Research article

Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching

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A B S T R A C T

Given the importance of ESP teaching, this study explores and compares students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching. The researcher administered a 32-item Likert-scale questionnaire to 248 participants (216 students and 32 teachers) at five universities in Vietnam. The participants were then stratified to select 20 participants (fifteen students and five teachers) for interviews. Results showed that there were significant discrepancies between students and teachers' perceptions of four categories: task-based language teaching, corrective feedback and assessment, discipline specifications, and culture integration. However, students' and teachers' perceptions of three categories, namely language use, application of technologies, and grammar teaching, were aligned. Interview data generally confirmed the quantitative results and provided more insights into what the participants thought. It might be important for teachers to present their concerns about ESP teaching to students and understand students' needs and expectations to bridge the gaps.

1. Introduction

English for specific purposes (ESP) involves English for academic purposes and occupational purposes (Anthony, 2019; Basturkmen, 2020; Belcher and Lukkarila, 2011; Hyon, 2018). Thus, ESP teaching needs to be based on learners' instructional needs (Basturkmen, 2020; Mostafavi et al., 2021) by "providing language instruction that addresses students' own specific purposes" (Belcher and Lukkarila, 2011, p. 1). The past few decades have undergone an increasing demand for learning ESP for effective communication in English as a lingua franca (Chan, 2019; Nickerson, 2012), and the importance of ESP teaching has accordingly been highlighted (Anthony, 2019; Huttner et al., 2009; Hyland and Wong, 2019). However, Basturkmen (2020, p. 9) pointed out a lack of "robust discussion of ideas and theories concerning [the] teaching and learning" of ESP and calls for more investigations into how ESP is taught and learnt to gain more nuanced understandings about classroom processes.

Beliefs or perceptions are described as "propositions individuals consider to be true […], which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change" (Borg, 2011, p. 370–371). In second/foreign language (L2) education, both teachers' and learners' beliefs play an influential role in the instructional process and outcomes (Borg, 2015; Ellis, 2008). According to Ha and Nguyen (2021), alignments between students' and teachers' beliefs may facilitate the process and results of both teaching and learning, but discrepancies may negatively influence classroom behaviors (Bell, 2016), students' satisfaction, instructional practices, and academic achievements (Levine, 2003; Schulz, 2001). As such, it is essential that teachers "make their own beliefs about language learning explicit, to find out about their students' beliefs, to help their students become aware of and to evaluate their own beliefs, and to address any mismatch between their own and their students' belief systems" (Ellis, 2008, p. 24).

Although there has been a growing research agenda into what teachers and learners think and believe in the field of language education, teachers' and learners' beliefs about the teaching and learning of ESP are relatively underexamined. To the researcher's knowledge, previous research into ESP teaching mainly concentrated on discourse analysis, curriculum development, and learners' needs analysis. Given the importance of ESP teaching and belief literature, the current study investigates and compares how Vietnamese tertiary students and teachers perceive effective ESP teaching. Such understandings can be used to give implications for ESP teaching practices in the classroom (Nguyen and Hung, 2021; Borg, 2015; Ellis, 2008) and curriculum design (Macalister and Nation, 2020). The fact that learners will need to effectively use ESP at the workplace and for academic purposes and that results from investigations into teachers' and students' beliefs can be used to improve the classroom practice provides a compelling rationale for the current study.

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1.1. Current perspectives on ESP teaching

An extensive survey of the literature shows that ESP students need to improve the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Feak, 2013; Goh, 2013; Hirvela, 2013; Hyland, 2013; Kirkgoz, 2009; Liao, 2009). Specialized and technical vocabulary (Coxhead, 2013; Kithulgoda and Mendis, 2020), and grammar (Paltridge, 2012) are considered essential for ESP learners to use language effectively. However, it has been concurred that the ultimate aim of teaching of vocabulary and grammar is not only to provide learners with linguistic knowledge but also to integrate their translation of such knowledge into communication (Evans and Morrison, 2011; Kassim and Ali, 2010), especially in academic and work settings (Qing, 2013; Rickheit et al., 2008). This implies that ESP practitioners should use authentic materials (Blagojević, 2013) to link the ESP classroom to academic and work situations (Bremner, 2010). As ESP is discourse-sensitive (Hewings, 2002), curriculum and materials developers and practitioners should pay attention to intercultural issues for effective communication, especially in contexts where English is used as a lingua franca. Due to current globalization trends around the world, ESP learners, sooner or later, communicate with people with diverse cultural backgrounds (Aguilar, 2018; Evans and Suklun, 2017).

To increase employability and academic performance (Allais, 2012), English as a medium of instruction (EMI) can be integrated into ESP courses (Aguilar, 2018; Macaro, 2018; Pecorari and Malmström, 2018). The EMI-driven approach only may reduce expenditure (González-Ardeo, 2013) and provide both academic knowledge and language for the discipline (Arnó-Macià and Mancho-Barés, 2015). However, evidence from recent research shows that EMI teachers with specialization in the related discipline may mainly focus on providing the disciplinary knowledge rather than enhancing learners' language competency (Arnó-Macià and Mancho-Barés, 2015; Yang, 2016) and are generally unspecialized in second language pedagogy (Fortanet-Gómez, 2012).

Integrating the content-embedded approach into ESP courses may foster learners' knowledge and skills (Aguilar, 2018). That is, learners need to have some prior knowledge or experience to take an ESP course (Lightbown and Spada, 2001; Pica 2002), which helps them get involved in classroom activities effectively. However, teachers without any knowledge of the discipline may not get involved in classroom interaction and tasks. Aguilar (2018) suggested the necessity of professional training for ESP teaching in which teachers need to learn both pedagogy and some knowledge of the related discipline. From a pedagogical perspective, task-based language learning can engage students in the learning process (Basturkmen, 2020; Ellis, 2008; Littlewood, 2004; T'sai, 2010) in which students can learn content, language, and intercultural issues (Aguilar, 2018). Given the importance of task-based approach, ESP teachers can employ simulated tasks, role play, feedback, group work, and pair work in the classroom (Hargie, 2019).

There exist some misconceptions of ESP teaching in some contexts in the world. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identified that some ESP teachers only provided instructions on technical terms instead of developing learners' competency for their professions because they believed that an ESP course was to teach English for a specific discipline; therefore, their practice focused mainly on providing learners with lexical resources and grammatical repertoire for later use. Learners were quite passive, and the classroom was, thus, lacking in interaction activities. Indeed, effective ESP teaching requires commonly perceived language teaching strategies (Basturkmen, 2017; Cheng and Mok, 2008; Kithulgoda and Mendis, 2020).

Recent research and proposals have revealed some shared issues between teaching English for general purposes (ELT) and ESP teaching (Basturkmen, 2020; Edwards, 2000; Li So-mui and Mead, 2000) because they both employ second language acquisition "constructs to analyze and discuss ESP teaching and learning" (Basturkmen, 2020, p. 9). Like General English teachers, ESP teachers or instructors should help learners learn, acquire, and use the target language effectively. Instead of applying traditional concepts of ESP in teaching grammar and vocabulary, ESP teachers should help build learners' abilities to communicate at the workplace and/or in academic settings (Cheng and Mok, 2008; Edwards, 2000; Evans, 2011; Kithulgoda and Mendis, 2020; Perrin, 2003; Ponger, 2003; Taillefer, 2007). Regarding L2 pedagogy, the classroom practice should include grammar teaching, error correction and assessment, target language use, cross-cultural issues, application of technologies, and communicative language teaching strategies (Brown, 2009; Levine, 2003; Schulz, 2001).

As in the aforesaid, previous research on ESP mainly analyzed learners' needs and language use to give implications for curriculum development and pedagogy. Ibrahim (2010) recommended that curriculum developers and teachers should consider three main interwoven aspects of ESP: "the nature of language to be taught and used, the learners and the setting in which the other two would occur". The endeavors by Basturkmen (2020), Belcher (2006), Dudley-Evans (2001), and Nelson (2000) introduced 5 foci of ESP teaching: focus on learning, focus on needs, focus on skills and strategies, focus on discipline, and focus on language. Learning-centeredness should be emphasized to enhance learners' relevant competency. The teacher may need to mediate students' learning rather than focus on making lectures (Basturkmen, 2020; Kim, 2008; Mostafavi et al., 2021). As learners' needs may vary in different contexts, the ESP curriculum should not be based on a one-fit-all principle. Thus, curriculum developers should analyze what learners need to learn (Belcher, 2006). However, there are potential conflicts and collisions between local and global needs in the ESP world. ESP specialists should not disregard the local needs but attempt to train learners in competencies and skills to participate in educational and work settings in both local and global contexts (Anthony, 2019; Belcher, 2006; Hyon, 2018; Mostafavi et al., 2021). In a broad sense, the main purpose of ESP is to provide learners with vocation-oriented communication in their own discipline. In a narrow sense, content and language should be integrated because this integration is assumed to maximize learners' language use in a simulated life-like discourse (Swales and Feak, 2011). Finally, syntactic and lexical features of English for a particular discipline should be embedded in authentic teaching materials and classroom practice (McLaughlin and Parkinson, 2018; Mostafavi et al., 2021; Paltridge, 2012).

1.2. Students' and teachers' beliefs in L2 and ESP education

Second language teachers' beliefs are generally considered "an important determiner of what happens in the classroom" (Macalister, 2012, p.99), and understanding teachers' beliefs provides useful insights into their classroom behaviours (Borg, 2015). Similarly, learners' beliefs are supposed to play a decisive role in the process and outcomes of their learning (Ellis, 2008; Macalister and Nation, 2020). Recent studies have investigated students' and teachers' beliefs about different aspects of language teaching and learning, such as vocabulary (Dudley-Evans, 2001), corrective feedback (Brown, 2009; Ha and Nguyen, 2021), pronunciation (Nguyen and Newton, 2019), task-based language teaching (Basturkmen, 2017), intercultural competence, critical thinking, and paraphrasing (Kirkgoz, 2009). Regarding linguistic features embedded in materials, teachers might need to provide students with vocabulary and grammar to help them with writing, reading, listening, and writing. ESP teachers should also involve students in a discipline-related discourse while integrating culture, critical thinking, paraphrasing, and communication in the classroom. While the literature in ESP is replete with research delving into what should be taught (Hewings, 2002), relatively little has investigated how ESP should be taught and compared students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching.

Overall, a large body of research has shown that teachers' beliefs do not always align with students' beliefs. However, there is a paucity of

research examining students' and teachers' beliefs about effective ESP teaching. This is important because such inquiry can provide in-depth understandings about the (in)congruence between students' and teachers' beliefs about effective ESP teaching, which can, in turn, help teachers enhance the efficacy of their instruction.

1.3. Research aims and questions

The current study explores students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching to figure out a pedagogical framework for ESP. It confines itself to the domain of business English (BE) as the needs for learning it have been growing throughout the world in recent decades. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What teaching practices do students consider to be indicators of effective ESP teaching?

RQ2. What teaching practices do teachers consider to be indicators of effective ESP teaching?

2. Research methods

2.1. Research approach and design

This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to interpret and compare the students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching. Data triangulation was employed to increase research reliability and validity. Qualitative data obtained from interviews were used to provide in-depth interpretations of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire.

2.2. Participants and setting

248 participants (32 teachers and 216 students) were involved in this study. The teachers (22 females and 10 males) had been teaching BE at five higher education institutions in Vietnam. All of them held a bachelor's degree in English language and a master's degree in ELT or applied linguistics. They were in the age range of 30–38 and had an experience of 5–10 years as EFL teachers and 3–6 years as ESP teachers. They had neither been educated in ESP teaching, nor taken any official training in ESP. The student participants (119 juniors and 97 seniors) were taking or had taken a course in ESP in the past year. With the approval of the school boards, the participants (N = 248) at five universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, were selected. They all expressed their willingness to get involved in this study. The questionnaire was administered to all the participants. All the respondents were treated with full respect and dignity. They were informed of relevant ethical issues required by the Academic Committee.

All the students at the five surveyed institutions were required to take at least one ESP course. The aims of including the ESP course in the curricula were twofold: enhancing their English competence for work performance and providing relevant language features to read references in their discipline to increase their academic performance. Traditionally, these ESP courses were taught by teachers of the specializations. For example, BE was taught by teachers specializing in business and knew BE terms. However, the current reforms required assigning ESP courses to English language teachers to improve students' language use and skills.

2.3. Instruments

This study employed a questionnaire (in English and Vietnamese) and interviews (in Vietnamese) to collect data. As ESP teaching is an interdisciplinary area, the questionnaire was based on current perspectives on effective ELT (Bell, 2005; Brown, 2009; Levine, 2003; Schulz, 2001) and recommendations for effective ESP teaching made in recent research on discourse analysis, needs analysis, and curriculum and materials development (Aguilar, 2018; Basturkmen, 2020; Kirkgoz, 2009; Kithulgoda

and Mendis, 2020; Mostafavi et al., 2021; Paltridge, 2012; Swales and Feak, 2011). It was designed on a Likert-scale of 1–5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = agree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). This 32-item questionnaire was composed of seven main categories: (1) task-based language teaching, (2) grammar teaching, (3) culture-related issues, (4) corrective feedback and assessment, (5) application of technologies, (6) discipline-specific language, and (7) language use (see Table 1). The interview protocol employed the same framework as the questionnaire.

The original questionnaire of 35 items was first administered to 10 teachers and 20 students separately who were not involved in the main study. After pilot testing, the questionnaire was reduced to 32 items as all these items hit 100% agreement (Brown, 2009). Secondly, wording was simplified to avoid participants' misunderstanding. The 32 remaining items were finally randomized, and the randomizing pattern was not revealed to the participants in the main study.

2.4. Data collection procedure

To collect quantitative data, the questionnaire was conducted at five different universities in Vietnam. Administrative consent was first obtained before participant ones. On administering the questionnaire, the researcher emphasized the importance of the respondents' answers for the success of the study. Although the questionnaire was written in both English and Vietnamese, the researcher explained each item in Vietnamese to the respondents to increase validity.

Although in-depth interviews in social sciences can enrich data and are applicable when factors and variables not predetermined in previous research, halo effect and invalid responses by participants may occur (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The researcher used prompt interview strategy to direct the participants to the intended questions. The researcher first sent an invitation to the participants' email addresses provided in the questionnaire. Twenty participants (fifteen students and five teachers) accepted and showed up for interviews. The respondents' responses were confirmed and clarified to increase research trustworthiness. In the interviews, the researcher asked guiding questions like "What do you think about…?", "Why do you think so?", "Why do you think it is important?" to delve into students' and teachers' perceptions.

2.5. Data analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire were projected to SPSS AMOS Package (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY) for analysis. The researcher first cleaned the data set to remove incorrect, incomplete, and invalid data. The validity of the questionnaire (N = 248) was then examined by using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity, principal components, Kaiser's eigenvalues-greater-than-one criterion, Promax rotation, and suppression of small coefficients lower than .5 before the model fit was employed. The procedure resulted in satisfying statistics: KMO = .704, significance level (*p*) < .01, total variance explained = 51.231, $\chi2$/df = 1.168 (*p* < .001), GFI = .865, AGFI = .834, CFI = .941, TLI = .916, and RMSEA = .027. Then, the scale reliability of each factor and the whole questionnaire was examined (α > .7). The value of corrected item-total correlation was

Table 1. Item distribution in questionnaires.

	Category	Item numbers
1	Task-based language teaching	1, 7, 11, 18, 20, 26, 28, 32
2	Language use	3, 9, 15, 19, 27, 29
3	Corrective feedback and assessment	5, 10, 12, 23
4	Application of technologies	8, 14, 24
5	Discipline specifications	4, 17, 22, 25, 31
6	Culture	6, 13, 21
7	Grammar teaching	2, 16, 30

greater than .6 for every single item. The value of Cronbach's alpha of each factor would have been smaller if a single item had been deleted. Seven factors were generated with loadings greater than .4. Normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and the Shapiro-Wilk Test), descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and Independent Samples t-Tests were then processed to explore and compare students' and teachers' beliefs about ESP teaching (see Table 2). The normality test showed that the data differed insignificantly from a normal distribution ($p > .05$). That means, the data were normally distributed.

The participants' responses in the interviews were subject to theme-based analysis. As the interview questions applied the framework of the questionnaire, the interview data were also analyzed into seven main themes (see Table 1). The researcher identified emerging themes and sub-themes by using the content-based approach (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This study applied the five steps recommended by Nunan and Bailey (2009): (1) transcribing, (2) examining the transcripts, (3) identifying initial emerging themes and categories, (4) refining themes and categories through an iterative process of re-reading, and (5) refining the thematic categories. As this study used an explanatory sequential design, the researcher categorized emerging themes into the developed framework (see Table 1). Any conflict between the quantitative and qualitative data was solved by applying the qualitative data because the participants' responses were already confirmed and clarified in the interviews. The students' responses to the questionnaire and interviews were integrated to answer the first research question. Comparisons of students' and teachers' beliefs (qualitative and quantitative) were made to address the second research question.

3. Results

3.1. Students' perceptions of effective ESP teaching

Descriptive statistics showed an overview of beliefs of Vietnamese ESP students ($N = 216$) about aspects of ESP teaching (see Table 3). Overall, the students agreed with the seven observed categories in ESP teaching ($M > 3.0$). They most highly appreciated language use, application of technologies, discipline specifications, and cultural issues in ESP teaching the most ($M > 4.0$). The standard deviations showed that their ratings did not diverge significantly ($SD < .7$). The reliabilities were acceptable ($\alpha > .7$).

The students' responses in the interviews generally confirmed and interpreted their ratings. The integration of content in ESP teaching was believed to engage students in meaningful discussions of content in the ESP class. Language accuracy, especially technical terms, was also highly expected as ESP was considered discipline-based. Considering language

Table 3. Students' responses to the questionnaire.

Factor	N	Mean	SD	Reliability
Task-based language teaching	216	3.78	.55	.802
Language use	216	4.18	.62	.814
Corrective feedback and assessment	216	3.94	.49	.858
Application of technologies	216	4.13	.59	.823
Discipline specifications	216	4.22	.56	.806
Culture	216	4.03	.51	.837
Grammar teaching	216	3.46	.59	.758

use, the students expressed their desire to have plenty of opportunities to use English in ESP classroom. However, some of them believed that it should not be a rule because it could challenge those at low proficiency levels a great deal. The native language should be allowed in case students were unable to express their opinions in English. Grammar was thought to be important, but a focus on grammar might restrict and discourage students' willingness to speak and communicate. The involvement of online interaction and learning in the grading system was absolutely agreed by the students. They suggested the use of social media to engage students cognitively and emotionally in learning.

Given corrective feedback and assessment, indirect correction was appreciated but was considered case-by-case adaption because it would obstruct low-level students' understanding. Considering the use of task-based language teaching, all the students agreed upon the necessity of language simplification. An ESP course was believed to expose two main intersected difficulties: language and knowledge of the discipline; therefore, language simplification was thought to make the class become a relaxing environment. Grammar was not, from the students' perspective, situated within the main aim of an ESP course but was regarded as a facilitative tool for language construction. ESP teachers were expected not to strictly adhere to the grammar points required in the curriculum, but flexibly base on students' language competency.

3.2. Comparison of students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching

An overall comparison of students' and teachers' perceptions of effective teaching of ESP showed some significant differences (see Table 4). In general, ESP teachers agreed with all the concerns in the framework for ESP teaching. The teachers most strongly agreed upon the items about task-based language teaching, language use, and corrective feedback and assessment ($M > 4.0$). While the use of task-based language teaching was the most strongly agreed upon ($M = 4.25$), and grammar

Table 2. Results of normality test.

Factor	Participant	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Task-based language teaching	Teacher	.153	31	.279	.626	31	.611
	Student	.157	215	.294	.547	215	.687
Language use	Teacher	.166	31	.206	.485	31	.520
	Student	.177	215	.212	.632	215	.636
Corrective feedback and assessment	Teacher	.151	31	.108	.541	31	.430
	Student	.178	215	.283	.497	215	.621
Application of technologies	Teacher	.172	31	.173	.576	31	.418
	Student	.180	215	.295	.601	215	.664
Discipline specifications	Teacher	.189	31	.172	.548	31	.406
	Student	.183	215	.203	.603	215	.609
Culture	Teacher	.131	31	.168	.487	31	.504
	Student	.145	215	.207	.519	215	.731
Grammar teaching	Teacher	.201	31	.154	.628	31	.567
	Student	.192	215	.243	.573	215	.758

Table 4. A summary of students' and teachers' beliefs of effective ESP teaching.

Category	Rank	Teachers' beliefs (N = 32)				Students' beliefs (N = 216)	T/S	
		Mean	SD	CITC	Reliability		Mean difference	p
Task-Based Language Teaching	1	4.25	.43	.654	.826	3.78	.47	.00
Language Use	2	4.21	.40	.565	.804	4.18	.03	.27
Corrective Feedback and Assessment	3	4.14	.37	.569	.747	3.94	.22	.04
Application of Technologies	4	3.96	.24	.546	.709	4.13	-.17	.09
Discipline Specifications	5	3.89	.34	.641	.716	4.22	-.33	.01
Culture	6	3.68	.22	.662	.829	4.03	-.35	.00
Grammar Teaching	7	3.57	.36	.676	.831	3.46	.11	.13

Note: SD: standard deviation; CITC: corrected item-total correlation; *p*: significance level; T/S: teacher over student.

teaching was rated the lowest (M = 3.57). The corrected item-total correlations were greater than .5, and the scale reliabilities (α) were greater than .7 for the whole framework and each category.

Results from t-Tests showed a comparison of students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching (see Table 4). Significant differences between students' and teachers' perceptions were found in the use of task-based language teaching ($p < .01$), corrective feedback and assessment ($p < .05$), discipline specifications ($p < .05$), and integration of cultural issues ($p < .01$) in ESP teaching, with a mean difference of .47, .22, .33, and .35 respectively. However, there were insignificant discrepancies between the students' and teachers' beliefs about language use, application of technologies, and grammar teaching ($p > .05$).

Analyses of the students' and teachers' responses in the interviews confirmed and explained their' ratings in the questionnaire. All the themes identified generally fit into the developed framework for ESP teaching. First, the difference between the two groups' beliefs was traced to their educational background. While the teachers' strong beliefs about task-based language teaching mainly stemmed from a course in their master's program, the students had never heard or informed about this teaching approach. In addition, inadequate training was revealed as a barrier for the teachers to use their knowledge of the discipline in ESP teaching (e.g., explaining vocabulary, discussing discipline-related topics).

Given the influence of the context and regular practice on their beliefs, the teachers reflected their experience that indirect correction of errors might not make sense to some students and was unusually time-consuming; some students, nevertheless, reacted negatively to direct correction because it could make them lose face in class. Also, the students wanted to receive credit from online interaction as it facilitated their learning a great deal, whereas the teachers believed that it should be encouraged. The teachers revealed that online interaction could increase students' out-of-class communication; however, giving credit for online work was subjected to quality assurance.

Overall, both the students and teachers agreed upon all the issues of concern in the framework for ESP pedagogy. The students believed that ESP teaching should be discipline-based, but the teachers held a strong belief about task-based language teaching. These two groups, in common, strongly agreed upon language use and least strongly agreed upon grammar teaching.

4. Discussion

The current study investigated students' and teachers' beliefs about effective ESP teaching. Although the data were confined to the Vietnamese context, they provided implications for ESP teaching practices in other L2 contexts. Comparisons showed some alignments and differences between students' and teachers' beliefs.

First, both teachers and students were aware of the importance of the learning process, relevant skills and strategies, discipline specifications, and language use. Their ratings indicated that they agreed with all of these foci in ESP teaching and learning. Regarding focus on learning, the

teachers applied task-based language teaching strategies to improve student engagement in the classroom. This means, the classroom practice focused more on learning than on teaching. Basturkmen (2020) and Mostafavi et al. (2021) recommended that ESP teachers should focus on facilitating the learning process rather than making lectures. Skills and strategies which were believed to be helpful for students' future occupations and academic performance were also emphasized. The language use and BE terms related to BE were also the focus in the classroom. In general, the practice was in line with the foci in an ESP course recommended by Belcher (2006), Dudley-Evans (2001), and Nelson (2000). Accordingly, the teaching and learning should have five main foci: focus on learning, focus on needs, focus on skills and strategies, focus on discipline, and focus on language.

Results showed similarities between students' and teaching' beliefs about ESP teaching. Results of Independent Samples t-Test showed insignificant differences between students' and teachers' beliefs three observed categories, namely language use, application of technologies, and grammar teaching. This result showed teachers' understanding of students' needs and wants. Also, these two samples were aware of the importance of these categories. They most highly appreciated language use in the classroom, but least highly appreciated grammar teaching. The qualitative data from interviews showed that the students did not expect ESP teaching to be accuracy-oriented but fluency-oriented. They believed that grammar teaching should aim to help them use language effectively rather than provide them with knowledge of grammar. Current perspectives on ESP teaching could explain their beliefs. According to Evans and Morrison (2011), and Kassim and Ali (2010), ESP teaching can create opportunities for life-like communication. To achieve this objective, materials should be authentic (Blagojević, 2013) to link ESP classroom practices to academic and work situations (Bremner, 2010).

There were also found some discrepancies between students' and teachers' perceptions. Comparisons of students' and teachers' ratings in the questionnaire showed that there were significant differences in students' and teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching, corrective feedback and assessment, discipline specifications, and integration of culture. An explanation is that one's beliefs can be affected by their education background, prior experience, context, and practice (Borg, 2011, 2015; Nguyen and Hung, 2021). It might be necessary for ESP teachers to understand students' beliefs, needs, and expectations (Plonsky and Mills, 2006) so that potential gaps can be bridged (Ellis, 2008). According to Brown (2009), it is unnecessary for teachers to satisfy all students' beliefs because they mainly reflect what students assume to be true (Borg, 2011, 2015). When teachers identify students' beliefs that do not help them develop, they can explicitly explain to change students' beliefs (Brown, 2009). Bell (2016) recommended teachers to elicit their beliefs to students when they identify that teachers' practice that does not meet students' beliefs. Such discrepancies may cause students' negative attitudes (Bell, 2016), resulting in low academic results (Levine, 2003) and satisfaction (Ellis, 2008).

This study contributed to the ESP literature. Theoretically, as the current study explored students' and teachers' beliefs about effective ESP

teaching, it applied a pedagogical framework for effective ESP teaching with seven main categories: (1) task-based language teaching, (2) grammar teaching, (3) culture-related issues, (4) corrective feedback and assessment, (5) application of technologies, (6) discipline-specific language, and (7) language use. This framework was based on pedagogy for ELT and current perspectives on ESP teaching. This can be a reference for not only Vietnam but also other L2 contexts which highlight the importance of ESP teaching. Practically, despite a focus on the teaching of BE in the context of Vietnam, the results showed potential discrepancies in belief between ESP students' and teachers which might be important for ESP teachers in L2 contexts to be aware of.

The findings indicate several implications for ESP teaching. As ESP teaching is based on perspectives on ELT and ESP (Basturkmen, 2020; Edwards, 2000; Li So-mui and Mead, 2000), teachers can facilitate language learning by considering second language acquisition theories (Basturkmen, 2020) and include discipline specifications. ESP classroom practices should help students integrate their knowledge of language (e.g., grammar and vocabulary) and discipline into life-like communication (Cheng and Mok, 2008; Evans, 2011; Kithulgoda and Mendis, 2020). It might be necessary for ESP teachers to include grammar teaching, error correction and assessment, target language use, cross-cultural issues, and application of technologies (Levine, 2003; Schulz, 2001; Brown, 2009) and assign tasks to students (Basturkmen, 2020; Hargie, 2019; T'sai, 2010). It might be also important for teachers to investigate students' beliefs about ESP pedagogy, elicit their beliefs, and explicitly explain to change students' beliefs if necessary (Brown, 2009).

The current study exposed three main limitations. First, as it confined itself to Vietnamese participants (N = 248), the results mainly reflected Vietnamese perspectives on ESP teaching. Further research can investigate students and teachers' beliefs in other contexts. Second, it targeted at BE students. Future investigations can include students in other disciplines to increase the generalizability of ESP teaching results. Finally, it was mainly based on self-reports. Further investigations can provide more insights into ESP teaching by including classroom observation data.

4.1. Conclusion

The current study put forward a step in uncovering students' and teachers' perceptions of effective ESP teaching in an EFL context in Asia. Data collected from a questionnaire and interviews highlight what students and teachers believed to be important in ESP teaching and how to incorporate these aspects in the ESP classroom. On the basis of the results, it might be necessary for ESP teachers to emphasize students' competency development; ESP teaching should not be prone to knowledge of language or knowledge of a particular discipline only. As ESP is an interdisciplinary area, teachers' knowledge of the discipline might help improve their teaching quality and enhance students' competence.

Declarations

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