

## Research Article

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# Investigating Demotivating Factors in Learning English for Specific Purposes at a Higher Education Institution

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** The countries using English as a foreign language have invested many efforts to improve the effectiveness of English teaching and learning for the communicative purposes. Currently, English for specific purposes (ESP) have been integrated and categorized in the programs at the tertiary level in Vietnam. The aim of the present study is to determine four major demotivating factors affecting Vietnamese tertiary students' ESP competence to meet the requirements of their future jobs. **Methods.** A mixed-methods approach was employed at a higher education institution to ascertain the liability of the findings. Particularly, the study involved 357 tertiary students participating in the survey questionnaire, 14 teachers of English and 85 students took part in semi-structured interviews. The researcher-made instruments met the high range of Cronbach confidence level ( $\alpha = 0.76 - 0.95$ ). **Results.** The results indicate that students have a high motivation in learning ESP for their prospective careers; however, they have disappointed feelings about the teacher-related factors, infrastructure-related factors, and university/faculty-related factors according to the outcomes from the student survey questionnaires. Besides, the findings from teachers' and student semi-structured interviews also assert that ESP language teaching and learning does not match their expectations. **Discussion.** It is implied that this research results might be beneficial for school administrators to formulate ESP supportive policies, for teachers to change their pedagogical methodology, and for students to develop their learner autonomy in ESP acquisition.

**Keywords:** demotivating factors, English teaching, higher education, tertiary level, language learning, mixed-methods approach, motivation, expectations, semi-structured interviews, pedagogical methodology

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## Introduction

Teaching and learning ESP rather than general English (GE) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has become a focal concern in the field of English language teaching (ELT). In its essence, English has shown continued impacts on the global integration in that it has become the means of international communication or commonly so-called lingua franca. ESP language learning and teaching, to a certain extent, stems from the enormous changes and massive economic development thanks to the far-reaching consequences of globalization, which highlights the growth of multinational capitalism of some global superpowers such as Britain or the US. These countries have an age-old accumulation of immigration from different countries; therefore, they need to employ one common language to exchange information in their daily lives and at work. In addition, ideologies of growth and the longing to facilitate international communication, giving opportunities for knowledge expansion have formulated the influential motivation in ESP's establishment. In its essence, ESP learners are not acquiring the language for general educative purposes or for the understanding of literature in which they study mostly the structure of one language, but rather a means to acquire some specialized knowledge or set of skills which inquire the modification of the practical knowledge of relevant fields (Vakilifard, Ebadi, Zamani & Sadeghi, 2020). In other words, context and content play crucial roles in ESP pedagogy because context refers to what situation learners would be using the language skills and content implies what he or she needs to achieve through one language (Benahnia, 2017; Wahyunengsih, 2018). In practice, many ELT educators (Dja'far, Cahyono, Bashtomi, 2016; Lebedev & Tsybina, 2018; Martinović & Poljaković, 2010) have perceived ESP as a radical break with a world-wide educational trend of change. As noted in the study of Negova and Umarova (2022), the finding asserts that ESP is widely recognized as sustained growth and has made a substantial contribution to the field of ELT. With the aim to meet the communication needs of rapidly industrializing nations, overcome local barriers in terms of communication, commonly by utilizing 'global' languages like English as a substitute for local languages, and stimulate the growth of multinational conglomerates, ESP is thought to be functioned as more efficient, being targeted to the specific needs of the learners for their workplaces or academic settings (e.g., Starfield, 2016; Tahririan & Chalak, 2019; Wahyunengsih, 2018).

Obviously, one of the most remarkable factors highly influencing language teaching and learning processes accounts for student motivation. Asijavičiūtė and Ušinskienė (2014) state that motivation enables ESP students to be more achievable and competent in their learning outcomes. Motivation could be regarded as a driving force, determining human's behavior; thus, research on second language (L2) in general and ESP motivation is to highlight the need analysis of learner's desire to keep his or her determination on acquiring the target language. However, motivation to learn ESP is obstructive due to its nature such as peculiar writing conventions and exclusive glossary, which is so-called demotivating factors in ESP language learning and teaching studies and is often ignored in the research field. In its essence, demotivation is possibly interpreted as the negligence of adequate motivation to perform a specific goal. Vakilifard et al. (2020) opine that demotivation refers to the state in which a lack of motivation results from the specific external causes. As a result, demotivating factors hinder learners' learning motivation and result in unsuccessful competence of ESP proficiency. Consequently, understanding demotivating factors in ESP teaching and learning helps both teachers and learners aware of the risks that weaken student motivation. There is a number of demotivating factors in ESP learning and teaching, including

student-related factors, teacher-related factors, infrastructure-related factors, and university/faculty-related factors. These factors explain the reasons why students commonly regard de-motivation as a teacher-owned problem due to partially inappropriate teachers' behaviors. Consequently, demotivation probably leads to negative impact on students' ESP learning outcomes. In a similar vein, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) assert that demotivation can have a negative impact on the learners' attitudes and behaviors, ESP learning outcomes, and teachers' motivation. In other words, ESP teaching and learning under the demotivated condition brings about the low achievement of expected learning outcomes. As such, successful ESP language learning requires serious avoidance of demotivating factors. Although there are some studies (e.g., Navickienė, Kavaliauskienė & Pevcevičiūtė, 2015; Nikolaeva & Synekop, 2020; Vü, 2012) investigating student demotivation in ELT, no study has examined ESP demotivating factors influencing learners' expected learning outcomes in a single study. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) regard demotivation as "another side of motivation" (p. 138), so one way to increase the quality of ESP language learning and teaching in foreign countries is to familiarize learners with demotivating factors in acquiring ESP subjects. By investigating demotivating factors of ESP learning and teaching, the results are served as useful references for language teachers or researchers who are concerned deeply about ESP language learning and teaching. This study attempts to address the following questions:

1. What typical features cause the demotivating factors on students in ESP courses?
2. What are teachers' and students' perspectives towards the demotivating factors of ESP courses?

## **Literature Review**

### ***English for Specific Purposes***

ESP concentrates on ELT as a L2 or foreign language in which learners' expectations can be fluent in using English in a particular field of work. Traditionally, the acquisition of English was almost encouraged by the ability to communicate across languages fluently to exchange daily information, often referred to GE, in its early days. This has been further developed and classified as subject matters such as English for academic purposes (EAP), English for occupational purposes (EOP), English for vocational purposes (EVP), English for medical purposes (EMP), English for business purposes (EBP), English for legal purposes (ELP), and English for sociocultural purposes (ESCP) (Canarana et al., 2020). Notably, Starfield (2016) indicates that ESP is assumably viewed as an approach to ELT in which all decisions as to contents and methods are subject to the learners' reasons for acquiring ESP. As such, learners' intention of ESP acquisition is not a matter of either understanding English variations or science words and grammar for scientists or even investigating the differences from any other kinds of English language, but it possibly concerns what learners want to be fluent in using ESP, its range of knowledge, and abilities to help them get fluent in a respective specialized area such as legal English. Sharing the same opinion as Starfield (2016), Lebedev and Tsybina (2018) argue that ESP should be categorized as an approach to language learning, so they refute to consider ESP as a product. In other words, ESP does not belong to any sort of languages or reading materials, it is seen as an approach to language learning, which is constructed to satisfy learners' demands. Besides, Mauludin (2021) assumes that generally learners merely study English to fulfil their dreams of knowing English language or English culture, but they acquire English for study abroad or work purposes in the global environment. In addition, Didenko and Filatova (2017; p. 2) investigate the definition of ESP by identifying its differences of

the four absolute and two variable characteristics. Particularly, teaching and learning ESP has four absolute characteristics of (1) aiming to match the requirements of learners, (2) content relations (i.e., the themes and topics) to disciplines, occupations and activities, (3) focusing on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, and analysis of this discourse, (4) reflecting the contrast to GE. ESP possibly, but not necessarily, consists of two variable features, namely the restriction as to language skills to be learned (e.g., reading only), and not being taught according to any preordained methodology. Overall, acquiring ESP can be simply assumed as the use of a certain variety of English applying for a specific context to satisfy the needs of learners as the guiding principle proposed for ESP (Flowerdew, 2012). In other words, needs analysis and curriculum in ESP are central to design any courses within the ESP context.

### ***Demotivation***

“To demotivate” in Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, v. 10<sup>th</sup> defines “to make somebody less keen to work or study”. In this regard, the feeling of demotivation occurs when someone does not really want to complete one activity or make their great effort to do it because they recognize that there are not beneficial returns in this action. Zoghi and Far (2014) regard demotivation as a lack of motivation deriving from one individual’s sentiments of incompetence and powerlessness when confronting with an activity. Similarly, Vũ (2012) identifies four sources of learners’ demotivation as follows:

- Learners confess to lack the merit and ability to accomplish a special activity.
- Learners recognize the ineffective learning strategies.
- Learners realize to set too high expectations for their learning outcomes.
- Learners get depressed feelings of their attempts to achieve their objectives.

According to Dörnyei & Ushioda (2021), they emphasize that demotivation stems from particular external influences which decrease or weaken the motivational basis of a behavioral aspiration or an ongoing activity. Hence, demotivation is probably defined as the negative counterpart of motivation. Take a demotivated learner for example, demotivation emerges when he or she has lost his or her interest for some reasons, which derives from various sources of demotivation. Similarly, a teacher who cannot put his or her class under control or works with a boring textbook may experience some demotivated feelings. However, not all the researchers agree with this viewpoint. Mauludin (2021) argues that Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) constrain the boundary of demotivation definition to only external factors, he asserts that internal factors such as self-confident reduction and negative attitude are also regarded as demotivating factors in the ESP learning process in addition to external factors. Then, they suggest the need to extend Dörnyei and Ushioda’s definition of demotivation (2021), including both external and internal factors which discourage motivation during the process of ESP teaching and learning. Generally, the loss of interest in ESP learning can be originated from different causes of demotivation such as teachers and their pedagogical practices, learners themselves, learning conditions like physical conditions, and ESP curricula.

### ***Demotivating factors***

In fact, ESP teachers usually confront the pressure to teach well because they have to be well-prepared for their lesson plans regarding subject expertise. Although there has been cooperation between teachers of English and specialized teachers, sometimes there still exist many obstacles in conveying lesson contents to students in a really effective way. Actually, teachers of English are

not intensively trained in these specialized majors so that many teachers are probably passive and lack confidence while delivering specialized content to students. Factors that reduce motivation in learning are those causing a decrease in an individuals' motivation to study and work. Unmotivated learners used to be encouraged, but in some situations, for unwanted objective reasons, they lost motivation. Diminished motivation can occur when an individual has another choice or when they are distracted. For example, a student, instead of going to school, decides to stay at home to play games. Therefore, demotivation can be understood as a result of reducing or weakening a learner's interest and motivation and has some characteristics of both internal and external factors.

Harmer (2010) emphasizes four factors which might be discouraging to the learners' motivation, namely physical conditions, method of teaching, teaching staff, learning atmosphere. Hosseinpour and Tabrizi (2013) investigated demotivating factors in EFL in an Iranian context regarding seven factors including a) inadequate facilities, b) reduced self-confidence, c) class characteristics, d) lack of purpose to study English, e) teaching methods, f) teachers and teaching styles, and g) negative attitudes toward English and the culture of English-speaking countries as demotivators. The results point out that low proficient learners perceive reduced self-confidence and negative attitudes more demotivating than their classmates at other levels of proficiency. Following the above research, Han, Takkaç-Tulgar & Aybirdi (2019) conducted a study to measure six demotivated constructs such as teachers, characteristics of classes, experiences of failure, class environment, class materials, and lack of interest affecting Turkish EFL tertiary students' ELT. The results indicate that students report negative attitudes of the classmates, teacher-related factors, personal issues, class characteristics, test anxiety, failure experiences, and education system. This research, however, does not compare teachers' perspectives to highlight the students' viewpoints. Similarly, Tran and Moskovsky (2022) examined Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of student-related demotivating factors, and the ways these factors influenced teachers and their teaching. The study employed semi-structured interviews with 30 participating EFL teachers from 14 universities in Vietnam. The results proved that student limited English proficiency, negative attitudes towards English and English language learning, poor classroom performance, and low academic achievement are considered as the most potent student-related demotivating factors for Vietnamese EFL teachers, which heavily has a number of negative consequences for teachers' emotions, behaviours, and attitudes. This study also has a delimitation when there is a limitation of respondents involving in the study. In fact, there are several demotivating factors in learning English in general and ESP in particular. The factors that cause the loss of interest in acquiring ESP can stem from internal or external sources. In the present study, the demotivating factors investigated are mainly from the learners, the teachers and the infrastructure (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009).

With the previous theoretical knowledge, the study is sure to contribute the overall views on the matter of demotivating factors in ESP teaching and learning.

## **Methods**

### ***Research design***

The mixed-methods research is basically designed to conduct a cross-sectional study of 357 representative students, who enroll ESP courses – typically legal English subject – at a higher education institution in Vietnam. Approximately 5.000 students at Hanoi Law University (HLU) constitute the study population; however, the researchers are, within the constraints of time and

money, unable to collect information from all the population, so Cochran's (1977) formula is used to select a sample of 357 respondents with  $e = \pm 5\%$ . For the ease and convenience, the questionnaire is implemented by the active Google form link, which is sent to the participants' addresses within a period of two weeks. For the semi-structured interviews, they are conducted over the phone with the 85 student participants and 14 teachers, following a permission of recording the interviews for the single purpose of transcribing the response for this study. Then, two sources of data are addressed by IBM SPSS v.25 application for the questionnaire, and NVivo application v.12 for the interview recordings. The researchers exploit the results from two sources consolidate the validity of the research findings.

### **Participants**

The research respondents are those at HLU registering legal English credits as the partial fulfillment of the bachelor's requirements. To choose the representative sample of the large population, Cochran's (1977) formula with  $e = \pm 5\%$  is applied to get the respective samples of 357 over the population of about 5.000 HLU students.

$$n = \frac{z^2 (p \cdot q)}{e^2}$$

Where:

$n$  = number of items in samples

$z^2$  = square of confidence interval in standard error units

$p$  = estimated proportion of success

$q$  =  $(1-p)$  or estimated the proportion of failures

$e^2$  = square of maximum allowance for error between true proportion and sample proportion, or  $z_p$  squared.

Regarding gender participation in the survey questionnaire, the research involves 133 male students accounting for 37.3%, and 224 female ones equivalent to 62.7%. When concerning the residence, 160 participants equal to 44.8% come from the rural areas, next 134 respondents from the urban areas, and 63 students same as 17.6% from the mountainous areas. Additionally, the research investigated number of years students have studied English, the results reveal that 290 students making up 81.2% have studied English for under 15 years, 41 participants, corresponding to 11.5% have learnt English for under 20 years, and 26 respondents just like 7.3% have acquired English for under 10 years. Concerning the student major, the majority of students is non-English major students ( $n = 325$  participants, same as 91%), while 32 students equivalent to 9.0% are English major students. In regard with the level of student motivation towards ESP, mostly 274 students representing 76.8% feel motivated to study ESP, similarly 71 students accounting for 19.9% perceived highly motivated, and only 12 participants similar to 3.4% find little motivated.

To assure the liability of the research, the respondents checked courtesy request at the end of the questionnaire to participate in a semi-structured interview over the phone for about 30 minutes. As a result, 85 students accepted to be involved. Besides, 14 teachers of English willingly joined in the semi-structured interviews to get the overview of the matter concerned.

### ***Research Instruments***

The research employed the researcher-made questionnaire basing on the factual and behavioral criteria recommended by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010). For the survey questionnaires, they included 4 groups with 80 statements equally dividing in these factors, namely teacher-related factor, student-related factor, infrastructure-related factor, and university/faculty-related factor. For the semi-structured interviews, they comprised of 20 questions for student interview, together with another 20 ones for practitioners' interview. The questionnaires were constructed internally before they were sent to 4 experts on legal English language teaching and legal practitioners for content validation. After that the questionnaires were fine-tuned properly before implementing a dry run among a group of 30 students and 5 teachers of English to validate the strengths and weaknesses. The researchers retained the statements according to the range of confidence level ( $\alpha = 0.76 - 0.95$ , fairly high; Cronbach, 1951). The final survey questionnaires included 15 teacher-related factors, 14 student-related factors, 12 infrastructure-related factors, and 10 university/faculty-related factors. For semi-structured interviews with students and teachers, 10 interview questions for students, and 8 ones for ESP instructors were selected. Finally, the final versions were again sent back to 4 experts to examine and validate the liability.

### ***Research Procedures***

Having prepared the proper research instruments, and the permission to conduct the study, the researchers composed an email embedded with an active link to a Google Form, then the questionnaire was sent to the participants' email addresses. The questionnaire including the researchers' instructions, articulated the objectives and relevance of the study, assured anonymity, and gave participants the option of discontinuing participation in the study. The respondents were expected to return the questionnaire within two weeks after the email was sent. Simultaneously, a contact number was also provided in case a respondent had any questions. Participants agreeing to participate in the semi-structured interviews expressed their availability over the phone for about 15 minutes. After two sources of the research instrument were selected via a snowball sampling technique during the time schedule, the researchers implemented the process of data screening together to obtain the desired sample size. Then, the appropriate data was treated by IBM SPSS v.25 application for the questionnaire, and NVivo v.12 application for the interview recordings.

### ***Data analysis***

The data was collected, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted for the purpose of descriptive statistics. Specially, frequency count and percentage were utilized to treat the respondents' profiles. Descriptive statistics was employed to address Likert-scale statement to find out the means and standard deviations relevant to the interval scales such as very low (1.0 – 1.80), low (1.81 – 2.60), moderate (2.61 – 3.40), high (3.41 – 4.20), and very high (4.21 – 5.0). To verify the different perspectives of the respondents in terms of 4 ESP demotivating factors, ANOVA was utilized to test the disparity. To ascertain the accountability of the qualitative data, NVivo v.12 application was employed to address the frequency of occurrence of the respondents' perspectives in the semi-structured interviews.

## Results and discussion

To investigate the particular features leading to the demotivating factors for students in ESP courses, Table 1 illustrates respondents' viewpoints about the teacher-related factors. In general, they have negative perspectives towards this aspect. The role of ESP teachers is to provide learners with practical knowledge thanks to teachers' tactful use of pedagogical strategies to activate student language learning motivation stemming from psychological quality teachers help students to recognize the necessity to achieve L2 learning objectives. As glimpsed from Table 1, the respondents do not feel satisfied with teachers' ESP equivalent knowledge because teachers in charge of these courses seemingly fail to explain or supply learners with sufficient understanding of respective knowledge about the equivalent information. As clearly reported in the previous studies (e.g., Ahmadi & Bajelani, 2012; Han et al., 2019; Wahyunengsih, 2018), the specialized knowledge about one field has been required and highlighted as teachers have to understand the core of the subjects that they are teaching in order for them to help students comprehend what aspects of ESP mention. In addition, students reflect that teachers have not exploited teaching aids or realia effectively to support the effectiveness and practicality of ESP teaching and learning. Typically, the participants reveal that teachers in ESP classrooms are not very good at developing student learner autonomy, which empowers learners with the ability to improve their own ESP knowledge, this result is somewhat similar to the research finding of Mauludin's study (2021). Currently, students are encouraged to promote the learner autonomy not only in ESP fields but also other subjects at the tertiary level. Thanks to the availability and ubiquitous Internet innovations, students are able to utilize the Internet applications to address their own concerns relative to their ESP difficulties. This reflection is also reported in the previous studies (e.g., Sandra & Ismail, 2016; Giang & Tuan, 2018; Tuan, 2021) which assert the impacts of utilizing the Internet on students' English competence. Regarding teacher-related factors, students express their discontented remarks on teachers' classroom management styles. It can be stated that the way teachers interact with students has, to a certain extent, influenced student learning outcomes, which can be found in the previous studies (e.g., Jean-Louis, Céline, Cynthia & Marcel, 2018; Tuan, Huong & Minh, 2021; Tuan, Lan, Huong & Minh, 2022) confirming the student achievements heavily resulting from how teachers work with their students. Therefore, it is concluded that teacher-related factors have not come up to student expectations.

**Table 1**

*Student perspectives towards teacher-related factors*

Teacher-related factors	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Description
1. Use of technology (slides, computer assisted learning, showing videos, etc.) in the ESP course motivates me and affect my learning	357	3.12	.704	Moderate
2. I think the instructor used a useful and practical lesson plan	357	2.51	.523	Moderate



Teacher-related factors	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Description
3. I like the innovative pedagogical method used by the instructor to teach ESP.	357	2.02	.675	Low
4. I think the material used in the class is useful and it includes appropriate topics	357	2.12	.629	Low
5. The teachers do not provide ESP handouts before/after lessons.	357	3.83	.822	High
6. The teachers do not guide searching/ reading more documents/provide documents and websites relating to the lessons in ESP class.	357	3.02	.548	Moderate
7. The teachers do not communicate with students during the learning process with the relevant knowledge of ESP.	357	2.90	.655	Moderate
8. I like the atmosphere of my ESP class thanks to instructors' active classroom management	357	3.01	.770	Moderate
9. Teachers do not update the lectures in ESP classes according to the current situations.	357	4.03	.689	High
10. Teachers only give priority to good students, not interested in the others in teaching ESP classes.	357	3.10	.883	Moderate
11. Teachers do not answer all the students' questions during the learning process relating to the ESP knowledge.	357	4.06	.716	High
12. Teachers teaching ESP classes do not guide students to self-study ESP knowledge basing on the assistance of information technology.	357	3.93	.609	High
13. Teachers often fail to explain the difficult ESP terminologies due to their lack of respective knowledge about the equivalent reference.	357	4.00	.670	High

Teacher-related factors	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Description
14. Teachers do not help students improve their four basic English skills – reading, speaking, listening and writing, together with ESP terminology. They just try to follow the preset syllabuses.	357	2.91	.825	Moderate
Valid N (listwise)	357			

Table 2 reveals the student perspectives towards student-related factors. As clearly seen from Table 2 student intrinsic motivation to study ESP generally shows high extents. However, one of the remarkable demotivating factors blames for their lack of respective knowledge to fully understand what is stated in L2 specialized texts ( $M = 3.85$ ;  $SD = .810\%$ ). To address this problem, it is possible for ESP teachers to reconsider their curriculum by collaborating with other related majors. As claimed in teacher-related factors, students do not highly value the usefulness of ESP materials and appropriate topics ( $M = 2.12$ ), this proves that student background knowledge related to ESP themes should be relevant, which is also consistent with the findings of Martinović and Poljaković (2010), and Vü (2012). For the intrinsic motivation, learners surely realize the necessity of the advantageous ESP competence for their future positions. This state of student readiness is very essential in that students realize their potential fully and are able to visualize themselves doing a certain job in the future ( $M = 3.84$ ). This point is somehow different from Navickienė et al. (2015), in which they disclose that learners are vague about their reasons to participate in an ESP course. Furthermore, ESP demotivating factors possibly derives from the cultural dissimilarity in equivalent lexical meanings when students find it hard to convert between source language and target language so that this disparity may yield much hinderance for students to communicate in ESP fields, which also shares similarities in the previous studies (Han et al., 2019; Vakilifard et al., 2020; Tran & Moskovsky, 2022). Overall, students recognize the benefits of a good command of ESP for their prospective working positions, they find it difficult to master ESP words and comprehend clearly ESP texts.

**Table 2**

*Student viewpoints on student-related factors*

Student-related factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1. I find it challenging to study ESP as my background knowledge relating to ESP themes is not adequate.	357	3.85	.810	High
2. I find it too hard to understand ESP due to my poor command of general English.	357	3.23	.589	Moderate

Student-related factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
3. I take ESP course because I like English and I enjoy learning English	357	4.06	.728	High
4. Learning ESP is important to keep updated and informed of recent progress in my field of study.	357	3.92	.811	High
5. Learning ESP is important to me because I could be offered with a prospective and international position.	357	3.84	.656	High
6. Students in ESP classes do not have the same general English level, which demotivates the competitive learning atmosphere.	357	3.78	.785	High
7. Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using ESP to deal with my potential responsibilities.	357	4.11	.614	High
8. Learning ESP can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.	357	3.65	.652	High
9. I can imagine myself having a scientific discussion in English in my future job.	357	4.07	.722	High
10. I cannot understand the meanings of ESP words because ESP words are not equivalent to Vietnamese language.	357	3.81	.752	High
11. I find it too hard to remember ESP words and their pronunciation.	357	3.87	.822	High
12. I can imagine myself speaking English with international experts or colleagues concerning ESP knowledge.	357	2.75	.702	Moderate
13. The things I want to do in the future require me to use my ESP knowledge.	357	3.82	.724	High

Student-related factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
14. I imagine myself as someone who is able to have a scientific talk or presentation in English in an international event	357	3.32	.642	Moderate
15. Learning ESP is important to me to understand the professors' lectures and knowledge relating to all subjects in my classes	357	4.13	.812	High
Valid N (listwise)	357			

When considering infrastructure-related factors, the respondents express their dissatisfaction with the availability of equipment reserved for ESP teaching and learning as displayed in Table 3. In fact, ESP is regarded as challenging for most foreign language learners; thus, infrastructure reserved for ESP teaching and learning must be well-equipped to come up to student expectations. As ESP is designed for practicum situations, mooted activities are frequently employed, which requires infrastructure such as labs, libraries, or practicum rooms to have special investments. Apparently, the results in Table 3 present that infrastructure for ESP teaching and learning is still modest, which might have negative impacts on ESP learning outcomes.

Together with infrastructure, other indoor or outdoor class activities involving ESP have not satisfied students. For example, students complain about not reserved space for ESP practice in the labs ( $M = 3.57$ ;  $SD = .727\%$ ), or not enough ESP reference books in the library ( $M = 3.84$ ). Therefore, to get the most efficiency, ESP teaching and learning require modern and advanced infrastructure. These infrastructure-related factors have not mentioned thoroughly in other studies before.

**Table 3**

*Student stances on infrastructure-related factors*

Infrastructure-related factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1. Projectors or teaching aids for ESP do not come up with students' expectations.	357	4.08	.521	High
2. The topics presented in the ESP class discouraged me to participate actively as there is no availability of ESP teaching realia to accompany with.	357	3.72	.614	High
3. I think class activities and my participation in the ESP class (for example presenting in English language) motivate me and affect my learning	357	3.01	.521	Moderate

Infrastructure-related factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
4. ESP textbooks used in the ESP classes are not updated regularly.	357	4.13	.619	High
5. The library does not have enough ESP textbooks for students to borrow.	357	3.84	.902	High
6. The lab does not provide reserved space for ESP practice.	357	3.57	.727	High
7. ESP language laboratory facilities do not equip enough for students to practice.	357	3.63	.524	High
8. Modern equipment with the internet connection are not allowed students to use without the consent of teacher-in-charge.	357	2.84	.831	Moderate
9. The library does not have enough ESP reference books such as ESP dictionaries	357	3.64	.628	High
10. The library does not link and share online resources with other libraries at a national and international scale.	357	2.06	.602	Low
11. Practicum rooms reserved for teaching and learning ESP are not adequately updated.	357	3.87	.915	High
12. I think the topics covered in the ESP course are rudimentary and boring, not much practical.	357	3.95	.737	High
Valid N (listwise)	357			

Table 4 presents the supportive factors that are also considered as demotivating factors in ESP teaching and learning. In general, the participants assume that university/faculty-related factors should be changed to give more assistance to improve the efficiency of ESP teaching and learning. Table 4 investigates the internal and external issues; that is, the connectedness of ESP program with inside and outside institutions. Consequently, the respondents recognize that in-house supportive programs have not been given enough priorities when designing an ESP course. It is important to conduct a need analysis to see what ESP students actually want to achieve after

the course so that university/faculty may have a clear orientation exchanging with students on effective ESP learning methods. Compared with Lebedev and Tsybina’s result (2018), the aspect of this research finding is somewhat similar to them; however, their finding only mentions the need analysis, not for what purpose. Besides, the investment in updating ESP textbooks, modernizing ESP teaching facilities or inviting educational experts on ESP teaching has yet to be properly taken care by university/faculty administrators. In regard to external factors, the results indicate that the practicality of the ESP courses is questionable and does not match student expectations. Likewise, they are longing for more collaborative activities or exchange programs with domestic or international universities regarding the use of ESP in practice. Furthermore, intern or apprentice programs using ESP knowledge are necessary for students to measure the extent they have gained from ESP courses. Generally, students expect to receive more practical supports from their university/faculty to enable them to get better learning outcomes from acquiring ESP courses.

**Table 4**

*Student opinions on university/faculty-related factors*

University/faculty-related factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1. The university/ faculty does not really show interest and invest in ESP teaching facilities properly.	357	3.22	.632	Moderate
2. The university/ faculty does not have any discussions or orientation on ESP learning methods.	357	3.62	.791	High
3. The university/ faculty does not change/ improve the ESP textbooks to suit the reality.	357	4.05	.647	High
4. The university/ faculty has not been able to arrange a class-specialized teacher.	357	2.11	.891	Low
5. The university/ faculty has not organized extra-curricular activities to practise ESP.	357	4.15	.621	High
6. The university/ faculty does not organize collaborative activities with other universities or institutions regarding ESP	357	4.42	.671	Very high
7. The university/ faculty does not have any exchange programme with international universities or higher education institutions.	357	4.50	.818	Very high

University/faculty-related factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
8. The university/ faculty does not invite current experts on ESP outside school to teach ESP programs.	357	2.19	.698	Low
9. The university/ faculty does not send ESP students to do an internship course at working institutions.	357	4.62	.775	Very high
10. The university/ faculty does not organize regular job fairs to connect between job hunters with ESP graduates.	357	4.04	.941	High
Valid N (listwise)	357			

Table 5 presents the results of the student semi-structured interviews, which is manipulated by NVivo. As glimpsed from Table 5, the interviewees are likely to express their negative perspectives, so the results are somehow similar to that in the survey questionnaire. Nearly two thirds of the participants think that the ESP courses are not very helpful, which indicates that ESP courses should be done more to satisfy learners' expectations. The inefficiency of ESP courses may come from the poor need analysis, low motivation, lack of ESP textbooks or materials, and inadequate infrastructure. Moreover, the participants believe that ESP courses should have practical apprentices at intern places so that they can apply what they have gained theoretically into real situations. Some previous qualitative studies using some kinds of interviews (Johnson, 2015; Mousavi, Gholami & Sarkhosh, 2019; Nikolaeva & Synekop, 2020) have emphasized the necessities of bridging what ESP theoretical knowledge into practicality. Furthermore, students really want to have a deep background knowledge of respective knowledge of respective subjects to understand ESP fields. They also confess that they do not change much their practical skills and sub-skills in using ESP due to the improper impacts of teachers, infrastructure, and administrative policies for ESP.

**Table 5**

*Summarized analysis of student semi-structured interviews (manipulated by NVivo)*

When participating ESP courses, you	N	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Perceive the usefulness of the ESP courses	85	Yes	28	32.94
		No	57	60.05
2. Experience unwillingness to take ESP courses as the partial curriculum requirements	85	Yes	61	71.76
		No	24	28.24

When participating ESP courses, you	N	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3. Have high motivations for taking ESP courses	85	Yes	30	35.30
		No	64	64.70
4. Realize effective ESP course contents and course materials	85	Yes	35	41.18
		No	50	58.82
5. Have practical apprentices at internship places	85	Yes	21	24.71
		No	64	75.29
6. Want to have experienced ESP teachers	85	Yes	39	45.88
		No	46	54.12
7. Develop fundamental ESP basic skills	85	Yes	19	22.35
		No	66	77.65
8. Improve skills and sub-skills in using ESP competence in practice	85	Yes	26	30.59
		No	59	69.41
9. Want good infrastructure supporting for ESP self-studying references	85	Yes	18	21.18
		No	67	78.82
10. Undergo lack of background knowledge to understand technical terms.	85	Yes	66	77.65
		No	19	22.35

Table 6 overviews the results from teachers' semi-structured interviews, which is handled by NVivo application. Specially, most teachers want to develop student ESP knowledge at the tertiary level rather than GE which seems to be relevant as English has been taught as EFL since the primary level. As such, there is no need to further improve GE at the tertiary level ( $n = 12$ ). This notion is also in line with the finding of Zoghi and Far (2014), which emphasizes the necessity of mastering ESP for school leavers to use at their prospective jobs. Another aspect teachers' remark is not mixing ESP and GE curricula in one program ( $n = 8$ ; 57.14%). As mentioned before, most teachers desire to teach only ESP at the tertiary level. Regarding teachers' qualifications, most teachers agree to have formal qualifications related to the ESP subjects ( $n = 9$ ; 64.29%). This finding might be different from that in Canarana et al.'s study (2020), they argue that teachers should have to prepare well before their lessons, they do not need to be trained in specialized subjects. In reality, understanding a piece of information in ESP is much challenging because it might involve in many collaborative specialized fields, which demand having a good background knowledge to grasp the meanings thoroughly. In order to inscribe students' memory of ESP competence, teachers have to adjust their pedagogical approaches in teaching ESP via providing more mooted circumstances. The application of ESP knowledge into mooted events enables students visualize what they might do with their ESP ability in the future. Additionally, the supportive actions of administration leaders are very necessary according to the teachers. The schools need to not only invest monetary



schemes in ESP facilities or training courses relative to ESP enhancement programs, but encourage ESP teachers to participate in teachers' exchange programs or have specialized career development strategies for them. Overall, teachers recognize inappropriate investments of the schools for ESP, which is, to a certain extent, similar to the student evaluations.

**Table 6**

*Summarized analysis of teachers' semi-structured interviews (manipulated by NVivo)*

What are your opinions of	N	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Developing ESP knowledge at the tertiary level rather than improving general English language skills.	14	Yes	12	85.71
		No	2	14.29
2. Organizing mooting circumstances relative to ESP instead of tedious theoretical lectures.	14	Yes	11	78.57
		No	3	21.43
3. Total ESP curriculums better than mixed general English and ESP curricula.	14	Yes	8	57.14
		No	6	42.86
4. Reserved facilities for teaching and learning ESP classrooms.	14	Yes	13	92.86
		No	1	7.14
5. ESP teachers with respective formal qualifications relating to subjects.	14	Yes	9	64.29
		No	5	35.71
6. More inviting present practitioners in teaching ESP.	14	Yes	11	78.57
		No	3	21.43
7. Overseas exchange programs in ESP.	14	Yes	8	57.14
		No	6	42.86
8. University administrators promoting ESP with incentive schemes.	14	Yes	14	100
		No	0	0

**Conclusion**

English has obviously proved its influential role as a medium of international communications. Currently, the global integration creates more opportunities for multinational companies or organizations to cooperate together, which places a great demand for the tertiary education to keep renovating training programs to meet the requirements of international working cooperation.

The most common problem in EFL countries is that English is learnt mainly for communicative purposes in some contexts. From the findings of this paper, it is concluded that students have high motivational aspects to acquire ESP, the main demotivating factor possibly comes from the student lack of background knowledge of respective specialized subjects, which deters learners from understanding fully what ESP texts denote or communicating confidently where they have to use ESP. For teacher-related factors, learners think that teachers should not only have qualified with ESP but also get formal qualifications in respective areas. In addition, teachers are expected to give students more chances to practice ESP in mooted circumstances instead of giving theoretical lectures. For assistive infrastructure-related factors, students feel not much satisfied as the infrastructure is not reserved for ESP teaching and learning. Remarkably, library sections, language laboratory equipment or practicum rooms for ESP have not adequately taken into consideration. For the last supportive university/faculty-related factors, students want to receive more assistance from administrative leaders in terms of ESP related policies. Students really want to have ESP orientational discussions at the beginning of their programs, they also hope to participate in ESP exchange programs with other domestic and international institutions. Besides, ESP courses should be conducted more at intern or apprentice places for students demonstrating their ESP language skills. In this study, to strengthen the liability of the research findings, semi-structured interviews with students and teachers are also carried out. The results indicate that there are somehow similarities between the outcomes of the teachers' and student semi-structured interviews and that in the student survey questionnaires.

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**Giang Nguyen Dang** planned the original draft of the study and wrote the text of the study.

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#### Conflict of Interest Information

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.