

ASSESSING THE ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) ASPECTS ON THE EMPLOYABILITY OF ESP COMPLETERS

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify the employers and alumni respondents' background characteristics. In addition to, it assessed the ESP aspects on the employability of ESP completers. It was also intended to ascertain any significant difference on the assessment of the ESP learners' employability between alumni and employer. The descriptive method with 46 employers and 142 alumni were chosen randomly. The survey questionnaires were used to gather the data which was analyzed and evaluated by using Excel and SPSS programs for t-test analysis. For some qualitative criteria, respondents answered and assessed according to level from 1 to 5, equal to grades: "very poor/not responsive", "poor/ fairly responsive", "good/ responsive", and "very good/ highly responsive."The study presented the weighted mean distribution on the ability of the student-respondents in using ESP after participating in the training courses in the English centers with the average weighted mean of 3.22 of which 3.14 (the employer) and 3.30 (the alumni).The results of ANOVA test showed that $\text{sig} = 0.244 > 0.05$, so there is no difference in the assessment of employability between alumni and employer.

Keywords: English for specific purposes (ESP), ESP completers, employability, alumni, employer.

INTRODUCTION

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been known since 1960 in the world as an English course that was designed to meet specific purposes of learners in performing particular professional – related activities (Momtazur,2015).In Viet Nam, due to the global economic integration and the strong competitiveness of human resource through competency in the use of English language, English learning is a very popular tendency. It is important to use English effectively in education, jobs and in communication and as a result, ESP has become the

language of the international economic community and receives a lot of adult learners' attention and participation.

In addition to, there have been a great number of undergraduate, graduates, professionals who wish to take an ESP courses so that they can widen and improve their knowledge, to support for their current and future jobs. A person who majors in accounting, banking, business administration and human resource has many opportunities in choosing the well- paid jobs from foreign or joint – venture companies if he can use ESP well in business contexts. In contrast; a person with good knowledge in their study areas but poor in English, that means it will narrow their opportunities in both salary and foreign business trip.

Therefore, it is significant to take into account the factors observed by the researcher, hence this study examined the factors for the ESP learning in training institutions in Hanoi, Vietnam with the desire to improve equality of ESP courses and propose program for ESP learning and training institutions to support learners so that they can achieve their learning goals and meet their job's need in the world of work

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sampling

In assessing the ability of using ESP among learners after graduating from universities and English centers. To facilitate the survey, the author only collects opinions of alumni who are currently working at the enterprise in the study area. At the same time, the author also reviewed the business leaders where alumni are working.

To determine the number of employers and alumni assessing the ESP aspects on the employability of ESP completers, the researcher use the minimum sampling method. According to Hoang Trong and Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc (2014), in the book "Data Analysis with SPSS" and based on the study by Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) for reference on expected sample size.

At the survey site, there were 52 employers who have employees using ESP employees, of which the number of alumni of the universities and English centers currently working in 52 enterprises is 302. Using the S'lovin sampling formula with the error $e = 0.05$. The sample size was determined as follows: The sample is the employers: $n_1 = 52 / (1 + 52 * 0.0025) = 46$; while the number of alumni samples: $n_2 = 302 / (1 + 302 * 0.0025) = 172$.

Research Instrument

Further questionnaire for employers and alumni are also carried out in data collection process. This activity was done to clarify the confused answers and to make the findings more persuasive. Unstructured interviews were also conducted by the researcher with the respondents while in the process of administering the checklist questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employer and Alumni-Respondents' Background Characteristics

Background Characteristics	Employer		Alumni	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Sex				
Male	38	82.61	59	41.55
Female	8	17.39	83	58.45
Total	46	100.00	142	100.00
Age				
25andbelow	0	0.00	5	3.52
26-30	1	2.17	22	15.49
31- 35	5	10.87	87	61.27
36to40yearsold	8	17.39	11	7.75
41to45yearsold	11	23.91	9	6.34
46andabove	21	45.65	8	5.63
Total	46	100.00	142	100.00

As far as sex is concerned, the above table shows frequency and percentage distribution of the employer and alumni respondents' profile coming from the enterprise.

The study shows that there are 46 employers who take part into the survey of which male employers account for the highest frequency of 38 or 82.61% and female with a frequency of 8 or 17.39%. There are 142 alumni of ESP courses - who currently works in the company and female holds highest frequency with 83 or 58.45% while male has a frequency of 59 or 41.55%.

With regards to age, the number of respondents who are employers at the age group of 46 and above holds the highest percent 45.56% with a frequency of 21 employers while there is no respondent or employer that ranges from 25 and below. The second rank frequency belonging to the group of respondents aged from 41 to 45 years old is 11 or 23.91 %. The age group of 36 -40

years old has 8 employers or 17.39 % followed by the age group 31– 35 with a frequency of 5 or 10.87 % and the age group 26 -30 has the smallest percentage of 2.17 % with a frequency of 1. It could be seen from the table that the older people are the more they got promoted, and they get more successful in the job and reach leading position as an employer.

The age of the respondents, who are the alumni, currently working in enterprises with largest percentage is 61.27% or a frequency of 87 belongs to the age group from 31-35 years old while the respondents accounts for the smallest percentage of 3.52% with the frequency of 5 is the age group of 25 or below. The second – rank frequency belongs to the group of respondents aged from 26 to 30 years old with a frequency of 22 or 15.49% and those aged 46 and above, 41-45 and 36-40 years old with frequencies of 8(5.63%), 9(6.34%), and 11 (7.75%), respectively.

ESP Aspects on the Employability of ESP Completers

Table1 Ability of ESP Learners Studying in Universities

The ability to use ESP	Employer		Alumni		Average	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
Q1. have ESP listening skill	2.75	Good	2.82	Good	2.79	Good
Q2. have ESP reading skill	2.63	Good	2.74	Good	2.69	Good
Q3.haveESP writing skill	2.44	Poor	2.61	Good	2.53	Good
Q4. have ESP speaking skill	2.38	Poor	2.49	Poor	2.44	Poor
Q5can communicate in English	2.52	Good	3.05	Good	2.79	Good
Q6. can use ESP in professional work	2.06	Poor	2.47	Poor	2.27	Poor
Q7. can translate professional materials from English into Vietnamese and vice versa	1.62	Very poor	1.78	Poor	1.70	Very poor
Q8. can interpret into English in commercial economy, business administration	1.75	Poor	2.38	Poor	2.07	Poor
Average	2.27	Poor	2.54	Good	2.41	Poor

Table 1 presents the weighted mean distribution on the ability of the student-respondents in using ESP after participating in the training courses in the English centers with the average weighted mean of 3.22 of which 3.14 (the employer) and 3.30 (the alumni).

The employer rated second for criterion 2 regarding reading skills with WM= 2.63 (good). They rated third for criterion 5 on English communication skill with WM=2.52 (good). They rated fourth on English Writing with WM=2.44 (poor). They rate fifth on English speaking skills with WM=2.38 (poor). They rated sixth for criterion 6 with WM = 2.06 (poor) related to use ESP in professional work. They ranked seventh for criterion 8 with WM = 1.75 (poor) related to the ability to translate English in the field of economics as well as business administration.

Alumni rated highest WM = 3.05 for Criterion 5: Ability to communicate in English. They underestimate WM = 1.78 (poor) for criterion 7 regarding the ability to translate professional documents from English to Vietnamese and vice versa. They rated second for criterion 1 regarding English listening skills with WM=2.82 (good). They rated third for reading English skills with WM=2.74 (good). They rated fourth for the criteria 3 related to English writing skills with WM = 2.61 (good). They rated fifth for criterion 4 regarding English speaking skills with WM=2.49 (poor). They rated sixth for criterion 6 with WM= 2.47 (poor) related to the ability of using ESP in professional work. They ranked seventh for criterion 8 with WM = 2.38 (poor) related to the ability to translate English in the area of economics and business.

The result is supported by the studies of Nguyễn Thị Tô Hoa & Phạm Thị Tuyết Mai (2016) and Lam Thi Lan Huong (2005) when they both have similar finding about ability of students in using ESP while study only at universities. They face difficulties with business English terms under different contexts and translations skills especially from Vietnamese into English.

Table2 Ability of ESP Learners Participating in Training Courses in the English Centers

Ability inu=Using ESP	Employer		Alumni		Average Weighted Mean	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
Q1. have ESP listening skill	3.22	Good	3.26	Good	3.24	Good
Q2. have ESP reading skill	3.25	Very Good	3.32	Very good	3.29	Verygood
Q3.haveESP writing skill	2.85	Good	3.24	Good	3.05	Good
Q4. have ESP speaking skill	3.16	Good	3.29	Very good	3.23	Good

Q5can communicate in English	3.23	Good	3.56	Very good	3.40	Verygood
Q6. can use ESP in professional work	3.22	Good	3.28	Very good	3.25	Verygood
Q7. can translate professional materials from English into Vietnamese and viceversa	3.06	Very poor	3.22	Good	3.14	Verypoor
Q8. can interpret into English in commercial economy, business administration	3.14	Good	3.25	Very good	3.20	Good
Average	3.14	Good	3.30	Very good	3.22	Good

When evaluating the English ability of an employee, the employer rated highest WM = 3.25 (very good) for criterion 2: having English reading skills. They rated the least WM=2.85 (good) for criterion 3 regarding English writing skills. They rated second for criterion 5 regarding their ability to communicate with WM=3.23 (good). They rated third for English listening skills with WM=3.22 (good). They rated the fourth for criterion 6 regarding the ability to use ESP in professional work with WM=3.22(good). They rated fifth for criterion 4 regarding English speaking skills with WM=3.16 (good). They rated sixth for criterion 8 with WM = 3.14 (good) related to the ability to translate English in the field of economics and business administration. They rated seventh for criterion 7 with WM = 3.06 (poor) related to the ability to translate professional documents from English to Vietnamese and viceversa.

Workers (alumni) rated highest WM = 3.56 (very good) for Criterion 5:Ability to communicate in English. They rated the least WM = 3.22 (good) for criterion 7 regarding the ability to translate professional documents from English to Vietnamese and vice versa. They rated second for criterion 2 regarding their ability to read English with WM = 3.32 (very good). They rated third for criterion 4 on English speaking skills with WM = 3.29 (very good).They rated the fourth for criterion 6 concerning the use of ESP in professional work with WM = 3.28 (very good). They rated 5th for criterion 1 related to listening skills with WM = 3.26 (good). They rated 6th for criterion 8 with very good WM = 3.25 (very good) related to the ability to translate English in economic and business fields. They ranked seventh for criterion 3 with WM =3.24 (good) related to English writing skill.

Representatives of enterprises said that 100% of the staff working in the departments related to mandatory use of foreign languages, it is difficult for the agency to recruit, often every year the company invites large foreign language centers in Hanoi to conduct training courses at enterprises with their requirements, on the other hand the staff have to participate in ESP course at the English center, the ability to use ESP is advantageous to offer better paid job and career opportunities for employees.

In general, both enterprises and employees have common assessment of ESP capacity of employees after participating in the ESP training courses at English centers are significantly improved.

Significant Difference on the Assessment of Employability of the ESP Learners between Alumni and Employers

Table 3 Significant Difference on the Assessment of Employability of the ESP Learners between Alumni and Employers

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.472	1	1.472	1.365	.244
Within Groups	200.629	186	1.079		
Total	202.101	187			

The results of ANOVA test in table 3 show that $\text{sig} = 0.244 > 0.05$, so there is no difference in the assessment of employability between alumni and employer. It can be inferred that when the employer evaluate ESP skills of current working staff about listening, reading, speaking, writing, translating, interpreting and communicative skill in using ESP at work, they can see their employees' ESP qualification. In addition to make the study more significant, the survey is done by asking alumni to evaluate themselves about their ESP skills using at work. The result shows that the assessment of employability between alumni and employer about employee' ESP skills is the same or there is no difference between alumni's and employer's assessment of the employees' employability.

CONCLUSION

Based from the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Majority of the employers are above middle age and dominantly composed of male group

while for the alumni group, the female accounts for higher rate than male and mostly below the middle-aged group.

2. Both the employer and the alumni give low evaluation on the employability of ESP completers when they studied at the universities but the results are quite positive after they took part in the ESP course in the English centers.
3. Both employers and alumni have the same viewpoint on the assessment of employability of ESP learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn, the recommendations are suggested there after:

1. Training institutions for ESP learning need to create a distinct image with good reputations to attract more learners.
2. Teaching staff may enhance further their ESP professional skills by their attendance to seminars, trainings, and even graduate studies.
3. ESP teachers may use varied teaching methodology, motivation, lesson planning, and assessment techniques to make the lessons attractive and interesting on the part of the learners.
4. Curriculum may be updated from the needs and interest of the learners and community.
5. Teaching facilities may be invested to strengthen the ESP programs.
6. Tuition fee rates may be reviewed in consideration to learners' status and institutions may also offer scholarship for excellent learners as motivation to support learners to achieve their learning and job targets.
7. Institutions offering ESP programs may offer good salary and incentives to attract qualified and deserving teaching staff.
8. Institutions offering ESP programs may create good marketing strategies to attract more enrollees to the program.
9. The proposed marketing plan may be tried out and subjected for validation.

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