

An Investigation of Students' Needs and Motivation in ESP Learning in Physical Education and Sport in South of Vietnam

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Abstract:

The study is aimed at investigating students' attitudes toward, motivation and needs in enrolling in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Language courses in the physical education and sport context in South of Vietnam. With the use of a qualitative method of focus-group interview and the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) framework for data collection and analysis, findings from the study reveal some disparities between the current practice of ESP courses in the universities and the students' needs and expectation in English language learning for their future career. The study suggests practical implications for leaders, administrators and lecturers in designing and implementing ESP courses aligned with students' needs and expectations.

Key words: ESP, needs, motivation, attitudes, physical education and sport (PES)

INTRODUCTION

The crucial role of students' needs analysis in ESP teaching has been significantly emphasized by different research in effective course design and implementation in the ESP teaching literature (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; West, 1994). Students' needs analysis is also practiced across disciplines of business, economics, maritime, aircraft mechanics, information technology, social sciences and humanities, and tourism industry, to name a few (Balaei & Ahour, 2018; Chen et al., 2016; Chemir & Kitila, 2021; Korba et al., 2023). Most of these studies report significant discrepancies between what is taught from the ESP courses and what employers need from students or students' needs in learning English for their future careers. For example, according to Chen et al. (2016), the current course design and implementation result in a disparity between students' and employers' requirements of English language skills for workplace. Additionally, the in-class activities and tasks designed do not help develop students with social communication skills needed for their future workplace (Chen et al., 2016). In their study of information technology students' needs in English language learning, Balaei and Ahour (2018) report that there is a significant dissatisfaction among students in the course. Specifically, while students prefer to have more time for language skills

development, teacher's limited knowledge of language skills seem not to be able to help students to achieve such objective.

Despite the crucial role of students' needs analysis in English language teaching in general and in ESP in particular, little attention of students' needs analysis has been given in course design and implementation in Vietnam (Duong, 2007). Significantly, no evidence from literature indicates that research in needs analysis in sport and physical education has been currently undertaken in Vietnam, leaving a big gap in determining the appropriateness of current ESP courses' design and implementation to students' needs of learning English for their future workplace. Positioned on the humanistic and ecological perspectives, this study is aimed to explore students' motivation and their current needs in learning English for specific purposes at three public universities of physical education and sport (PES) in South of Vietnam. The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What do students need to know or expect to be taught in their ESP language courses?
2. What are their motivation in and attitudes toward the current ESP language courses?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Needs Analysis in ESP

ESP and Types of ESP

Originated in the 1960s, ESP, an abbreviation of English for Specific or Special Purposes, refers to English language courses which are offered for students based on their specific needs, usually focusing on specific career or disciplinary area (Gai, 2017). Viewing ESP as an approach, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) believe that ESP, together with GE (General English or English for General Purposes-EGP), are two branches of EFL (English as Foreign Language). The main difference between GE and ESP is that, while GE or EGP focuses on developing students' language skills, including speaking, writing, listening, reading and translation in general, ESP has its own defining objectives and characteristics related to students' specific career context which drives them to learn English for pragmatic use in such specific professional environments (Gai, 2017; Liton, 2015).

The term ESP is later sub-divided into several types and discussed among researchers in ESP literature. Discussion of ESP classification in literature has been concerned with such issues as occupation or disciplines, language use in related occupational context, course design's purposes, and means for achieving purposes of English language learning. For example, emphasizing on the means of achieving English language learning's purposes, Carter (1983) divides ESP into three types of EAP (English for Academic Purposes), EOP (English for Occupational Purposes), and English as a restricted language. According to Carter (1983), English as a restricted language refers to English courses which are offered in restricted work-

related settings such as English for waiters or waitresses; EOP is viewed in a broader work-related setting than English as a restricted language, including English courses offered in economics or business; finally, EAP refers to courses where English is customized to students' needs of studying in higher education English-medium environment. Whilst supporting Carter's view (1983) of two types of ESP, including EOP and EAP, Jordan (1997) further believes that EAP includes two strands of EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes) and ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes). A large common element portion of these two terms lies in the study skills and subject specific English offered to students. Examples of ESAP are English language courses offered in medicine, engineering or economics whereas courses which focus on listening and note taking, academic writing, and reference skills in a specific professional environment are considered as EGAP. In line with this discussion, Basturkmen (2003) suggests that types of ESP need to be understood based on course design's purposes. Consequently, there are three types of ESP: (1) ESP focuses on narrow-angled option of learning English in a particular occupation, (2) ESP focuses on wide-angled option of learning English with common needs (in a similar occupation set such as English for health professionals), and (3) ESP focuses on wide-angled option of learning language use features in a language variety.

Although there is no clear borderline between these sub-divisions of ESP, there is a general agreement in research that ESP needs to be viewed and divided with reference to students' needs and disciplines in which language is used (Basturkmen, 2003).

Needs and Needs Analysis

As ESP is believed to aim at helping students achieve certain goals of academic and professional language learning, understanding students' learning needs is crucial. ESP students' needs are different, depending on the disciplines and occupation context that they belong to. Analysis of students' needs is denoted as an initial step and key instrument in developing an ESP course to ensure the course's effectiveness and success (Bosher & Smalkoski, 2002; Korba et al., 2023).

Needs analysis in course design and delivery, which has been extensively highlighted in research, is perceived as a corner stone in ESP programs (Benesch, 1996; Dudgey-Evans & St. John, 1998; Forey & Chung, 2019; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Gai, 2017). Conceptualization of needs analysis in ESP is varied, but generally incorporating the collection and analysis of information about what, why and how the English language course should be. For instance, needs analysis can be viewed as an examination of what students have already known and what they need to know in order to ensure that the course will be relevantly designed and delivered to meet students' needs (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Korba et al. (2023) recently clarify that needs analysis is a systematic collection and analysis of all related subjective and objective information for creating a relevant course. Such information is translated into learning needs, which is a basis for selecting materials, designing tests, and developing evaluation strategies.

Central to understandings of needs analysis is the conceptualization of needs. When considering needs analysis as a learning centred approach, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) propose that students' needs can be approached from two directions: target needs and learning needs. Target needs refer to what students need to do in the target situation, which is categorized into three types of necessities, lacks and wants. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 56) describe, necessities are defined as what students have to know in order 'to function effectively in the target language' whereas lacks are considered as the gaps between what students know and the necessities. Wants, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), are what students think they need to have. Regarding learning needs, Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) clarify that they involve several factors of who the students are, their socio-cultural background information, age and gender, their current language knowledge and background knowledge of the specialized content, their attitudes towards English language learning and culture of English.

Viewing needs analysis as a process of analyzing information, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) clarify information which needs to be collected can be categorized into several types as follows. First, target situation and objective needs are those related to students' profession or career. Second, personal information, which is similar to the learning needs identified by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), refers to students' personal information that may affect their English language learning. The third type of information is language learning information which includes details about students' current English language knowledge and skills, whereas the fourth type of information refers to students' professional communication in their occupational area, including language, discourse and genre analysis. The final type of information is students' expectations about ESP course's environment (i.e., students' expectations of how the ESP course should be run).

Types of needs or information for needs analysis are continuingly discussed in ESP literature, among which students' expectations are highlighted as one of the most significant information to be collected in course design and evaluation (Basturkmen, 2006; Eggly, 2002; Stefanova, 2021). As Basturkmen (2006) stresses, if students can see the connection between the instructional materials used in the course and application of these materials into their professional context, for example, their motivation in language learning can be enhanced.

In this study, needs to be collected for analysis is conceptualized within Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) point of view about target needs and learning needs, combined with information about students' expectations in a language course described by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). Specifically, the study is aimed at collecting students' information about what they currently know about the language, what they need to know for their profession, what they expect to be taught in a language course, and what their motivation in language learning as well as their attitudes toward the current language course.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

Motivation and Attitudes toward English Language Learning

Self-determination Theory's Perspectives on Motivation in English Language Learning

Based on a social psychological perspective on humanistic motivation, emotion, and development, self-determination theory advocates propose that individuals naturally tend to engage themselves in learning when the learning environment exists factors that can facilitate or forecast their oriented-learning growth processes (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Specifically, students will innately show their inherent interest to learn, to do, and to grow when the three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). According to Niemiec and Ryan (2009), the need for competence refers to the students' experience of behavior which has been earlier enacted effectively. Such effective performance experience helps drive students to a sense of confidence in pursuing further learning challenges. The need for autonomy is defined as students' experience of behavior which are reflectively self-supported and make them decide to engage in learning activities. Finally, the need for relatedness is viewed as a social and emotional bond between students, including their desire for communication, exchange, support and social interaction with the community (Ushioda, 1996, p.2).

As Dornyei (2005) emphasizes, motivation is a crucial drive to initiate students' language learning and helps them sustain their long-term process. Within the self-determination theory framework, motivation's multi-faceted complexity is classified into two types of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Yu, 2020). Intrinsic motivation is driven by the need for autonomy and competence whereas extrinsic motivation is sustained by students' learning activities or behavior undertaken to achieve specific instrumental outcomes (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Yu, 2020). Significantly, as Deci and Ryan (1985) stress, extrinsic motivation is not an opposite counterpart of intrinsic motivation and does not imply a lack of self-determination from students; actually, it needs to be understood as students' different levels of internalization or self-regulation along a driven continuum of self-determination in language learning. However, whilst emphasizing the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning, such factors as classroom environment, teaching and learning facilities, or students' learning contexts and situations are not elaborated in the self-determination theory (Yu, 2020). Consequently, it is essential to take into consideration of having a micro perspective on motivation in language learning which includes motivational factors related to students' learning environment that may affect their language learning (Dornyei, 1998; Yu, 2020).

Motivational Components in English Language Learning

Within a micro motivation framework proposed by Dornyei (1994), students' motivation in language learning is examined under three dimensions of (1) language level, (2) student level, and (3) learning situation level. Among these three

dimensions, student level and learning situation level are considered the most crucial ones.

According to Dornyei (1998), learning situation level involves intrinsic and extrinsic motives and conditions which are categorized into three groups of course specific motivational elements, teacher-specific motivational elements, and group-specific motivational elements. The course-specific motivation aspects consist of different elements of syllabus, teaching materials, teaching methods, learning activities or tasks. The second group of teacher-specific motivational elements refer to affiliative drives to please the teacher, authority type (including either authoritarian or democratic teaching style), and direct socialization of student motivation (including modelling, task presentation and feedback to students). Finally, the group-specific motivational elements are concerned with student group's dynamics which consists of goal-orientedness, norm and reward system, and classroom goal structure (which can be competitive, cooperative or individualistic). In Dornyei's micro motivation framework (1994), student level includes such components as language anxiety, perceived language competence, student's previous experiences, and self-efficacy.

Due to its close connection with the needs for competence, which is identified in self-determination theory framework, self-efficacy is widely discussed by researchers in motivation literature (Genc et al., 2016).

In this study, the micro motivation perspectives will be examined, with a focus on two components of competition (at the learning situation level) and self-efficacy (at the student level).

The Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

From the humanistic education viewpoint, an individual's whole person growth is strongly affected by the environment and the activities that the individual engages in with the world (Sannino & Engestrom, 2018; Winter, 2018). Humanistic psychology advocates propose that, although humans are unique and irreplaceable, they do have equal potentials for constructively growing, performing their roles, and create interventions in society (Hanley et al., 2020). It is crucial that the institutions need to create the individuals with opportunities and conditions to support their emotional and well-being development. This view is further supported by the ecological advocates who believe that individuals need to be viewed and judged with reference to particular social, cultural, and political context that they inhabit (Perrett, 2006 cited in Hanley et al., 2020). These points of view are richly reflected in the cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) which was founded from different works of Vygotsky and later developed by such educational psychologists as Vassily Davydov and Evald Il'enkov (Sannino & Engestrom, 2018).

Centrality of the CHAT lies in its multi-facets of culture, history and power which are denoted in the literature that, since all natural and societal activities are constantly changing, all organisms, including humans, need to be explored and viewed in relation to the related changes and complicated interactions that constitute the organisms (Foot, 2014; Sannino & Engestrom, 2018; Stetsenko,

2020; Stetsenko & Arieievich, 2004). As clarified by Foot (2014), community and its underneath culture play a significant role in shaping individuals' insights and practices. The cultural values which are embedded in histories are constantly changed and developed. Analysis of individuals' actions and practices, therefore, needs to be undertaken in reference to the historical contexts in which the actions and practices are taken place. According to Foot (2014), the growth of an individual's action is resulted from collective actions practiced over time, thus, analysis of the individual's practices needs to be taken into account of their complexity both at a particular period of time and over time, not just grasping the practices as discrete or separate elements.

Based on the humanistic and ecological perspectives, this study adopts the CHAT framework earlier proposed by Engeström (1987) which consists of six components that constitute to human activity, including subject, object, community, rules, mediating artifacts, and outcome, in order to explore in depth insights of how social and cultural components contribute to language learning. The authors employed this framework in the qualitative part of the study as a guideline for discussion with students about their needs, motivation and attitudes toward their English language learning. The CHAT framework is described in Figure 1 as follows.

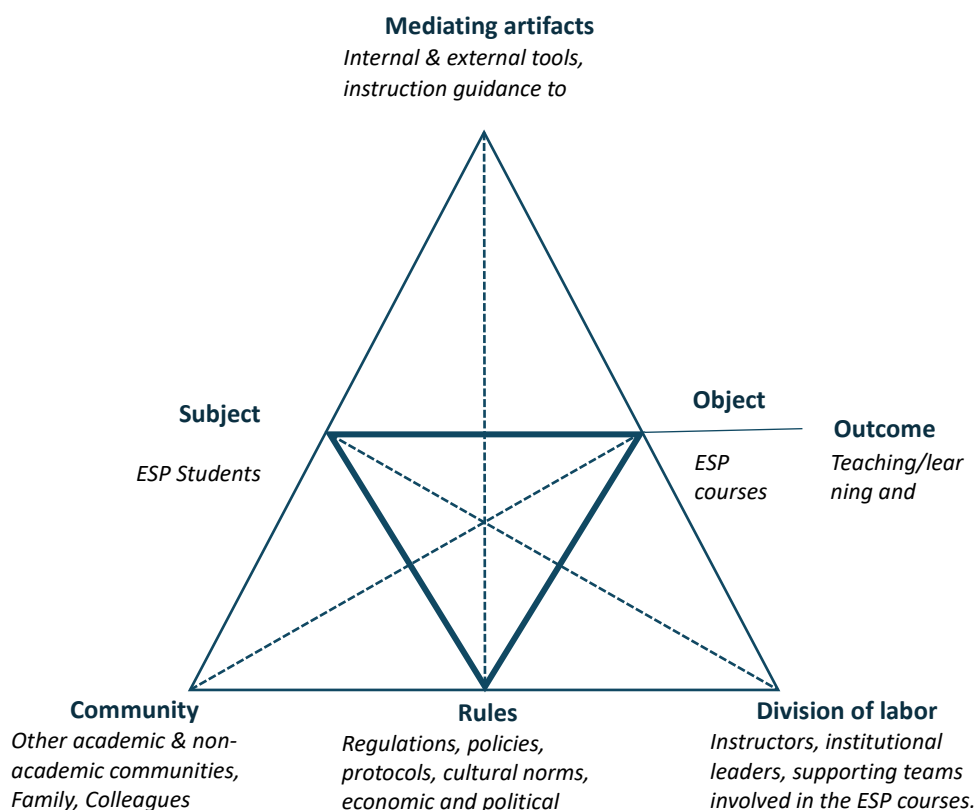


Figure 1. Model of instruction activities in the ESP courses (Adapted from Engeström

In English language teaching and learning, six components of the CHAT framework can be described as follows. A subject is a student or a group of students whose English language learning is a central of analysis. Objects refer to English language courses offered to students of different sport education programs. Mediating artifacts include different internal and external tools, instructions and guidance employed to facilitate students' learning of English. These artifacts also include facilities and devices provided to assist students in language learning such as language labs, instructional materials and digital applications used in language teaching and learning. Similarly, rules consist of the institution's regulation, policies, protocols or cultural norms, cultural, economic and political context in which interactions between students and instructors are taken place. Rules direct and adjust how the English language learning is facilitated and developed and how the interactions between students and instructors are undertaken in both academic and non-academic communities, resulting in what students' motivation in and attitudes toward their language learning can be. The division of labor refers to what types of activities that related stakeholders (i.e., instructors, students, institution's leaders and supporting team) involved in the English language teaching and learning will do, what specific roles they need to perform, what appropriate tools they need to use to the objects. As Foot (2014, p. 333) emphasizes, comprehensive understanding of the division of labor requires critical examination of 'socio-historical power structures and patterns of relations both within the community and between a community and the larger culture/society of which it is part'.

Whilst the CHAT framework has not been documented in any research in needs analysis in ESP teaching and learning, similarly there is no evidence that this framework is undertaken in research in ESP teaching and learning in the PES field in Vietnam. Thus, the utilization of the CHAT framework in examining students' attitudes, motivation and needs in enrolling in ESP courses will make significant contribution into the existing literature in design and practice of ESP programs in PES field in general and PES field in the context of teaching and learning in Vietnam in particular.

Positioned on a humanistic and ecological perspective, the authors of this study hoped to examine each target student as a unique individual who has different contexts of language learning, explore their expectations of how English language learning should be taken place, investigate how successful or challenging they are dealing with the English language courses, and picture what their motivation in and attitudes towards the learning of English language currently undertaken at the institution. Therefore, the CHAT framework will be used as an orientation for discussion among students in the focus group interviews of this study.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and analysis

This study adopted a qualitative method for data collection owing to its flexible, emerging and open-ended benefits and suitability for the research purpose (Phakiti, 2015). Additionally, since qualitative method can supply 'in-depth, intricate and

detailed understanding of meanings', it was employed in this study to propose further explanation and more multi-perspective description of the data collected (Gonzales et al., 2008, p. 3, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p. 287). In this study, focus-group interviews were utilized for collecting the data whereas Nvivo 20 was employed for analyzing the qualitative data collected.

Focus-group interview

According to Cohen et al. (2007), focus-group interview is an effective tool for supplementing traditional types of observation and individual interviews. In this study's focus-group interview, the participants are provided with three questions as follows:

- What are the needs and expectations of studying English language courses?
- What are the motivation of studying English language courses?
- What are the attitudes towards English language courses?

Before answering the questions, the participants were provided with the CHAT framework. Under the authors' assistance, the participants identified related stakeholders and artifacts of the community that may affect their needs, motivation, and attitudes toward their English language learning. After the CHAT model constructed, discussions among the participants were encouraged to find out similarities and differences in their answers for the three questions while the authors acted as facilitators who gave support to the participants during their whole group discussion. In this sharing process, the authors also assisted the participants to explore in depth different aspects of the CHAT framework when most participants might believe that they had the same expectations, or they shared the same motivation and had the same attitudes toward their English language learning at the university.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts of the interviews was sent to the participants' for their review, comments and confirmation before it is critically analyzed using the Nvivo 20 program. The Nvivo 20 was utilized to develop a coding frame which was created within an identified list of overarching themes based on the CHAT framework. Based on this coding frame, instances belong to each theme were systematically labelled with identified codes and later transferred into specific themes for analysis. Both the coding frame and the theme list were done manually and partially computer-assisted by using the Microsoft Office Excel in entering, organizing and summarizing data.

Procedures and participants

After the ethics consent form is submitted and approved by the University's Board of Research Ethics, the authors sent the participants-recruitment announcement to students who are potential participants of the study. When the target participants are identified, the study's information was sent to the participants, including the research aims, procedures, benefits, and challenges. All the participants were asked to complete the study's written consent form to anonymously participate in the study which include a one-hour focus group interview.

Overall, there were 15 students participating in the focus-group interviews. The students came from three universities of PES in South of Vietnam. Among these 15 participants, seven of them were freshman and eight of them were sophomore. The participants' age ranged differently, from eighteen to nineteen years old. There were only five female students whereas the rest were male. All the male students were in their fourth semester of the ESP course learning.

As regulated by the curriculum framework of these universities, all students enroll in ESP courses for four semesters, starting in the first year and finishing in the second year of the course of study. There is no placement test for the students enrolled in the ESP programs, but they need to achieve an IELTS score of 4.5 after finishing their fourth semester of ESP learning.

After having the list of participants agreeing to join in the study, a two-hour focus group interview was set up with a consideration of the participants' time convenience. To ensure that the participants to reach a full and mutual understanding of related terms such as motivation, attitude, and needs, the authors had discussed the meaning of these terms with the participants before the interview. All the interviews were recorded, which was earlier informed to the participants, transcribed, and examined with supplement of the authors' notes taken during the interviews. These notes included detailed descriptions of how the participants reacted when answering the interviews' questions or when they talked about the different artifacts and stakeholders. The notes also included the percentage of the participants' agreement on each answering idea.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis in depth of the focus group discussion was undertaken, which reports significant differences between students' needs, expectations and motivations in English language learning at the universities, based on the six aspects of the CHAT framework. Specifically, there were six aspects of the CHAT framework related to students' needs revealed from the analysis whereas students' motivation came out with five aspects (see Table 1)

Table 1: Overarching themes and coding aspects based on the CHAT framework.

	CHAT framework' dimensions	Themes and coding aspects	Coded text samples
Students' needs and expectations in ESP courses	Mediating artifacts	Facilities for ESP learning	I wish to study in classrooms which are well-equipped with modern teaching and learning facilities like in other countries in the region...including modern language laboratory with stable internet connection and technology resources for my English language learning. It's ok not to have native English instructors for the courses, but I really hope that the university will have well-equipped language labs where I can regularly practice the language with different online apps.

		To facilitate language interaction in class, I believe not only movable tables and chairs, but also different devices should be more invested in so that the instructors can design different interaction activities in classroom for us.
	Instruction & guidance to ESP learning	I believe [that] language teaching methods are different from those used for other subject areas. Thus, I wish the instructors' instruction should be changed in such a way that we [students] can be actively engaged in communication in class rather than focusing on completing grammar or textbook's exercises. I believe [that] both writing and speaking are important. Thus, in addition to knowledge and skills related to written communication, I wish to have more interaction tasks in classroom so that I can practice and improve my spoken language which I need to have for my future career.
Rules and regulations	Policies & regulations on English language use	My teacher does ask us to use only English in classroom, but we [students] can't do this. We [students] use quite a lot of Vietnamese in classroom the university or faculty may think about having a policy or regulation for all students and instructors to use only English language in the university so that we can practice English more often. If there is no official regulation from the university..., it is hard for students to improve speaking as even some instructors use Vietnamese in classroom as well.
Division of labors	Institutional leaders' role in English language learning	The role of the university's leaders and faculty's management team need to be better highlighted in promoting English language teaching and learning. Unlike other universities of sport, graduates of this university need to use English proficiently as most of us become professional athletes or trainers, but I don't think English learning and teaching is adequately promoted through the leaders' and deans' roles in the programs, as compared with other subject areas.
	Supporting teams involved in ESP courses	I know that other universities have special investment in English language teaching and learning by setting up Language supporting team and center where students can be offered with support when they are in need. This University needs to have similar services for students here. Yes, a supporting team which may include senior students to assist new students to learn English is very useful, and we need to do it as soon as possible.

	<i>Community</i>	Environment for ESP practice	I don't think only English-major programs are offered with professional environment for language practice. The university needs to create an English language environment for students so that we can have the opportunity of practicing English more often. At present, some of us usually join English speaking clubs offered in other universities to practice English.
		Opportunities of interaction	Interaction needs to be developed not only in the class, but also outside the class as well. To do this, the instructors should design more interaction activities in classroom as well as more projects so that we can have more opportunities of interacting outside the class.
	<i>Objects</i>	Concerns about ESP courses' roles	I think ESP is now very important given our professional career in the future; Thus, the program's roles need to be more appropriately paid attention to through different ways, including adequate investment in the programs.
	<i>Outcome</i>	Professional graduates with proficient English knowledge and skills	I wish to be able to be proficient in both written and oral communication when I finish the program. IELTS score of 4.5 is my goal. In addition to knowledge about my profession, being able to use English fluently is a must, and my goal is IELTS 4.5.
Students' motivation in and attitudes toward ESP courses	Mediating artifacts	Facilities for English language teaching & learning	My class is quite crowded, 45 students, and equipped with old tables and chairs which are unmovable for group activities. It is very inconvenient for both instructors and students. But we can still learn well I believe. My friends and I all know that learning English is important, and I try my best to learn now. But there is not enough good teaching and learning equipment, of course, just screen, board and markers. Even, there is no microphone for teacher in some classes.
	Rules and regulations	Lack of policies & regulations for English language use	Although the instructors do ask us to use English in classroom, but it is challenging to control this as some of my classmates are not good at using English. They come from disadvantaged provinces, you know. In addition, there is no rule from the university asking us to use English in the campus for language improvement purposes.
	Division of labors	Lack of support in English language learning	Even it's hard to find good English materials in the library, not mention having a supporting team to help us with language learning. But I still believe my instructors and friends are enthusiastic and helpful in finding good strategies for me to learn in classroom. No, except for the library, I don't think we have any supporting services or programs for language learning as we are not in an English-major programs. We do have technicians to help us with classroom's technical issues only.

	Community	Lack of communication	Communication with teacher and students do occur in classroom only; after class, it's rarely to have a chance to talk with the instructors about my language lesson. I do think other classmates have similar experience. We do try to speak in English as much as we can, but it is within our group only as we know that studying English is important and useful for us later. I am not sure what happen to other groups. I don't think I keep communication with my teacher after the class. If I need help, I will talk or consult with my groupmates then.
	Objects	Concerns about achievement of learning objectives	I wish to achieve my language goal of IELTS 4.5 or 5.0 so that I can communicate with other professionals after graduation, but it is not from this program, given the current practice of teaching and learning. I will study at a foreign language center to achieve this goal anyway. I don't think I can get IELTS 4.5 from this ESP program. I will study with my private tutor at home then.

Students' attitudes towards the ESP programs

Findings from the data analysis results revealed that most students showed positive attitudes towards their current ESP courses. Among fifteen students participated in the interviews, thirteen of them confirmed their recognition of the feasible efforts given to the courses by the instructors, stating that 'the current courses are designed quite useful' to students (S1, S4, S7, S8, S10, S11, S12, S13, S15). The usefulness aspects, as identified by the students, are related to the instructors' efforts in selecting appropriate topics and designing meaningful activities for students in classroom (S11, S12). The students (S2, S3, S5, S6) affirmed that, "with limited time given for each lesson, efforts are sufficiently given to ensure [that] the lesson's objectives are achieved". These efforts include 'the instructors' design of meaningful topics and creation of different exercises which are suitable to our[students] English proficiency levels when the textbook's topics are not familiar with, or the exercises are too challenging for us [students]' (S4). S12 and S13 further added that 'the efforts also include the instructors' continuing encouragement given to us [students from disadvantaged provinces] to help us keep up with other students in the class when our learning results are not really good'. Unlike English major programs which are 'usually invested with good conditions for both teaching and learning and [even] taught by highly qualified academic instructors, non-English major programs like ours are not, but I believe my instructors have done the best for our learning, which made our programs are useful and engaging to students' (S3, S5). Furthermore, students' positive attitudes towards the ESP programs were substantially denoted to their instructors' creation of a friendly learning atmosphere and relationship with students. As some of them emphasized, 'we [students] come from different provinces where English learning is not given priority and thus our English is not as good as those in this city. However, our instructors encourage us

to speak English in class...they are so friendly and caring to us that ... when we make errors, they make fun with us so that we do not feel nervous or anxious about the errors, making us feel more confident in using English and working with English in class' (S5, S7, S15).

Only two students reported that "learning English is quite stressful [to us]" due to "English language level differences among students, big size classes, and current old-fashioned teaching practice" (S9, S14). According to S9, in addition to limited time for language practice in class, with approximately 40-50 students who are at different English proficiency levels in each class, it is challenging for students to acquire all essential knowledge and develop language skills needed even for the examination purposes. Therefore, 'although I always have full concentration on my lessons and work hard after classes, I find it challenging for me to develop my English language skills...just think about the expected learning outcome of having an IELTS score of 5.0 by the end of this year, I feel so stressful' (S14). These findings are consistent to what found by Balaei and Ahour (2018) about students' dissatisfaction about ESP courses due to lack of time for language skills development.

Students' motivation in the ESP programs

Analysis of both content and word frequency of students' discussion reveals a different range of motivation among students which can be categorized into two groups: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, which are described by Dornyei (1998). The instrumental outcomes guided the extrinsic motivation students in learning English identified from the study's results are consistent to those reported by Yu's study (2020), which include respect from other people, future career promotion, preparation for future job, overseas travelling, and examination preparation.

Emphasizing the significance of English language learning for future professional career, students of the first group of extrinsic motivation (S1, S2, S3, S5, S7, S8, S9 & S15) confirmed that "sufficient English language people will have more opportunities of getting promotion in career and receiving respect from others in society than those who cannot use English well". According to S7, "English is the utmost important requirement that every single graduate needs to have, without which, it is hard to get a job even when an outstanding [studying] performance is achieved". In line with this view, another student (S8) stated that, "in addition to employment requirement, good use of English can also give me more opportunities to be promoted in career, more opportunities for overseas business travelling, and particularly get respect from [my] future colleagues". Some students in this group (S10, S11, S12 & S14) asserted that their full engagement and participation in English classrooms is simply to "successfully pass the end-of-course exams" and "complete the study program on time". Specifically, S11 clarified that "I am quite active in classroom because students' attendance and lesson-contribution are among the requirements that I need to meet which does not really mean that I am really motivated by the lesson". She further explained that "with limited time for learning in classroom and with such a big size class, I don't think I can achieve my language learning goal of getting an IELTS 4.5 by the end of the program. In fact, I am

learning English with a tutor at home, and I think it can help me getting the expected IELTS score”.

Within the intrinsic motivation group of students, data analysis reports self-competition and self-efficacy to be crucial motivational components of students in their English language learning. These findings are aligned with those obtained from the studies conducted by Deci et al. (1981) and Tauer and Harackiewicz (1999), emphasizing the crucial role of students’ concentration on winning the activity and the competition context in enhancing their motivation in language learning. Specifically, two students of this group indicated that “I know my speaking is not as good as others, but I always feel at ease, with no stress or anxiety at all, when completing the tasks, because I believe [that] I can complete the task successfully when I am not too much nervous about it...and such belief really helps me in learning language” (S13). In fact, “I want to be the first [student] to find out the answer or solution in my group as it indicates that I am really serious in my study; and I believe [that] there is no good result if I don’t have good investment in what I am doing” (S9).

Significantly, findings about intrinsic student group further confirmed previous study’s findings obtained by Tanaka and Ellis (2016) about the existence of correlation between students’ self-efficacy and their language learning achievement. Two students clarified that, ‘since some of us come from the countryside where we do not have enough conveniences to learn English, we understand that we need to work hard and have more investment in learning the language to keep up with other students in the class. In fact, the more we work hard in completing the tasks, the more we feel confident when we can become better than other students in the class although our speaking skill is not as good as we want. When we feel confident in completing the tasks successfully, we are more eager to concentrate on working harder to achieve better results’ (S6, S9, S14). Sharing the same view, other students in the intrinsic motivation group verified that ‘it is meaningless to study without having competition, even competition with yourself. I always want to be better than myself yesterday’, and that ‘once I achieve success in even a small task, I become more excited to learn’ (S4, S6, S9, and S13).

Results from the study about students’ intrinsic motivation in ESP learning are consistent to those emphasized by Niemiec and Ryan (2009) about self-regulation and self-determination in driving language learning. Specifically, once extrinsic motivation is sustained by students’ learning activities undertaken by specific instrumental outcomes, and once these instrumental outcomes are achieved, students will autonomously engage in learning and developing (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Five students in this group shared the view that ‘engagement and participation in classroom have been significantly resulted from our [students] awareness about self-development and cultural understanding of the target language which can be in turn useful for our professional area’ (S4, S6, S13, S14, S15). They believed that ‘understanding of the target language’s and other regional country languages’ culture is critical for the young generation as it is one of the requirements for regional integration’, and such ‘sufficient using and understanding of the

language and culture can later help [them] better exist in the professional area' (S4, S13, S15). With this view, students found 'it is more meaningful and engaging in completing assigned tasks' (S6).

Students' needs in the ESP programs

Regarding students' needs in ESP programs, analysis of content and word frequency reveals that English language practice environment and instructors' assistance in developing specialized vocabulary as well as language skills of speaking, writing and reading are students' critical needs in language learning. These results about students' needs in ESP learning are in alignment with previous studies' results reported by Chen et al. (2016) and Korba et al. (2023) indicating significant needs of students in developing reading, speaking and writing skills as well as specialized vocabulary enhancement for future employment though these studies were conducted in different professional contexts of ESP courses offered in business, technology and mechanics areas.

A majority of students (S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S8, S11, S13 & S15) shared the view that among the four language skills, speaking, writing and reading are believed the most crucial skills they need for their future career although listening skill is the most challenging one. As some of them claimed, 'lack of specialized vocabulary and environment for practicing English has hindered our development of speaking and writing in realistic professional situations (S2, S4, S8, S11 & S14). Admitting that 'the instructor does provide us with lot of reading activities to help us developing the reading skill', S5 and S13 believed that 'these are a kind of textbook practices, not really real-world situations that we may deal with in our future career', and that 'we need more help in developing strategies or techniques to develop our specialized vocabulary and thereby improve our reading skill'. Regarding writing skill development, a similar view is shared by S6 and S14 that 'most of activities for writing skill development are textbook based, requiring students to complete grammar exercises or short emails or letter writing that I believe they have not yet related to real world professional situations that I may face in my future career.' The students suggested that 'the lessons need to be designed and delivered through different activities which are real-world or professional related problems that we will experience in our future profession' (S6, S13). While 'we can practice both speaking and writing in class, time for each lesson is quite limited to enable us to do so. Yet, it is challenging for all students to practice speaking and writing outside classroom as not many of us have motivation to get together to do so' (S6).

Although all students in the interview highlighted the significance of the development of speaking, writing and reading language skills, some of them admitted that 'listening skill is the most challenging one' among the four language skills (S1, S2, S4). According to S1 and S2, teaching and learning practice of writing skill is currently similar to those of speaking and writing skills. As S1 stated, 'there is no listening task related to future profession for us [students] to practice in classroom. We [students] usually learn listening by practicing such activities as listening and filling blanks with specific words, listening and answering short

questions, and listening and selecting yes or no answers'. While these activities are 'challenging' for students as they did not experience such practices when they were in secondary schools, they cause 'tediousness' and 'discouragement' to students in their language learning (S4).

Data analysis results further reveal a lack of sufficient attention from instructors in teaching listening skills to students in classroom, making this skill challenging to students. As S2 indicated, 'we [students] are not given enough time for learning listening in classroom. More time is given for reading and writing than for listening and speaking'. Other reasons for making listening skill learning challenging, as indicated by S1 and S2, are 'students' lack of vocabularies' that hinders them from recognizing the words when they are listening, 'lack of regular practice of listening at home', and 'both midterm and final exams do not include listening tasks'. Despite such challenges, students highlighted the need of improving listening skill in their ESP learning, underlining that 'we[students] understand that listening is important and that speaking cannot be improved without improving listening skill' (S1, S2). However, to help students be more interested in learning listening, it is believed that 'listening lessons need to be designed with more real world or professional career related tasks in classroom' rather than 'textbook-based activities' (S1, S2, S15).

Students' expectations in the ESP programs

Findings from the qualitative data analysis report several deficiencies in the program currently practiced at the three universities, which reflect students' expectations in the ESP program practice. The first shortcoming of the program, as indicated by some students (S4, S5, S6, S8, S11 & S15), is related to the institutional leaders' role in supporting and promoting the ESP program's implementation at the universities. S5 claimed that 'I believe [that] the university's leaders are supporting the [ESP] programs, but I do not think [that] there is any particular promoting the English learning and teaching activities here since I first enrolled in the program two years ago'. In line with this view, S6 and S8 added that, 'given the vital role of English in internationalization in different areas, we believe that our university's leaders have not made sufficient investment in the ESP program yet to promote it to an appropriate position or develop the English language teaching and learning.' Lack of attention from the universities' leaders are further confirmed by S8 who endorsed that 'when English is viewed only as a subordinate course of study [by the university's leaders], it is understandable that English language teaching and learning have not been sufficiently invested recently and consequently not developed.'

Lack of the university leaders' attention in promoting ESP programs have resulted in the second deficiency in the ESP courses' implementation which is inadequate supporting services in language learning. The supporting services, as identified by the students, include library which is well equipped and updated with materials for language learning and tutoring services for those students who are in need (S10). According to S13, 'we[students] do have a library here [at the university]. However, there are not many materials, books and professional magazines in English for us to work with to improve our English; and many of these materials are outdated

already.’ ‘As we do not have enough time in class to practice language and explore in depth issues related to the lesson, we wish to have supporting services outside the classroom such as tutoring sessions or office hours with the instructors. However, we do not have these services in this university’ (S10). In line with this view, two other students added that, ‘I believe that such activities as writing or speaking tutoring sessions are currently developed in other universities; unfortunately, we do not have such similar activities in this university. [Therefore], If I am not good at a particular language area such as writing, I make plan to improve it by enrolling in an English language class at a foreign languages center or having a personal language tutor at home, and it is costly of course’ (S10, S13, S14).

Furthermore, findings from the interviews significantly show a lack of adequate facilities for language teaching and learning of ESP programs at the universities. Many students describe that ESP teaching and learning are currently practiced in traditional classrooms where long tables and benches are arranged with big size group of students, and without electronic devices or teaching aids supporting the language learning (S1, S3, S9, S10, S11, S13 & S14). S1 explained that ‘there is no movable tables and chairs in my classroom that can help the students to engage in pair or groupwork activities for practicing language; and...with a big size class of 40 to 50 students, it is not convenient for the instructors to organize interactive activities’. As another student added, ‘we [students] simply study with textbook and cassette players; some instructors do have lessons designed in power point and give us [students] a chance to listen or watch online video clips; but it is not very often as there is not enough time to do so in class and the internet connection is not good for the instructors to do so.’ S9 further inserted that ‘there is a computer laboratory here [at the university], but it is not equipped with adequate applications or programs for English language learning. So, we [students] rarely to go there to study.’

In addition to the lack of adequate teaching and learning facilities for ESP program implementation, results from the focus group interview’s analysis disclose a lack of sufficient English language practice environment for students’ learning at the three universities. The environment for language practice, as defined by the students, includes different activities organized in and outside classroom such as instructors’ interaction in English with students, English clubs, or extra-curricular activities organized to encourage students to use English as a means of communication (S4, S7, S9). Regarding the in-class environment for using English, one student stated that ‘not many of us[students] can speak English in classroom because our English is not good, and our instructor needs to use Vietnamese instead of English when delivering the lessons to make sure that all students can understand the lessons well’ (S7). ‘With at least 40 students in classroom, who are at different levels of English, it is impossible for the instructor to use English to deliver the lesson within very limited time; So, Vietnamese is definitely used to help both instructor and students to complete the lesson plan’ (S6, S11, S15). Similarly, S10 and S13 emphasized that, ‘although using Vietnamese instead of English is effective for all students understand the lessons, it has a side-effect that students cannot interact in English

in classroom, and thus, their English language speaking and listening skills cannot be improved.'

With regard to English language environment created outside classroom, one student stated that, 'since we[students] have limited time for practicing speaking and listening language skills in classroom, we[students] need to visit English language clubs organized in other universities to practice these skills as there is no similar activities organized at this University' (S3). This view is further shared by another student who '... believe that there is no effective environment for practicing English outside classroom at this university; we[students] are still fine to join in English club at other universities, but it is much better if we[students] have similar activities organized at our university' (S7). S12 and S13 argued that, 'certainly, there is no problem for us to join in English clubs at other universities, but the problem here is that most of students at these English clubs are majored in English. Therefore, we find quite challenging for us to keep up with them when participating in the activities there.' At this point of discussion, S9 clarified that, 'I believe [that] only when the activities organized at my university, my English language practice becomes effective since the instructors understand well what their students' English language proficiency levels are. [Thus], the activities would be appropriately selected and organized to suit our [students] levels.' Significantly, the students shared that 'such a culture of speaking English outside classroom does not exist in the university, and we[students] find it hard to use English in public even it is for the purpose of practicing English. People might criticize that we want to show off our English when we are doing so' (S4, S10, S13, S14).

Additionally, qualitative data analysis results report a traditional classroom practice of teaching and learning across the universities. Most students participating in the interviews informed that 'the teaching and learning is currently in textbook-based practice, with a focus on written exams success rather than language use effectiveness' (S1-S15). S9 described that 'the lesson usually begins with introduction of vocabulary or grammar rules related to the lesson. Then, the instructor guides us to go through the exercises about the grammar rules introduced or to answer questions about the given reading paragraphs in the textbook. Finally, we [students] are asked to complete the homework given in the textbook.' 'Sometimes, the instructor asks us [students] to work in pairs to complete the textbook's exercises; but there is not enough time for groupwork activities as there are so many students in each class' (S4). According to S7, 'there are little interactive activities developed in my class. In fact, lot of activities are developed focusing on vocabulary and grammar development which makes sense to me since the exams are mostly vocabulary and grammar-based testing.' S8 explained that '...given the lack of adequate equipment for teaching and learning, teaching and learning in my class are textbook-based practices. We[students] spend lot of time on learning grammar, vocabulary and reading....and the quizzes or exams are also aimed at testing our knowledge about grammar, vocabulary or reading texts given.' In line with these views, S3 added that 'since there are many students coming from other provinces where English learning is not paid attention to and thus their english language proficiency is not good to help them understand all instructions in English.

Then, the instructor translates the instruction into Vietnamese to help them. We[students] also communicate in Vietnamese when working in pairs or when we do not understand a particular point of the lesson, we can ask the instructor in Vietnamese.' Since textbook-based activities are designed for teaching and learning practice, 'it is understandable that it is hard for students to develop such language skills as speaking and listening' (S13).

Finally, qualitative data analysis reveals a great concern from students about the current ESP programs' roles and their expected learning outcomes. Specifically, S2 and S13 stated that 'we [students] aim at becoming professional trainers or professional coaches; either way, being proficient in English is crucial for our future profession. Therefore, we aim to get IELTS score of 6.0 or 6.5 at least when we graduate. However, with the current teaching and learning practice, we[students] do not think we can achieve these scores unless we have extra tutoring classes at home.' Similarly, S12 inserted that 'although I am expected to have a B1 level certificate [equivalent to an IELTS score of 4.5], it is difficult for me to achieve it, given my current level of English language proficiency and the teaching and learning at this university.... I am having an extra evening English language class at a foreign languages center, but I am not sure if I can get the expected outcome.' The view of promoting ESP programs' role to be equal with other professional courses of study is mutually shared by the students that 'we[students] understand that courses of study related to physical education and sport are important, but we[students] believe that English is also important to help us better integrate into the region [Asian region]and exchange of expertise and experience in sport training and practice cannot be carried out if we cannot use English fluently...' (S3, S4, S5, S15). One student suggested that 'I think [that] it is time for the university's leaders and instructors think of making appropriate changes in promoting the ESP courses to make it more effectively practiced, and thus ESP programs' role can be equally placed to other subject courses of study, and that more investment in the programs should be made so that more positive learning outcomes can be achieved' (S13).

Obviously, findings about students' needs and expectations in the ESP courses reveal a disparity between ESP course's design, implementation and students' language proficiency levels and needs. These findings are consistent to those reported by Duong (2007) earlier that there is a lack of official communication among instructors for the purposes of course design, implementation, evaluation to ensure that the ESP programs are implemented in alignment with students' needs. Significantly, findings about the current ESP practice's deficiencies indicate a salient needs analysis for overall renovation of the programs at the three universities.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Despite significant findings obtained, this study still have limitations. Since the study was conducted with only fifteen students currently enrolling in ESP courses in three universities of PES in South of Vietnam, it has not explored in depth information from students of ESP courses offered for PES in the North and Central

of Vietnam and ESP courses in other professional areas. Therefore, future studies about students' needs analysis in ESP courses may take into consideration of involving PES students in the North and Central of Vietnam and professional area diversity in which ESP courses are offered. In addition, while this study provides insights from students about their universities' ESP courses' practice, perspectives from the instructors on the programs were not explored yet, which is another limitation of this study. Furthermore, this study was conducted using a qualitative method of focus-group interview which is limited in involving a large population of participants for study. To complete an overall picture of students' needs, expectations and motivation in ESP course enrollment, insights and perspectives from a larger population of students and instructors are needed. Therefore, it is suggested that a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the issues should be undertaken in future research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is aimed to understand students' needs and motivations in learning ESP in three universities of PES in South of Vietnam while exploring their attitudes towards the current ESP courses' practice. The data analysis results reveal that, although most students have positive attitudes toward their current courses, they indicate different motivations in English language learning as well as different needs and expectations in the ESP courses' practice. Specifically, regarding learning needs, to help students achieve the expected learning outcomes of having an IELTS score of 5.0 by their second year of study, different strategies related to renovating the current ESP programs need to be developed. These include an urgent shift from the current traditional classrooms where the instructors are centered in directing all teaching and learning activities to innovative student-center teaching and learning practices in which students are involved in different meaningful and interactive activities to develop their language competence. While professional vocabulary and grammar are focal of teaching, such four English language skills as listening, speaking, writing and reading need to be integrated in the lesson to help students comprehensively develop the language.

With regards to students' target needs in language learning, the study's results indicate salient disparities between the current practice of ESP programs and students' expectations in language learning and the program implementation. These disparities are related to lack of adequate supporting services for students' learning, lack of sufficient teaching and learning facilities and equipment and an absence of environment for language practice. These limitations prove that the current ESP courses have not yielded students' desired outcomes and proved inadequate in addressing their needs. To ensure that the ESP programs remain aligned with students' needs and expectations, there is a call for several changes to be undertaken. First, at the institutional level, it is essential that the universities' leaders issue policies or regulations promoting English language teaching and learning in the universities in addition to sufficient investment in upgrading the language teaching and learning facilities and equipment, including language laboratory and library equipped with updated English instructional and learning materials. At the

faculty's level, revision of the existing ESP courses' curricula is timely needed. Such curriculum revision needs to reflect students' needs of English language learning for future career. Additionally, appropriate trainings on using integrated skills teaching approach and designing interactive activities in classroom for instructors are significant. In addition to the development of different English learning activities outside classroom to create an environment for English language practice, supporting services such as self-access language learning corner or tutoring sessions need to be set up to assist students, especially those from disadvantaged areas or other provinces, to keep up with other students in class.

Findings from this study has significantly contributed to the literature of ESP students' needs analysis and ESP course design and implementation, especially those courses offered for students in physical education and sport area in Vietnam which is still scarce. Given the above limitations in this study, it is important for future research about students' needs, motivation and expectations in enrolling ESP courses to take into consideration of the participant diversity and population for more confirmed results.

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