Business Students' Perceptions of the Importance of ESP Courses for Bangladeshi Undergraduate Students

By
Mustan Shariah
19263003

English and Humanities
Brac University

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC
    University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party,
    except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other
    degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

_____
Mustan Shariah
19263003

Approval

The thesis titled "Business students' perceptions of the importance of ESP Courses for

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Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)   _____
                                                    Md. Al Amin, PhD
                                                    Assistant Professor
                                        Department of English and Humanities
                                                    Brac University

External Expert Examiner: _____
 (Member)

                                            Dr. S. M. Akramul Kabir
                            Assistant Professor of English, Directorate of Secondary
                                    and Higher Education, Bangladesh

Departmental Head: _____ (Chair)   Professor
Firdous Azim, PhD

                                        Professor and Chairperson
                                Department of English and Humanities
                                            Brac University

Ethics Statement

This paper is my own research work. While doing the research, I follow all the ethical guidelines of the Brac University. I have maintained the ethical issues and also tried to maintain the privacy issue of the participants. Therefore, I did not expose their real name and institutions; rather, I have used pseudonyms to keep their privacy. I did not force anyone to participate and permission was also taken from all of them.

Abstract

English is the lingua franca of the world in almost all cases. It is the language of higher education in almost all the universities of the world. Almost all the universities in Bangladesh, particularly all the private universities, use English as the medium of study. Therefore, in order to succeed in universities having good English skills is one of the prerequisites. To develop undergraduate students' English skills universities often offer English courses known as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. In Bangladeshi context, ESP courses are provided to undergraduate students to develop their English speaking and writing skills. However, the ways in which students are taught in the ESP courses – combined with the syllabus, materials, and classroom setting – should improve to achieve more effective results. This study is a qualitative study in nature, and it explores the perception of business students of some private universities regarding the effectiveness of theses courses. Data for this research was collected through online interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic's restrictions. Participants are current students from three universities and some have already passed from the same universities and are working in different sectors. This study has found out that there are lots of lacking regarding the syllabus and teaching method of ESP courses. Moreover, the study finds that students also should grow their interest in learning. Finally, this study has suggested some recommendations that may help the learners and teachers to get the proper use of ESP courses and benefit from them.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Perceptions of Business students and graduates; Needs Analysis; Academic Skills; Professional skill and designing a course.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my parents, my husband, and my only daughter who always support me in all ups and downs of my life. Their smiling face always acts as a source of inspiration and happiness to me.

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"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful"

At first, I cannot thank the Almighty Allah enough who gave me the strength to reach here. Then, I would like to thank my parents, my sister, my husband, my in-laws, whose support, care, motivation helped me to overcome all the difficult situations of my life. I am thankful to my daughter who has come in my life as a blessing. I am very much grateful to my supervisor, Md. Al Amin, the most helpful person who has taught me how to write and improve a research paper from the very beginning of my masters and every single step of my thesis. I would also like to thank our chairperson Professor Firdous Azim and all the faculty members. Finally, I would like to thank my friends who were always there beside me to support me when it is needed.

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List of Acronyms

ESP   English for Specific Purpose

ELT   English Language Teaching

UGC   University Grant Commission

EAP   English for Academic Purpose

EOP   English for occupational Purpose

EGAP   English for General Academic Purpose

EASP   English for Specific Academic Purpose

EST   English for Science and Technology

EMP   English for Medical Purpose

ELP   English for Legal Purpose

EFME   English for Finance, Management, and Economics

MBA   Masters of Business Administrations

EBP   English for Business Purpose

TSA   Target Situation Analysis

LSA   Learning Situation Analysis

PSA   Present Situation Analysis

MALL   Mobile Assistant Language Learning

EGP   English for General Purpose

EMI	English Medium Instructions
ESL	English as Second Language
EFL	English as Foreign Language
BEW	Business English Writing
TA	Thematic Analysis

Chapter 1 Introduction

In recent years, English has become the dominant language throughout the globe. Especially in case of academic purposes, English is being used as a lingua franca. Besides academia, the English language has become a mandatory language for most corporate and especially international business sectors. Bangladesh has shown a tremendous amount of improvement in its education policy and English medium instruction (EMI) over the years. However, over the course of years, the global revolution in English Language Teaching (ELT) has been shifted to English for Specific Purposes (ESP). For many years, in our country, ELT without specific goals depending on the context has been used as the main way of teaching. To develop communication in business purposes, people have to take various English courses, and in Bangladesh, most universities provide one or two basic courses for business students to build up their English language skills. ESP is one of the most popular courses among them.

The main purpose of these ESP courses is to comprehend and communicate with national and international people in English according to their specific needs. If people can enrich their language skills more than others and even develop themselves in the process, it would give them more opportunities beyond the academic field. They are given more power and duties to develop the business sectors, and by this opportunity, they can improve their position as well. English language skill is very important for international business sectors and multinational companies. It can build up one's career. On the other hand, for lack of proper English language skills, one may feel isolated and socially humiliated. Non-native speakers have to keep minimum communicative competency on English language skills so that they can communicate, revise, and edit any instruction and work to improve and continue their interaction with foreign companies.

If we think about any successful meeting or communication among several companies, language is one of the most important components, and a fluent and quality presentation can develop and improve the reputation of the company as well. On the other side, when people cannot communicate properly with the companies, their professional competence suffers due to the lack of their communicative competence. Most of the companies put emphasis on the communication skills on their employees and workers besides their working skills. In fact, any company's international reputation is significantly tied to the use of a common language. Thus, a company cannot develop themselves inside and outside without keeping international relationships, through a common language, among developed countries. Therefore, the need to improve language proficiency is great. It is quite important to make any company's corporate language English from their native language to be in a good international position. As a common corporate language, English is the most popular and internationally established. Therefore, every company can strive to communicate and transfer their documents and papers conveniently by being competent at English.

Global issues and multi-culturalism have a great effect on business organizations. Career development of an employee also depends on the cultural development of their works. On the other side, language can create possibilities and problems also for the organization. A well-designed language strategy can improve the company and it is effective for communication, coordinating, and knowledge sharing. On the other hand, if the employees are not well trained and topics are not designed earlier, the plan and possibilities may fail.

In Bangladeshi context, to develop our language skills of business students, ESP courses are provided for undergraduate students. Basically, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a course which is offered and taught in all the sectors – for example, business, medical, nursing, aviation, and others. However, in some cases it is effective, and in some cases, not so effective. The main purpose of ESP courses is to develop the four main language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in terms of the learners' specific needs. In our country's universities, undergraduate students are provided one or two basic English

courses to develop our English skills. If we specify business students, especially in private universities, they have two courses: one being a basic English course and another being an ESP course.

In these courses, teachers put emphasis on speaking skills, because business students, after graduation, have to join various multinational companies. Therefore, if they cannot communicate properly, they cannot fare well in their job life and not get much opportunity. On the other hand, the other three skills – reading, writing, and listening – are given poor importance. However, business students do not know how to write academic papers, and though their speaking skills are developed, they have errors in writing and lots of grammatical mistakes. Needs analysis is an important component for designing an ESP curriculum. However, most of the universities do not follow this process. Another problem is our classroom environment. In a classroom, there are lots of students in an ESP classroom, and, therefore, most of the time the aims of the courses are not fulfilled. Even speaking, which is usually stressed in Business ESP courses, is not sufficiently developed. Though Bangladeshi business students may try to develop their four skills, for these reasons, ESP courses cannot be effective sometimes. Therefore, when they start their professional life, they have to face many problems in their speaking and writing skills, and they do not know how to write an academic paper properly as they were always busy with their business-related subjects and did not give value to English language skill development.

In fact, learning a language for the workplace is quite important to be a qualified employee. Among them, business English has become more popular, as worldwide international corporate sectors want their staff to be expert in multilingual scenarios. If we want to compete with the international market, language skill is thus of utmost importance and is highly required. In recent years in Bangladesh, ESP courses have been popular to fulfill the requirement of working sectors' learners to reach their goal. Therefore, ESP has been a completely distinguished branch of English language teaching (ELT). In essence, the aim of ESP is fulfilling some specific requirements of the learners. Mostly, it gives emphasis

on language learning skills and those sectors, which are needed to explore learners' ability to communication in their profession. If we think about business English, this is one of the most current areas of ESP learning. The main curriculum is designed based on needs analysis to gauge the needs of the learners. However, in our country, it is a matter of question whether or not our ESP courses are designed according to the requirement of the learners and need analysis are done to coordinate the course outline.

Needs analysis is the most important part for ESP teachers to identify the needs of ESP learners and to find out in which area they have their lacking. Therefore, the curriculum should be organized based on their needs. According to Hutchinson et al. (1987), the teaching of ESP basically concerns the linguistic aspects of language. However, now, it has been shifted to develop communicating skills and learning has been specified by the learners' need to acquire the language (p. 18-19).

Many studies have been done to conduct the need of ESP learners in different fields from different countries. Among them, ESP for business students is one of the most important areas. The purpose of this study is to find out the expectations of business students from their ESP courses and actually what they have gained and learnt from it. This concerns mostly the position of ESP courses, especially business English at Bangladeshi universities. In Bangladeshi national businesses, we do not need to use any second language for our business purposes. However, if we want to compete with the international market in business, our students need to be properly prepared to cope with other sectors. If we think more deeply, business sectors and corporate sectors are the main stakeholders of our economy. Our agriculture sector, medical sector, engineering sectors – all of them can be carried to the international market through the advertisement of a successful business team. Therefore, if our students are properly nurtured, they can serve and represent our country in better light. However, the ESP curriculum is not properly assessed, and needs assessment is something quite missing in our context. Another major problem is that our classroom management is not proper or well organized for ideal ESP classrooms. Moreover, students are not properly

taught academic writing. Only speaking is emphasized, and even if Bangladeshi business students can speak properly, to present a presentation befitting international standards, they have to possess all the qualities to write a paper and organize it in a proper way, and finally integrate all of these to culminate in a quality presentation. For all these purposes, the model of our ESP courses should have some changes according to the needs of the learners.

At Bangladeshi universities, ESP courses provide basics of English learning methods. However, they are not taught how to manage a business deal formally in international sectors. Students are also busy with other courses, making them disregard learning how to apply the theoretical skills they learn in their ESP course in their practical life. Therefore, when they enter the job sector, they may face much difficulty in overcoming these problems. To get promotions and success while working in multinational companies, they need to be updated and be experts in presenting a presentation and organizing them formally. As it happens, when students come to universities for graduation, all of them are not from the same background. Most of them are from Bangla medium and they need more time to improve their basic language skills. Therefore, the curriculum and syllabus should be designed according to their needs and all the students should have the opportunities to explore their problems and overcome them.

1.1 Background

The goal of an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course is to prepare students to use English in academic and professional environment. Therefore, it is necessary for developers of the ESP course to be aware of the expectation of learners. Especially for that reason, ESP has become more and more popular in English language teaching. Rautenbach et al. (2017) have observed that the development of ESP curriculum for universities is very significant and important because it emphasizes learner's language development and considers academic skills for improving research, writing work, and professional skills – all of which can have a significant impact on their profession and workplace. Given the growing importance of communication through research or technical fields and the emphasis on

international cooperation, the implications of ESP have developed tremendously in recent decades. Over the past decades, there are lots of studies which have been done to discuss the position of ESP in the 21st century by reflecting on their respective backgrounds and attempting to include suggestions on these trends and outcomes (Kamberi et al., 2020).

According to Benesch (2001), who is one of the most influential scholars in our educational sector, ESP is the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where learners aim to use English in a specific field for some specific purposes. This special field is the sector where every student can become experts for their specific goals. Bangladesh is a unilateral national state, where no second language is required for internal communication, and where English has been very important for competitive hob market seekers (Roshid & Chowdhury, 2013).

In Bangladesh, we currently need professional human capital to help rapid industrial development and a return against development and earning. Business education is one of the most important sources in Bangladesh through which we can bring economic change from agricultural to an industrial based economy. Thus, we can see the importance of English as a global language and the need for ESP courses in business education in Bangladesh. There is a need to explore different aspects of education in the context of ESP courses offered by different universities. University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh has approved around 103 private universities in Bangladesh that are operational, and surprisingly all of them are established as an English medium university, where ESP courses are generally offered in the English language and also for literature major students (Rahman et al., 2019). Bangladeshi universities have started providing the design of ESP courses, which have not been made suitable to the business students' needs; therefore, many business students are not getting jobs and, even those who do become employed cannot do well in the job sector in their field when they graduate from university, as foreign employers are making their field of employment more competitive. Therefore, the purpose of the current research study is to investigate students' perception about ESP courses and how successful ESP courses at

universities are for business students and graduates.

Based on the earlier findings, this study finds a contextual research gap which would be bridged in this research. Most of the scholars have researched perceptions and an analysis approach to ESP context. Therefore, the aim is to explore the perception of business students and the role of the ESP courses in Bangladeshi context. Realizing the gap, the study proposes to investigate the perception of business students and graduates of their ESP courses in terms of improving their academic and professional communication skills.

As the objectives of the research is to investigate the perspective of business students about ESP courses among Bangladeshi university students, the research questions are:

1. What are the perceptions of business students about their ESP courses in terms of academic and communication and professional skills?

2. What are the methods and needs analysis which may help to develop an ESP course?

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews some literature and theoretical studies on the role of ESP courses. It defines ESP, provides a brief overview of ESP and how students need to examine its development. It then explores the reasons for the emergences of ESP and the brunches of ESP. It also addresses the phases of ESP field growth as well as the skills and techniques used in ESP. In this chapter, we will discuss some details on the significance of ESP courses in Bangladesh. Prior to the end, it talks about the implementation of ESP courses at the university: advantages and challenges. Finally, it discusses the related studies in different contexts towards the business students from different universities.

2.2 Overview of English for Specific Purposes

The history of ESP originated in the 1960s. In the 1960s, ESP and its teaching methods and techniques were isolated from ELT (English Language Teaching) for around an era (Farsi, 2013). ESP denoted the study and instruction of English in a specific area as a foreign or second language in which the students intend to practice English. During the early stages of teaching ESP, in many fields such as commerce, engineering, and science, it was strongly influenced by the students' desire to communicate between languages (Aguilar Perez, 2018). ESP denotes the impact of the worldwide interest in learning English. Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) explained that the introduction of governmental mass education program depends on regional differences, with English as the first, and often only, foreign language. As a consequence of market development and improved occupational mobility, the need for English is a very common matter of communication with one another. The full form of ESP, English for Specific Purposes, implies that students who have a specific study field, job, and research goal need to learn a particular variety of English. Lu (2018) pointed out that ESP courses focus around the ability to express the topics or concepts that students most need in order to be able to read confidently and communicate adequately in their field of research work.

2.3 Defining ESP

Generally, when linguists started to study ESP in earlier days, the most important and significant notion they have found is that it is most important to know about the purposes of the students, which is why they are taking these English language courses, and learning from the courses can help them in those particular contexts. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) thus refers to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign or second language where the goal of the learners is for some particular activities (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 2). Therefore, it means that ESP is for those learners who need some special skills to learn in some specific language for their specific purposes.

ESP may be described as an approach to language training in which all the materials, techniques, and assessments are based on the reasons for desired knowledge by the learners (Hutchinson et al., 1987). If we compare ESP with applied linguistics, ESP has developed its own approaches and the study is focused on research rather than other fields, which is the most remarkable feature in ESP (Bojovic, 2006). Moreover, ESP actually employs various approaches and methods as a strategy, becoming a term which refers to teaching English for specific work such as students learning the language for their study related reasons. Therefore, ESP may also be learned or understood for all forms of English (Lee, 2016).

2.4 Branches of ESP

ESP is divided into separate parts according to the target situation and specifications (Rahman, 2015). The main two branches of ESP are English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). EAP can be divided into EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes) and EASP (English for Specific Academic Purposes). Whereas EAP refers to any kind of English teaching which is related to academic studies and needs, EOP involves work related needs and training for learners. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) state that, in the area of EAP, English for Science and Technology (EST) has the most importance. However, English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and English for Legal Purposes

(ELP) have also taken their place in the EAP ground. On the other hand, English for Finance, Management, and Economics (EFME) are also very popular now-a-days in Masters of Business Administrations (MBA) courses. English for Business Purposes (EBP) is developed for business students to increase their communication skills with others (Rahman, 2015).

As Hutchinson et al. (1987), ESP is a methodology that implies that both subject and strategy choices are focused on the learner's motivation for learning, and the various branches of ESP can be seen as an approach to language learning of their own.

2.5 Characteristics of ESP

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) provide some absolute and variable characteristics according to the definition for ESP.

2.5.1 Absolute Characteristics

1. ESP has been designed to fulfill some specific needs of the learner.
2. ESP learners can use some specific methodologies and activities according to its service.
3. ESP focuses on the language skills and discourse of the learners to complete those general ESP activities.

2.5.2 Variable Characteristics

1. ESP is designed for some specific activities.
2. Its teaching situation and methodology are different from general English learning.
3. ESP is not for the beginner level students. Usually, it has been designed for adult learners or tertiary level learners in tertiary level institutions. However, sometimes secondary level learners are also taught ESP at school. Most of the ESP courses are designed with the basic knowledge of language system.

2.6 Reasons for the Emergence of ESP

According to Hutchinson et al. (1987), through the advancement of human activities, there was no history, strategy and simple movement for ESP. However, the phenomenon began to evolve in various ways. In various part of the world, ESP has emerged differently. However, three main factors are involved for the beginning of ESP.

2.6.1 Requirement of a Brave New World

In 1945, the aftermath of the Second World War represented a time of huge development in economics, research, and technology worldwide (Farsi, 2013). This revolution has developed a united world, specially focusing on the development of two powers, technology and commerce. In previous times, learning English was only for communicating with other countries' people. However, a new form was formed with modern learning generations, after the adoption of English as a foreign language in business and technology. This brave new world following the tragic global war could understand and concentrate clearly about their need to learn a common language.

2.6.2 Revolution of Linguistics

The object of linguistics has historically been defined by the rules for the uses of English and, above all, grammar. However, there have been many changes in the way language is considered and used in modern years and mostly communicating for real life purposes throughout the world (Crystal, 2018). Gaffas (2019) said that in English language instructions there were huge differences between language used for business and language used for other purposes like technological or engineering contexts. From these experiences, these ideas have led to the improvement and modification of ESP university courses for various categories of students. On the basis of this, particular courses for students from different backgrounds are recommended.

In essence, ESP instruction requires responding to the work conditions of undergraduates or graduates, and a needs analysis should be considered first regarding

language analysis approaches. A survey was undertaken by Tatzl et al. (2016) upon 92 engineers who have to work for business communication, and who also had to recognize critical communication capabilities and communicative activities. The result shows that their speaking and writing abilities were influenced by their listening and reading skills. English was addressed as very significant and remarkable for communicative activities including participating in seminars, internal and external networking and resolution.

Basturkmen (2012) concluded that it is very important to identify good oral communication skills or speaking skills and communicative activities through a needs review to teach language practitioners, syllabus creator, and relevant work-related material. From the results, what is gained as pedagogical outcomes is signified that occupational situations could be integrated into the curricular design and development of the ESP course.

Another important element is that in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English professors or instructors need to be trained. Therefore, for a certain subject, students will be taught properly for certain skills and learners also should be understood properly.

2.6.3 A New Focus on the Learner

Focusing on the specific learning process and learning materials, the recent growth in the philosophy of education system promoted the improvement of ESP (Adams et al., 2007). For learners, some specific desires and needs have an important and major influence on the willingness of learners to learn effectively. The theory was based on the notion that the interest of learners would be developed if the ESP courses are centered more on the needs of students and this may lead to faster and better learning (Mahmood, 2017).

Therefore, we can say that there were three steps responsible for the emerging nature of ESP. First, there was the requirement of a brave new world which accommodated the globe through the uses of trade and technology. Secondly came the linguistic revolution which promoted learning for real-life communication. The final one was emphasis on the students about knowing their needs.

2.7 Needs Analysis

Several studies have been conducted by various scholars in different contexts on the required analysis for ESP. The importance of the study of needs in the field of ESP was explored in most of them. Needs analysis in the designing of language instruction and language program applies to a structured method that will help teachers compile data to provide a clear and full understanding of their students' needs and desires.

The term "Analysis of Needs" was used first in the 1920s in West Bengal. To learn a foreign language, what the learners are required to do in the target situation, and how they can give their best performance while learning, Michael West introduced the concept of needs at that time to the learners and teachers. The instruments for the language need analysis are questionnaire, structured interview, observation the learners, discussion, and assessment (Rahman, 2015).

2.7.1 Components of ESP Needs Analysis

Different components of language needs analysis have different functions. Their main focus is language planning, language developing, teaching and learning in the easiest and systematic way. From the overview of many scholars, it is evident that Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Learning Situation Analysis (LSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA) are the main components for assessing students' needs to help the learners (Rahman, 2015).

2.7.2 Designing an ESP Course

The ESP course design needs some steps which should be taken into account. These are analysis of needs, appropriate and suitable teaching principles, appropriate teaching materials based on the reconfiguration of authentic text. Moreover, self-working research, project work, cooperative learning, group work, and the participation of learners in the process of choosing material content and methodology to increase the interest and motivation of learners must be completed (Javid & Farooq, 2015).

ESP courses will considerably develop English skills for the learners as ESP courses have various styles and opportunities based on particular fields or occupations. Teachers or instructors who teach those courses have multiple positions to perform and obtain various skills. They do not need to cover everything from English Language Teaching; rather, they have particular duties. The proposed proportion of ESP courses' materials should match the number of students who have come to develop their English skill at the end of their ESP courses. The significant and remarkable point is that, conventional skill focused and examination oriented English instruction should be reoriented into an EAP model since ESP will fulfill the needs of university graduate students to use English successfully in their academic disciplines and potential workplaces than typical University English (Li et al., 2020).

2.8 Related Studies in Different Contexts for Business Students

Several studies claim that ESP courses influence the achievement of students in their academic and professional skills development. Most scholars consider that ESP courses are goal-oriented and research-based. The methods that are actually supposed to be used in ESP teaching are also different from those being employed regularly in EGP teaching. For this reason, ESP teachers are different from the teachers or instructors of the EGP courses. However, they will continuously use the same syllabus, techniques and teaching materials with a little change or sometimes no change to the teaching methods and techniques. The teacher must notice and determine the needs of the learners as well as every group of students, then organize courses and choose teaching materials that fulfill those needs and purposes (Li et al., 2020).

The development of technology has exploited learner's knowledge and skills. The field of language research on mobile phone technologies is known as Mobile Assistant Language Learning (MALL). MALL research reveals unique routes of language learning. One study (Tayan, 2017) has been done in the Saudi Arabian university context where MALL is faring quite well as a support for teaching. The purpose was to find out the learners' and

teachers' perspective about mobile technology which can develop English speaking skills for other sectors' students. The findings showed that there are significantly positive effects on learning English as a foreign language through MALL. It also motivated learners for independent learning which help them to collaborate further richer learner environments. It also a useful tool to support language acquisition for ESP or ESL learners.

For business communication, business English has a big role to improve all kinds of activities and the reputation of any company. Therefore, ESP has a course called Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF). To validate that purpose, a study – Mostafavi et al. (2021) – has been done on some employees of an Iranian company. They are from different companies and their positions were different: someone was in director level, others had the role of advisor, middle manager, upper manager, among others. Their English proficiency levels also differed from one another: some were elementary level learners, some were preintermediate, and others were in intermediate level. The results showed that after doing the BELF course, their speaking English proficiency increased, and communication skills and proficiency level have also developed. Those who have done this course are more confident in using English at their workplace, and they have higher self-confidence while communicating with others. Therefore, they can develop themselves as well as their companies. Furthermore, it encourages them to develop their English proficiency skills to increase the professional atmosphere.

In recent times, learning a language just for working purposes and to improve the working environment have become popular and important in many countries. As English is a global language, in business sectors, English is becoming popular for the method of communication, and some companies have made English mandatory for everyone as a common corporate language. If any company wants to join international seminars or compete in an international field, communication must be in English. Additionally, fluent English is almost a prerequisite for thriving in such competitions. Therefore, students do not need to cover all the sections of learning English; they need some specific English language practice

to communicate effectively at their formal professional sectors. Zaidoune and Chroqui (2020) tried to find out English language needs for economics, law, social science departments' students. The result also shows that students are interested towards all the four skills of language learning; however, they also give emphasis on improving particular aspects of what they need in their particular field. They also want to develop their communication skills in English.

If the gaps between the objectives of educational institutions and English language skills are bridged according to learners' needs, that will help the students to meet with their practical needs and expectations about language learning. In Saudi Arabian context, if any student wants to become involved in a business environment and perform well professionally, that person has to be an expert in English language skills. In light of this, Alghamdi (2019) aimed to find out the needs of English for those students who are doing business studies as their major in their graduation program. Different students have different perceptions about their needs for English for their academic purpose. However, for special purposes, the materials, methods, and forms are not suitable according to the students' needs (Alghamdi, 2019).

English Medium Instruction (EMI) is being used more than before in business studies programs at university level for higher education in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) throughout the world. In European context, EMI is very popular for business studies and other sectors. On the other hand, in the Middle East and the North African side, EMI is rarely used by learners and teachers, and also for other subjects' learning. Therefore, the performance of the general students of the latter according to academic activities and pedagogical performance is comparatively weaker than those students who use EMI for business learning (Alhassan et al., 2021).

Business English Writing (BEW) is another important element for business students as they have to write many formal applications, documents, and other writings at their workplace. Students' writing needs depend on their job prospects. According to their

requirement, doing Business English Writing course is very helpful to rearrange good quality business writing. Therefore, BEW courses are included most of the university in China to improve their writing skills (Wang & Shen, 2019).

If we think about ESP teachers' perception about business courses, it would appear that first they plan a course for business students to fulfill their purposes. Designing a course properly is very important to get the best output from it. While designing a syllabus for the learners, teachers should keep in mind that they have to design a course which will help to develop students' communicative competence and skills as well as improving their professional growth. Teachers give importance on students' English ability, their independence about thinking, knowledge about business background, and communication skills with other people. Therefore, learners can get opportunity to improve themselves more. Teachers also have to read and watch news to get new and updated business knowledge. Therefore, they attend various business seminars and programs to improve their business English teaching abilities. Teachers also have to give more time for business training in order to provide more training for students. To get more practical results, sometimes instructors from industries can be hired as teachers besides the classroom English teacher. Such hybridity may bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical learning (Chen & Wu, 2013).

Based on the reviewed literature, some hypotheses can be made. First, the business graduate students of Bangladeshi universities have significantly positive perspectives about their ESP courses in terms of improving their academic and professional communication skills. There are also significant differences in the experiences of Bangladeshi ESP courses among those business students who have graduated and those who are still currently studying.

2.9 Summary

This chapter presented the definition of ESP, challenges and advantages of ESP courses, the current situation of ESP course related research in Bangladesh, and, finally, the

importance of knowing the students' perception about ESP courses. The following chapter

will introduce and explain the research design and methods which will be used to conduct the

study.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the study, including an explanation of research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Additionally, the reliability test analysis is discussed. The purpose of the chapter is to provide the readers details about the methodological steps which will be used to conduct the research. Also discussed is the purpose of the study and the obstacles I have faced while conducting the study. The following research questions will help me as a guideline:

1. What are the perceptions of business students about their ESP courses in terms of academic and communication and professional skills?

2. What are the methods and need analysis which may help to develop an ESP course?

The main focus of this research is to find out the perceptions of Bangladeshi business students about their ESP course and, according to their needs, how the course syllabus and materials would be developed for an ESP course. Therefore, I have approached to the students from universities and the students who are finished with their graduation from the same department and are now working in various sectors. I have tried to understand from their subjective point of view by being unbiased. In other words, I tried remaining openminded to find out their problems and what their genuine expectations are from the course. For that purpose, I tried ensuring that they are not nervous and asked them about themselves and specifically crafted interview questions. In particular, I have designed my interview questions with the aim of finding out the problems regarding ESP courses and their overall perception towards them. The participants were simply expected to share their opinion and experiences. A chapter summary is provided at the end.

3.2 Research Design

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), collecting research data can provide answers to the research questions; therefore, it is important and essential to utilize suitable

research methods and instruments in any study. This study has been conducted based on a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is an outlook for explaining and understanding the meaning of a problem in a social context. The research process includes asking questions, data collection from the setting, analyzing data from the participant's reply to build themes, and then the researcher's interpretation of the meaning of the data from his perception (Creswell, 2014).

Interview questions are used to obtain general information on perceptions of business students and graduates on the role of ESP courses at private universities of Bangladesh. Only the data from listening interview has been described. I have focused on resources and have made a connection among all the information from the interview questions. There are some lists of themes for thematic analysis, which is a process to combine the qualitative information. According to Terry et al. (2017), Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method called 'named and claimed,' and is quite a popular and recognized method for qualitative analysis. Therefore, I have done thematic analysis based on the interview for data analysis.

According to Krüger (2010), almost all aspects of research can be conducted with a qualitative method because of thematic classification as this is quite conducive to qualitative research. Social science, educational field, medical technology, international relations – research in all of these fields can be conducted with a qualitative approach.

3.3 Research Sampling

A population is usually a collection of people used as respondents to a survey.The sample is an integral part of an analysis as well. Normally, a sample is a particular portion of the community used as an individual or participant of a report. This study involves three private universities' business students and graduates. Data has been collected through interviews with some current students of these universities and some who have already and graduated from those universities. I have tried to observe a class of them to take notes in order to bolster the study with triangulation. However, in this pandemic situation, I failed

manage this data collection method of class observation. I have prepared a question set for both groups of participants. I used open ended questions as it is a qualitative research method, and, therefore, no close-ended survey questions have been used. I have asked about their experiences in their ESP classes and have been cautious about asking leading questions – which means I have tried my best to collect subjective data through the interviews. I have used the data to finalize the data analysis. Interpretation of the researcher is a significantly important part in qualitative research, for the researcher has to build up a meaning of a phenomenon from the participant's view in a qualitative research study (Creswell, 2014, p. 19).

Taking one or two interviews is generally not enough to collect data. However, in this pandemic situation, it is not possible to go to several institutions and taking interviews from many students. The selected universities are: X University, Y International University, and Z University. All the institutions are located in Dhaka and are closed now, their academic activities currently being conducted online. Therefore, I had to take online interviews. Managing ample participants was quite tough during this pandemic. For my part, I have done my best to ensure anonymity, as I have used pseudonyms for the participants.

The interview has not followed any strict rule; rather, I have tried to make it as flexible as possible. There are sets of questions for current students and old students from the universities. I have talked to them previously and had taken an appointment according to their suitable time. Therefore, it was very helpful for speakers of both sides, and they also have felt comfortable enough to speak. I had tried to take permission to attend two or three online classes of them for observing the class so that I could relate the students' opinion with the practical class. I would try to notice how the teacher conducts the class, what techniques, methods, and materials are being followed for teaching, and the responses of the students. Though I was aware it was impossible to physical classroom observation at the time, I felt data triangulation was quite important. Unfortunately, I could not manage online class observations either, and so the sole data collection method is semi-structured interviews.

3.4 Selection of the Participants

There are, in total, 11 participants of this study. From the two groups of student

participants, most of the current business students are from their first or second semester. The

other group comprises business graduates. I have taken a group interview of 2-3 students

from the same class. Their age range is between 18-20 years old, and for the graduated

students, their age range is in between 27-30 years old. The participants have requested me

not to use their real identity. Therefore, I have used pseudonyms. However other information

about them as depicted in the table is all real.

The following table shows information related to the students who will participate:

Table 1. Participant Profile

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Academic background/ Profession
1.	Rakib	20	Male	1st semester from XU
2.	Kabir	21	Male	3rd semester from XU
3.	Limon	22	Male	1st semester from XU
4.	Mehzabeen	20	Female	2nd semester from XU
5.	Akand	21	Male	3rd semester from XU
6.	Rima	21	Female	2nd semester from YU

7.	Robin	22	Male	2nd semester from YU
8.	Salma	22	Female	2nd semester from YU
9.	Sumaiya	23	Female	5th semester from ZU
10.	Sharifat	27	Female	Banker and graduated from ZU
11.	Ashik	30	Male	Account officer and graduated from XU

3.5 Instruments

I have asked 13-15 questions to the running students and 4-5 questions to the students, who have already passed from the same universities. Moreover, I have designed an openended question set for the participants, through which they have shared their opinions. Furthermore, I have asked some follow-up questions for more clarification about the study. Of course, I have explained my goal to them and the phenomenon of the study in details. For the sake of convenience, I have asked questions in the first language, Bangla, for increased comprehensibility and convenience. I requested them very humbly to record the conversation so that it would help me later in doing the thematic analysis. However, none of them gave consent for being recorded, and so I had to take notes and write down the key points of their opinion during the interview.

3.6 Data Collection Method

I have used semi-structured interviews as the main way for data collection procedure. I also planned to observe a few classes, though I could not manage that. However, this should

not be a massive weakness of my study, as to get specifically detailed information, interview questions are the only way of collecting data in this pandemic situation. There are two books written by John W. Creswell which are very helpful to get information about collecting data. These are *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* and *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. I have also used them as my guideline for the data collection procedure. According to Creswell (2012), there are five steps for collecting data, and the process of collecting qualitative data and the process of collecting quantitative data are quite similar. These are, selection the participants and research site by the researcher, taking permission to authority or participants to conduct the study, taking decision about which types of data to be collected, recording the information, and finally analyzing the data collection, while considering field issues and ethical issues (Creswell, 2012, p. 233).

According to these steps, I have selected my participants and have gained their consent. I tried to record the interview of the participants, but due to privacy and security issues they did not allow me. I, therefore, noted down the key points while taking the interviews. I have conformed to the ethical considerations and have not revealed any participant's original identity.

Creswell also mentioned about the natural setting of the study, interview questions, and qualitative observation. For qualitative interviews, the researcher can conduct face-toface interview with participants. It would be the best way as through this, the researcher can also observe participants' facial expression during the interview session. There are others ways of conducting interviews besides traditional solo sessions – for example, group interview, interviews over telephone etc. In recent times, the situation is quite critical and online interviews or interviews over the telephone are significantly suitable and convenient ways for collecting qualitative data. These interviews are constructed with semi-structured and open-ended questions for getting the opinions from the participants. In qualitative interviews and observations, the researcher takes field notes and tries to write down from the participant's

perspective by observing their activities and opinion (Creswell, 2014, p. 190). There are many types of qualitative data collection methods: qualitative document's source, such as personal letter, script checking, records, email, need analysis. However, I will use only interview questions and for the source of collecting data.

I have taken interview from nine current students from three different universities. For eight of the students, I have talked to them in two separate groups as each group's participants are from the same class and same university. The other participant was from a different university. Therefore, I talked to him separately. Besides these nine participants, I have only two participants who have finished their graduation from two different universities and are currently working. One of them is in a bank and another is in a private organization. I have interviewed them separately.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

According to John Creswell (2012), there are six steps in the process of analyzing and interpreting qualitative data (p. 261-262), which is mentioned in chapter eight. Therefore, for analyzing data, I will follow this book by Creswell, and I have adopted these six steps to analyze my data collecting from the participants. Therefore, I have collected all the data first. Then I organized them, and afterwards explored and coded from the data. Finally, I have combined all the codes to generate themes. I had to note down the important key points in my diary during interview. If anything seemed to me important, I have combined them with the themes of my study. Finally, I have given my opinion or interpretation on the basis of the answers from the participants from their interview questions in the Discussion chapter. Creswell (2002) said that qualitative research is based on the interpretation, and, therefore, the researcher needs to give interpretation and make sense of the findings he will collect from data (p. 257).

3.8 Obstacles

The main obstacle for this research regards data collection. During this COVID-19, a time came when all educational institutions were temporarily closed. Therefore, their classes and academic activities took place online, with students and teachers partaking in online classrooms from home. Therefore, it was not practical to take any face-to-face interview. Even individual online meetings were also quite difficult for internet and time issues. Additionally, all students hesitated to share any negativity about their institution. Therefore, I found it quite difficult to extract their genuine sentiments. Though they did not feel bored during the interviews, they have not allowed me to record them, as doing so may reveal their weaker points about teaching policies and materials. Finally, I did not receive permission to attend their live class.

3.9 Ethical Issues

The goal of research ethics is to ensure that no one will be sufferer for research purposes, and it will not harmful for anyone. The real names of the participants and of the institutions are not been published for the sake of anonymity. I have also taken permission from the participants before taking the interviews and have conducted the interviews according to their suitable time. If any students did not feel comfortable or were shy to talk, I have tried to convince them in a friendly manner. However, I did not force any one to talk about things they did not want.

3.10 Conclusion

A detailed explanation of the method, the sample's position, the participants, instruments, data collection method, data analysis procedure, possible obstacles regarding the study have been given in this methodology chapter. A summary of how the data would be interpreted is also provided. The next chapter concerns the results of the study.

Chapter 4 Findings

This chapter starts with the narrative of the participants from the open-ended questions which are asked to them to find out the problems and solutions regarding their ESP courses. Here, I present the salient findings from the interviews, by taking into account not only what they said but also their tone and expressions. I have asked the same questions to both groups of students – current students and graduates – and tried to find out their perceptions about their experience of doing ESP courses. I have presented the findings thematically.

4.1 Course Design of Business English

According to the interviews I have found some issues which are important to address for improving the course design for the business students.

4.1.1 Assessment

I have asked several questions to the participants, and their perspectives about evaluation are presented here as their assessment. Assessment is one of the important terms to observe a learner's progress. I will highlight some of the ideas of the participants that emerged from the interviews.

About the importance of needs analysis, the answers from the participants were quite surprising to me. Some students do not have any idea even about needs analysis and what its purpose is. When I have explained to them about the importance of needs analysis how it is done, all except one participant said that their teacher only gives them a course outline and, according to that, gives the lectures and takes exams. One participated has stated that,

> We never gone through under any survey before choosing any course or after taking
>
> the course to organize the course materials. For me I always prefer to explanation
>
> from my teacher about any topic to understand it better. However, most of the
>
> teachers follow their own strategy while teaching and for our ESP course, our course
>
> teacher had always given priority for writing. I am an introvert student by nature and
>
> feel very shy to speak in front of the class most of the time. Therefore, if my teacher

had done a need analysis survey from the students, he could come to know about my weakness and took initiative to overcome those problems.

All the other participants have agreed with him and also shared that more or less they also have some limitations and hesitations regarding speaking, and if they get any chance, they always try to hide themselves out of fear of speaking in front of the class. Therefore, sometimes they are taught what they do not need for their future studies, and sometimes very important terms are missed what they need to improve their learning. They also added that if the syllabus is organized with the needs of the learners, then it will work more according the specific purposes of the course. One of the participants has claimed that, at the beginning of the course, the course teacher gives them a draft of the course outline. However, the teacher does ask the students about their problems, and, according to those, the syllabus can be changed anytime. Therefore, they can learn what they specifically need to develop their skills. She has shared her experience of her first class of the course, stating that,

> Usually, at the first class we introduce with our course teacher and friends with a brief description about us. Actually, from that introduction our teacher gets some hints about his learners who are shy or bold to speak. So, our ESP course teacher had also asked us about what is the purpose of us doing the course and according four major skills, which one we need to improve. I can remember that he took a note on the reply of us and had created some groups where mixed of several qualities of the students and through the whole semester on that course we had to do group work and group presentation where all members need to help others and we all had to speak equally. Therefore, end of the semester all of us have improved our four skills, especially in speaking.

All of them acknowledged that ESP courses are provided to improve the four basics English language skills. More or less, all the universities have their syllabus to fulfill this goal. However, the steps taken to reach the goal is something that varied from one to another. Participants have said that through their ESP courses, learners should be masters of some

specific tasks which are especially needed when they will enter in the work sector. They can easily communicate with foreign customers or business partners and explain their plans, activities or progress about the work. The ESP course will help them to develop the projects and get promoted, doing well for themselves and for the company as well.

However, most of my participants except two said that their teachers or institutions do not follow the specific rules to develop or enrich their basic skills for the future. They do not even practice any speaking development tasks and also do not know how to write a formal business letter. In fact, their perception about the course is very poor and disappointing. One participant has claimed that the ESP course is the base for their other courses. Through this course they have come to know how to use English for the purposes and needs of their other courses as well as in the workplace. They have learned how to communicate in a positive and fluent manner, resulting in other people becoming pleased on them. Therefore, to the participant, the ESP course is very important to develop speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills as well as some specific needs for their subject and workplace.

Then I asked about their perception in general about the business English writing course. According to them, a business English writing course should have some specific theories and rules where all the terms are taught which are needed to solve any problem in case of jobs for any business writing. Students also have to practice them properly; otherwise, when it will come time to use these, they will face several problems. However, one participant has said that he did not have any specific course dedicated to writing. They had done one course on ESP where they were taught the rules for writing a formal letter and how to write a business report. Another participant has stated that he has done the course Business Writing, where most of the terms and rules for business-related writing are taught. Making a Power Point presentation was compulsory for them. Therefore, now, in her workplace, she can easily prepare any presentation and can help others as well. There are some formal words which are required when someone wants to write any official document. They also had practiced these at their university. Their papers were strictly checked and if they made any

mistakes, they had to resubmit. This is how some participants are reaping the fruits of their writing course today in their job sector.

4.1.2 Students' Perception Regarding Course Observation and Evaluation

Students' perception is very important to develop a course design for business students. When I asked them if they have done any ESP courses and, if so, how many, most of the participants' reply was the same: "obviously" they have done one ESP course, and three students are currently doing an ESP course in this semester. One participant has said that he has done two English courses: Basic English Learning and Business Writing. Other students' course is titled, English for Professional Purpose. Regarding the number of students in the class and how to cope with this, the opinion from the participants varied. Among them, five participants have said that their university provides an open-credit system and, therefore, they do not have any fixed amount of students who can take the class. Five participants are doing the same course, but they are from different batches. In the course, there are 40 students, and during the pandemic, they are doing classes through Zoom meetings twice in a week for 90 minutes without any break. They have shared that most of the students do not respond to the teacher always, and it is also not possible for the teacher to ask every student about their problems and solve it within the class time. They also have agreed that if they were doing classes in the classroom setting, this number of students is huge for learning the course content properly.

The other four participants come from another university, and they have no options to choose their course. However, the students from one batch have to attend the course together. The batch normally has either 20 or 40 students. My participants are doing the course with 32 students including them, as their batch has 32 students. Among them, 20-25 students are regularly attending the class and their opinions are also quite similar to the first group participants. However, one participant has said that, though they can choose their course, in one class maximum 25 students can attend and if the student level has crossed the limit, they would reopen another section for the same course. In his Basic English Learning course, there

were 20 students, and now he is doing the Business Writing course where there are 24 students, and all of them are almost always regular in the class. The subject teacher is quite careful about class participation of the students, and, therefore, he does not feel any problem regarding the amount of students in the classroom.

To explore the real scenario of the physical classroom is quite tough from the current students as almost for the last year, all the educational institutions have been organizing their activities online, and classes, assessments, and exams are also taken online. Therefore, I asked them about their normal classroom scenario and they have added that for English language learning they do not have any specific classroom. From the first group of five students, they have said that some of their classrooms have projector, multimedia facilities, but most are general classrooms. Their classrooms are enough for 20-30 students but when the number is 35-40 in any class, it is very difficult to manage seats and attend properly in the class. The other four students have said that, most of the classrooms have multimedia facilities except a little amount. Their classrooms are capable to take 20-25 students and the rooms are suffocated because of the lack of enough air circulation. However, the last participant has claimed that every one of their classrooms has the facilities for multimedia, projector, and proper air circulation. They always have 20-25 students in a class. Therefore, they never feel congested doing the class. The online classroom scenario is almost the same for all the participants as they attend the class online. The last participant has claimed that, though they are attending online classes, they have to respond to the teacher's discussion, and the teacher marks it very sincerely.

I have asked them about how they will evaluate their own writing skill or ability. The group of five students has agreed that, when they get good marks or grades in the exam, they think that their writing method is good and they are making fewer grammatical errors. However, the other three students stated that they extensively practice report writing and summary writing, and when they make mistakes, they try to follow the instructions from their teachers. The other participant has said that they already have a course – Business Writing –

where they are taught all the techniques about improving business-related writing and practice extensively. Therefore, almost all the students have a general idea about how to write any business letter, business report, application, making any presentation, among other things. In the Basic English course, which they have done in their 1st semester, they had to practice grammatical rules, paraphrasing any article, free hand writing, and more such activities. They were given tasks to practice writing and had to evaluate themselves to check their classmate's error. Such peer feedback allowed them to find out their own errors and solve them themselves.

Then, I asked about their perception of their ESP course from their experience in doing it. They have shared mixed reactions regarding this. The first participant has said that some specific rules and theories should be taught in the ESP courses rather than teaching general English. Therefore, the learners can improve their skills for further studies or the workplace. However, in their course, they are never taught in such ways. Instead, they have just memorized some grammatical rules and done writing practice like a general English course. The second participant has claimed that she has taken two English courses where speaking and writing were taught quite strictly. Due to the rigor, she can now conveniently pass any problems she faces at her office. According to her, an ESP classroom should not be boring, and that there should be limited students, resulting in the teacher being able to give importance to all the students and make a lively and joyful classroom environment. All students' problems also should be solved in the course regarding the four language skills of speaking, writing, reading, and writing.

4.1.3 Students' Feedback about ESP Classes

Student's feedback about the ESP course is one of the key points to develop a syllabus. When I asked them about it, all of them acknowledged it, not only for completing their graduation, but also because English is an essential part when they will want to do further higher studies or enter the job sector. When they will work for a multinational company, communication in English is obligatory for them. They said that if they want to

start their own business, to increase that project, they have to work with foreign people and foreign countries. Therefore, being an expert on speaking in English is very important. They have also added that, their other courses' exams, presentation, class lectures, are all done in English. Therefore, if they do not learn the basic needs and use of English language, they cannot do well in their other courses either.

According to the question about whether they are benefited from their ESP course and whether they use them outside the class or not, their reply was different from one another. One participant has said that, in their first semester, the course Basic English is compulsory for them. In that course they are taught how to use English for other courses and through which process this will make the tasks easier to them. Then, in the 2nd year, they have to do the Business Writing course, where they learn how to write a formal business report and other documents. As they sometimes have foreign students in the class, they have to strictly follow the English-speaking environment while they are staying in the campus. Therefore, in the other classes and also outside the class for formal talk, they have to use English as the medium for speaking.

The group of the other five participants have claimed that they have just been taught some basic grammatical rules for English learning, and most of these are not related to their main courses. I asked them specifically what they are learning about increasing skills like speaking or writing. They have replied that for writing they are learning some rules for writing a business letter. However, for speaking they do not do any specific practice or discrete classes. Outside the class, they never feel like using other languages besides their first language, Bangla. The other four students' opinions were also similar to this group of five students. However, they differed by saying that their teachers encourage them to practice English speaking among themselves even outside the class. Therefore, sometimes they try to arrange a presentation among themselves which actually help them to overcome their errors. However, except for the teacher's pressure, all the students do not come to attend these types of activities.

According to the participants, the aim of the ESP course is to help other courses in comprehending specialized English terms and making them easy to students. After completing the graduation, if they start any job in a multinational company or if they go for further higher studies, it will help them to reach their goal as well. For better communication with others and to get promotion in jobs, they have to become expert in English language speaking and writing as English is an international language and a second language in several countries. Therefore, to communicate with foreign people and to understand their situation or to be a good translator, if any employee does better, he will promote and improve very quickly. However, in the practical scenario, according to the participants, they do not practice for speaking or listening enough; rather, they are taught more general English and extensive writing practice. Most of them even do not practically implement what they learn from the course. Therefore, the complete aim of the course cannot be fulfilled in this way, according to the participants.

As my previous participants are doing online classes for one year, the scenario of the classroom setting is not clear to them. Therefore, I asked the participants who have already passed their graduation and are currently doing jobs the same question about their classroom setting. One of them replied that they did not have any other specific classroom for doing ESP classes. However, their teacher always tried to take classes in multimedia-facilitated classes, but she could not arrange it all the time. There were almost 35 students in their class, and, though the number is not low, the classroom was quite well conducted. The most surprising information was that their instructor is a literature teacher. They were taught only some basic grammar rules, and the class was like a general English class. Another participant has claimed that their classes were always taken by a language teacher as it is a language course and all classrooms have a projector and multimedia facility. If they had more than 2025 students in a course, a new section would be opened. Therefore, the classroom was never felt suffocated. Their teacher always made sure that class participation was ample. This

facilitated the students to practice speaking, and the result is that the participant has positive attitudes towards the learnt skills as she can use them in the workplace.

In line with the previous answer, the next question was about their job experience, whether their ESP course what they had done in their university can fulfill the need of communication in English or not. One participant has claimed that they had never practiced English outside the classroom environment. Even sometimes, they used their first language in the class as most of them were very uncomfortable speaking in English. Therefore, in his office, he has faced a lot of problems in case of communicating in English. He could understand other speakers' English language, but in case of producing sentences in English, he was not fluent as the other speakers. Then, after doing a course and getting more practice and experience in English, he thinks he might have caught up now. The next participant has said that speaking in English was the most important part while they stayed in campus. The authority and the teachers also put much emphasis on it. They have to attend in every class discussion and present lectures on several topics. Therefore, they have overcome obstacles about speaking. Though they are not fluent as a native speaker, they can produce sentences easily. As a banker, she has to communicate with a lot of people every day, and, therefore, to be good at communicating is mandatory for her job.

Then I have asked them about what challenges and problems they have faced when they have attended meetings, seminars, or any program which are based on English medium instruction. They said that communicating with known people or a single individual is easier compared to any meeting or seminar where a lot of unknown people are present. In such places, they normally feel shy to speak and communicate. Therefore, in international meetings, they have prepared and practiced more beforehand. The participant who is a banker said that at the beginning of the job, it was more challenging for attending EMI based meeting and seminars. However, she can overcome it now and she gives priority on fluency over accuracy. Another participant has said that he feels shy in front of many people when it comes to speaking or giving any speech as he has not had much practice on speaking.

Therefore, when he has to attend in any meeting or seminar, and if he has to give any speech, before attending that he tries to write a speech and practice extensively cope.

4.2 Teaching Business English (English for Business)

The teaching policy of a teacher is very important to improve a learner's learning style. From my participants, they have shared what they have learned from their course and they also suggested improvements of some matters which should be developed to update their course outline.

4.2.1 Skill Development

For developing language skills, I have asked them about the obstacles in case of learning. From their answers, certain points emerged as especially taxing to them which require changes. All the participants have agreed that regarding speaking fluently in English, they are facing a lot of problems. In case of listening to a native speaker's speech, some of them cannot sufficiently understand some sentences. However, in case of reading they do not face significant issues. In terms of writing, if they find any difficulty, by taking time they can manage it. One student said,

> Some of our teachers use native accent while delivering the lectures and I cannot catch their all words all the time. I have talked with some of my friends and they also share the same problem. However, we feel very shy to express lacking in front of our teachers as if the others may laugh at us. However, when some of our teachers talk very casually, I can easily catch them.

Only one participant has claimed that, throughout his ESP courses, their teacher makes them practice extensively to develop the students' four skills in English language learning. Their other courses also follow EMI. Therefore, speaking in English has become easier to him.

To develop language skills, my participants have pointed out some issues regarding their course. They said that if the teacher asks all the students separately about their problems, then he can find out the weaknesses of the learners and help them to solve these. Therefore, the participants of the class should be limited and then students will communicate properly with the teacher. All the students are not of the same quality in one class. Therefore, if the syllabus is prepared according to the needs of the learners in the class, then it will be more conducive for the improvement of the students. This is only possible by conducting a needs analysis before starting the course. They also added that every classroom should have the multimedia facilities, as a result of which learning will be more convenient and perhaps more effective using various materials. Classrooms also should be properly air-circulated, resulting in learners not feeling suffocated; otherwise, they may lose the interest of learning. Some of them have suggested that, as this course is for some specific purposes, the teacher should give importance to those purposes instead of teaching general English. If any student has lacking in writing, the teacher should help him more in case of writing practice, and those who are weak in speaking, the teacher should help them develop speaking skills.

When I asked the graduate students about the needs in writing in the English requirement in their job, both of them ensured that though they can speak in their first language, they have to write all the documents in English. The banker participant said that their software has the acceptance only for English language, and so they have no other options besides writing in English. Sometimes, they have to write formal letters and reports on monthly transitions, which is done with following a structure. The other participant said that he has to check a lot of letters and applications which are written in English. Moreover, in case of replying, the only language is also English. Even in checking the mail and replying against those mails, the formal language is English. Sometimes he has to make Power Point presentation and submit some assignments, which also follows some rules in English language. Therefore, English is the only language for written communication in every job sectors according to both of the participants.

The final question to them was about their suggestion to improve the course or course syllabus. Both of the graduate participants have said that a needs analysis should be compulsory before starting an ESP class, from which the teacher can come to know about the needs about the learners and can accordingly design the course outline and syllabus. One participant has said that an ESP course should be taken by only language teachers, because a language teacher knows the easiest techniques to develop learners' speaking and writing skills rather than a literature teacher. He also added that the classroom should abide by EMI. Therefore, through practice, students can become comfortable using the language, and even if they make errors, they cannot stop as the medium of instruction is strictly English. As a result of the compulsory EMI, they can improve their speaking skills. Another participant has suggested that the teacher should be more friendly. In that case, students may not feel shy to show their weakness, enabling the teacher to help them to resolve their problems. As the purpose of an ESP course is quite specific, both the teachers and learners should be extremely sincere about fulfilling the goal.

4.2.2 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes relate to what the participants have learned from doing their ESP courses. Five participants have stated that their syllabus, books, and lectures are delivered by teachers in English. However, most of the students want to communicate in their first language and some teachers allow this. Sometimes, in English classes, the teacher has to use the first language to explain the theory and activities, and this happens in other classes too. The other four students have said that in the English class, their teacher strictly follows using English throughout the whole period. However, in other courses they use Bangla if they need, and the teachers are also flexible about it. The final participant from a different university has claimed that, they have no option to use other languages except English in the classroom, and even outside of the class to communicate with teachers or any other formal matters, they have to follow English speaking practice strictly. She expresses that,

Most of the students are from Bangla medium background and we are very comfortable to use our first language while gossiping with friends or talking with others including our teachers also. However, though we talk with our friends in Bangla most of the time, we had to use English words while talking with our teachers or any formal conversations. Sometimes by mistake I use my first language with my teachers and they politely ask me to use English during conversation. Therefore, I can be more fluent and be extrovert in case of speaking and this really helps me to improve my speaking and listening skill as well.

If any teacher needs to explain any theory, he uses quite simple sentences and real-life examples in English. Therefore, students can also understand these easily rather than always adhering to EMI. Therefore, the percentage of using English is quite high in the other classes, and, those are obviously based on English speaking as well. To get the learning outcomes from the graduate students, I asked them what the major problems they have faced regarding communicating with others and writing any business report. The banker graduate has been working for one year and she has to deal a lot of foreign customers every day. She also has to submit a daily report on collecting money and for other activities. Primarily, she was troubled about the accent of foreign people at times. However, working with some experience she has recovered, and, as they have already learned how to write a report at their university, it is easier for her to cope with her job. Her words were,

I am very thankful to my university, and especially to my teachers to help to prepare myself for my future life. When I am congratulated and appreciated for my outstanding work, I always remember that if I was not taught properly and instructed properly there, it would be very tough for improving my position. As some of my colleagues are hardly passing through some meetings and presentations while I can deliver them with my best trying. And their main obstacle is that most of them did not practice speaking or making presentations at their universities properly or did by the

helping of some others. Therefore, they have those lacking and that shows effect on
their workplace too.

Her experience is quite opposite to my other participant's experience. Working in a
private company as an accountant officer for almost three years, he said that when he joined,
he could understand others' language. However, it was quite tough for him to continue
conversations in English. Therefore, he has done training on English speaking to fare better in
his job, and now after practicing and with a lot of experiences, he has almost overcome his
problems. He expresses that,

> I have never used to continue my general conversation in English except some parts
> of my classes. Even we asked questions and our teachers also explained various
> theories in Bangla to understand their students. At the end of the semester, we just
> presented our presentation in English and that was also done with a lot of practices
> and the effect of not using English frequently, now I am suffering during my work
> period to express my works with a better position.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter presents a critical discussion about the previous parts of collecting data
from the interview questions. The discussion on the main ideas and problems is followed by
some recommendations at the end.

The aim of this study is to find out the perceptions about business students regarding
their ESP course, and according to their perceptions, how to develop course materials and
syllabus. I have found that most of the universities provide a Basic English course for other
department students where they are taught some general grammar rules and are exposed to
general practice of the English language. The typical ESP course does not give importance on
specific needs about English skill development which is practically necessary for the
students' future life. There are very few universities which provide a separate course on

writing skill development. However, every university should have one dedicated ESP writing course. If the students do not speak or write a formal paper properly in English, they cannot be successful and ultimately the institutions from which they have come will be blamed for the student's failure.

It was also found that most of the classrooms do not have proper instrumental facilities, which are required for learning the four fundamental language skills properly. There is also a major problem that a huge amount of students participates together in a class. We know that an ideal language class based on communicative principles should have a small number of students. In a small ESP classroom, the teacher can notice all the learners properly, communicate with all of them, and help them to sort out all the problems. From the participants' interview, I have found that only one university strictly follows the student quantity policy in a class, and if they cross that quantity, they reopen another section for the students. However, most of the universities do not follow this and in one class they have 3040 students. This is very suffocative and neither can the teacher teach conveniently, not can the students learn properly. Thus, proper setting of a classroom is very important for an ESP course. Students will not find interest in doing class if the classroom is not interesting and well decorated according to the subject requirement.

Teachers of ESP courses should be well trained as the learners have to be master some specific skills to perform well in their future workplace or further higher studies. I have found that, one of my participants' instructors was a literature teacher. I was surprised to hear that a literature teacher is taking a language class. I think the authority and also the teachers should be aware about this matter. Otherwise, the main purpose of an ESP course may never be fulfilled. Learning grammatical rules or general English is important for all students. However, ESP course is not only for learning grammar rules; in an ESP course, some specific skills are focused on and developed according to the needs of the learner. Indeed, needs analysis is one of the most important parts of an ESP course. If the teacher takes a survey of the students before starting the course and, according to the needs of the learners, designs the

course, it works more effectively rather than when the teacher starts taking classes with a general syllabus. However, it is very unfortunate that universities do not follow this rule of surveying the needs of the learners. Two participants from the same university informed that their teacher simply asks them about their interest and if they have any problems understanding the lecture. Then the teacher tries to clarify that specific problem to the students. Instead of this bare minimum, all the universities and the teachers should conduct a needs analysis process and give importance to the learners' specific needs.

For business students, the main aim of an ESP course is to perform well in the workplace and pass in all the national and international competitions in their job sector. Therefore, communicating with other people without hesitation is significantly important. If any speaker shows enough confidence in case of speaking, the mistakes and errors may not appear noticeable, or at least not problematic, in front of other people. Therefore, practicing in speaking English should start from the beginning of university life. However, from most of the participants, it was seen that they even do not practice English during the whole class time period. They do not utilize the proper use of what they learn from their ESP courses outside the class either. Unsurprisingly, in their other courses, students mostly communicate with the teachers and other students using their first language. As a result, the practice of speaking in English is quite rare among the students.

For this pandemic situation, all the universities are continuing their classes and all official activities online. My participants who are current students all are doing online classes. In a class they have 30-40 students, and in a 90-minute class, a teacher cannot ask all the students separately about their problems. Not to mention, sometimes all the students are not present in the class regularly. There are also some universities which limit up to 20-25 students in a class, and they always have a discussion class, where all the students have to participate and share their thoughts and problems, and according to their needs, the teacher also gives his opinion. This communicative framework should be followed in all ESP

classroom situations. Unfortunately, we do not follow these activities, and therefore the proper benefit is not reaped from our ESP courses in Bangladeshi universities.

Another important point is that language writing skills should be developed if anyone wants to work in international sectors. Developing writing skills does not mean only writing a good article. There are some basic rules and theories of writing a formal letter, official report, or making a Power Point presentation. Another main purpose of ESP courses is to thoroughly teach students these skills and ensure via sufficient practice that they have mastered these skills. However, most of the participants do not learn in such a way. As a result, when they enter their job, they have to suffer. To overcome this suffering, they are sometimes forced to learn these basic skills again by paying extra money. Not only that, in case of English

Medium Instructor based meetings, seminars, they feel shy to attend for their low confidence. Moreover, what they have learned from their courses are rarely applied practically. From their experience, the participants have suggested to improve and bring changes in the syllabus and techniques of ESP teaching and learning. They have also suggested that the relationship between the teacher and students should be developed more and become friendly. In that scenario, students can share their weaknesses without any hesitation, leading them to truly develop their skills and reap the benefits of an ESP course.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

As the main purpose of the study was to find out the perceptions of business students about their ESP courses and according to their needs to develop the course syllabus, both current students and alumni students' perspective were investigated. Regarding the students' perception and self-evaluation about their knowledge and skills of English language, it should be noted that, though many of the students are working in foreign sectors of multinational companies, they have to improve their writing skills and communication skills as well. The study is qualitative in nature and interview questions are used as the sources of data. In most of the cases, needs analysis is neglected before starting a course and therefore teachers never come to know about the actual needs of his learners. This has an impact on their future professions, when they have graduated and started jobs in multinational companies or in international sectors. Indeed, the findings of the study show a disappointing situation of the current ESP courses in the universities of our country. We cannot only blame the teachers or students, as a host of other things are also responsible: the education system as a whole, the authority, number of students in a class, proper training of teachers, lack of teaching materials and environment, lack of our consciousness, even unwillingness of the students to improve their speaking and writing skills, lack of multimedia facilities, among others – everything is responsible for this gap among success of ESP courses. This situation of our education system or the problems about ESP courses cannot be solved overnight or by taking merely one step. We need to keep patience, and with proper training, observation and willingness of the learners, we can overcome the obstacles.

To conclude, in our country's universities, teachers and, most importantly, learners have to realize the importance of an ESP course. While doing the study, the researcher has found that students are taking their ESP courses as a very minor course. They do not give importance on learning proper speaking and writing in English as well as they give

importance on their other courses. Even most of the teachers and institutions provide less importance for ESP courses. For the pandemic situation, it was a very small study, and though a small study cannot show the whole situation of a country, the qualitative approach aimed to provide detailed perspectives of some relevant stakeholders.

To reiterate, the aim of the study was to find out the perception of business students about their ESP course and improve the syllabus according to their needs. Therefore, I would like to give following recommendations to conclude:

- The teachers should receive more teacher training and be more conscious about specific skill development rather than teaching general English. They have to find out students' needs and ensure the active participation of all students equally. Therefore, before starting a course, a brief needs assessment can be done to understand students' learning stage, needs, and preferences. Teachers should also be strict about using only English as medium of communication during the class time. It will help the students to overcome their hesitation about speaking in English.

- In case of using materials, variety should be brought. Writing articles, making Power Point presentation, and giving speeches on any kind of topic etc.: these should be made compulsory for every student. These practices will help them to reach the original purpose of an ESP course.

- The authority should take some steps. For example, in one class there should be 20-25 students, not more; if needed, they should reopen another section for the same course. Every classroom should have multimedia facilities and be well air-circulated. Therefore, students and teachers will not feel suffocated, and their willingness to participate in the class may very well increase.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. Have you done any ESP courses? If so, how many ESP courses have you completed?

2. How many students participated alongside you in your ESP class? Have you faced any problems regarding the number of students?

3. What is the physical setting of your ESP classroom?

4. What are the main obstacles you find in using the English language?

5. For business studies, why is English language course important for you?

6. Have you benefited from your ESP course? Do you use the things you learned from this course outside the class?

7. For your other courses, what is the percentage of using English? Or is English not used at all?

8. What is the aim of your ESP courses?

9. What is the importance of needs analysis and student's self-evaluation to business English curriculum development?

10. How do the students evaluate their own English writing ability?

11. In your workplace what are the major problems you are facing regarding communication or writing any report?

12. Briefly describe the needs of writing in English required by your job.

13. What do you think about business English writing course in general?
14. How well do you think the ESP course have you done meets the needs of communicating English by your job position?

15. What challenges have you experienced in EMI business programs, meeting, seminar etc.?

16. What is your perception about your ESP courses?

17. Do you have any suggestions for improvement in the program of your ESP courses or about modifying the syllabus of ESP courses?