ESP course which are not offered in Table 3 above but are regarded important by the respondents to be included in the next ESP courses. Surprisingly, English

for Politics and International Affairs seem to be the respondents' most highly chosen. Some other recommended topics are English for Arts, English for Sports, English for Traditional Culture, English for Transportation, English for Mass Media and English for Movies. The rest 4 suggested topics unfortunately overlap with what have been taught in ESP course so far. They are English for Medical Purposes, English for Science, English for Law (Legal English), and English for Business. However, this can be used as evidence that most of the respondents support the existing materials in ESP course.

The following figure shows the respondents' order of preference more clearly.

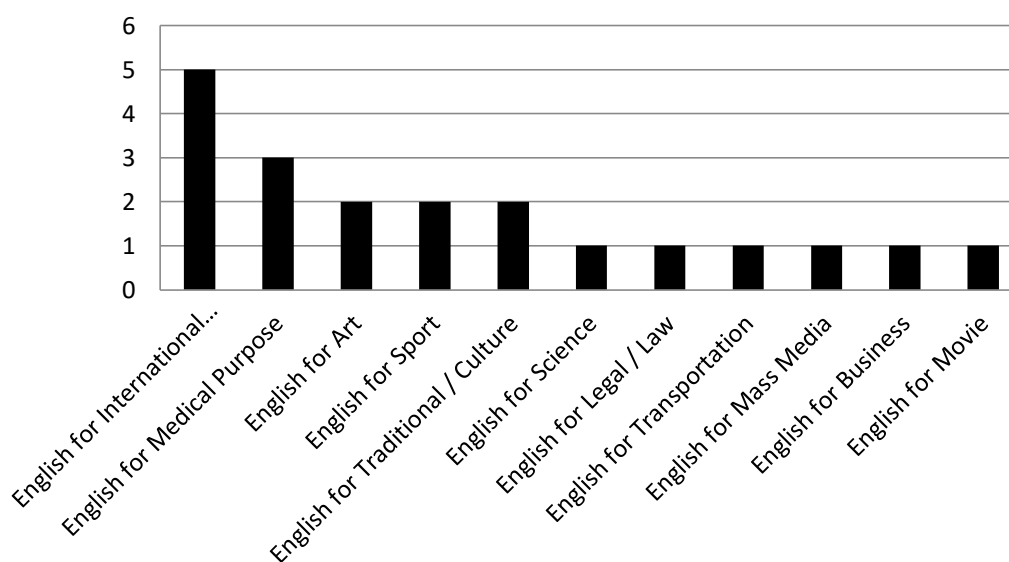


Figure 2. Other topics for ESP course as suggested by respondents

Part Four

This section presents the students' general overview on ESP course as to express their views on the usefulness of the course, the relevance of the materials to their needs and the degree of variety, the appropriateness of the teaching techniques, and so forth.

Table 5. Students' general overview on ESP course

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VAR00001	37	1.00	4.00	3.2703	.60776
VAR00002	37	1.00	4.00	3.1622	.60155
VAR00003	37	1.00	4.00	3.0000	.62361
VAR00004	37	2.00	4.00	3.0270	.68664
VAR00005	37	2.00	4.00	2.8378	.55345
VAR00006	37	2.00	4.00	3.1351	.53552
VAR00007	37	1.00	4.00	2.8378	.60155
Valid N (list wise)	37				

When asked about the usefulness of ESP course for them especially in connection with their future jobs and careers, most respondents agree that ESP is beneficial for them. This is shown by the Mean score 3.27. They also consider the materials in ESP course so far are relevant to their needs as indicated by the Mean score 3.16. Besides, they also think that they vary greatly as shown by the Mean score 3.2. As for the teaching methods employed in ESP course, such as lectures, group discussion, class discussion and students' presentation, most respondents regard them suitable to be applied in this course. This is reflected by the Mean scores 3.00 and 2.83. They also believe that the materials in this course help them a lot in understanding various English texts from different fields of study. This is clearly shown by the Mean score 3.13.

Results of the Interviews

All of the interviewees agreed that ESP is an important subject that will be useful for their future jobs or careers even though some of them admit that they still do not know what kind of jobs they will have in the future. Most of them also felt that ESP is not an easy subject to learn especially when it comes to the vocabulary of the different fields of study. Nevertheless, this did not discourage them from studying it as they realize the importance of ESP in equipping them with the English skills and knowledge they need when they go to the workforce. Furthermore, they suggested that some other topics should be added to this course so that the students' various needs and interests in the next ESP class can be accommodated.

Conclusion

Overall, it can be said that the goals of ESP get favourable responses. The students even consider that they are in line with their personal objectives in studying ESP. As for the materials, they agree with what has been given so far in this course. However, they also regard that other topics should be added, for example English for Tourism, English for Public Relation, English for MC and Presenters, English for Entertainment, English for Teaching, English for Advertising, English for Computer and Social Media and the like. They even suggest some other topics, such as English for International Politics, English for Sports, English Transportation, English for Interior Design, English for Home Improvement and English for Music and Arts.

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