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Bridging the Gap: An Investigation of Students' needs and Teacher Readiness in English teaching for Business Purpose

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ABSTRACT

This study is conduced based on the new liberal arts research project in University A, and this study tries to explore students' actual needs and investigating the preparation of conducting the English teaching for business purpose. The mixed research method, including both quantitative and qualitative method, is used in this research. A semi-structured interview outline and a 5-point Likert scale are used as the research instruments. 5 students are invited to do the interview, to further understand their actual needs towards teaching English with a business purpose. 98 participants including teachers, experts and education administrators are invited to conduct the questionnaire survey to explore the preparation of conducting the English teaching for business purpose. The results show that all the students are highly willing to learn English for business purposes, as they believe learning English for business purposes can contribute to future career development, enhance the pertinence of English learning and expand the depth of professional learning. What' more, the teaching policy for conducting the English teaching for business purpose is well-prepared, but requirements like teaching materials, the arrangement of the course structure, teacher competence, and evaluation system are need for further improvement.

Keywords: English for business purpose, students' needs, English teaching for business purpose;

INTRODUCTION

In Chinese university, students who are not English majors or majors directly and highly related to English are required to learn a foreign language, and the majority of students choose English as their foreign language to learn (Huang et al., 2021). College English instruction is one the main course for students to be guided for English learning. The teaching objects of College English coverall those college students who choose English a foreign language to learn. Those students are learning different majors covering various disciplines and specialties such as humanities, social sciences, science and engineering, and agriculture, arts, etc. However, the teaching syllabus for college foreign languages is set the same for all the students in different majors. College English is conducting English for general purpose, and no matter what major the student studies, the teaching objectives and content are all the same.

Generally speaking, there are two types of English teaching: English for general purpose and English for specific purpose (Nickerson, 2025). English for specific purpose (ESP) is normally designed to help English learners to obtain the needed language skills in specific fields (Hyland, 2022). This kind of English teaching can attribute to help students learn English more effectively in their own relevant fields (Normurodovna, M. A. ,2025). English for general purpose is a relative concept for English for specific purpose, indicating that cultivating learners' general English proficiency, without targeting any special academic, professional, industrial fields (LAIB Hazar, N. S. ,2023).

However, many scholars point out the short coming for college English teaching. He, X. (2022) claims that students are lack of interest in College English class. Li, C. (2021) also figures out that students are lack of interest. What' more, college English conduct English teaching for general purpose cannot meet the needs for preparing international professionals (Tao, J., & Gao, X. A. ,2021).

Besides, In the real-world communication in a professional field, like industries, business negotiation and transition, the exact language skills are need required in a particular field (Huhta, M. ,2010; Prodanovska-Poposka, V. ,2022). English teaching for the specific purpose can targetedly train students to grasp the English language ability in a specific area and cultivate students to explore professional field knowledge with English language as the entry point (Hyland, K. 2022; Dafouz, E. ,2021). With the process of globalization, the connections among countries around the world are becoming increasing close, and international exchanges are also becoming more and more frequent (Cevik, S.; 2025). English used as a "word language" can provide a bridge in global communication (Hutson, J. etal, 2024). Mastering a language means holding an admission ticket to understand and enter into the global world, and always be ready to express their own voice to the world, as well as well-prepared for holding the power of the speech (Salomone, R., & Salomone, R. C. 2022).

What's more, being proficient in the language of the professional field and also help students to understand the professional and inner logic of a professional field knowledge and frontier knowledge (Hyland, K., 2022). It can be found that English teaching for specific purpose is more and more important in nowadays, and the guidelines on College English Teaching (Guidelines hereafter) also emphasized the importance of conducting specific English teaching in college English teaching (The National Foreign Languages Teaching Advisory Board under the Ministry of Education, 2015, 2020). Knowing English in the specific area is also a necessity for students to be an international talent and making achievements aid accomplishment (Matthews, M. S., & Castellano, J. A. 2021). However, College English teaching is generally conducted in a general purpose, focusing on cultivating students' basic English ability without considering students' professional demands. It can be found College English teaching and learning is disconnected with the professional knowledge teaching and learning, and those two are not supporting each other or cooperating with each other.

This research tries to explore how to teach English with a business purpose based on a research program called a new liberal art in university A. This is a research program focusing on the integration of English major learning and business administration learning. This research tries to explore students' willingness of learning English for a business purpose and investigate the factors that influencing and conducting English teaching for the business purpose. The understanding of

students' willingness can be used to master the actual situation of students and understand their basic cognition. The investigation of the factors will make a significant contribution in exploring the possibility of the integration of English major learning and business administration learning, as well as further improving the scheme for talents cultivation.

Many scholars focus on teaching English for a specific purpose. Generally speaking, the relevant research is mainly concerned with four aspects: the nature of teaching English for specific purpose (Hyland, 2022; Nickerson, C., & Chan, C. S. ,2024; Rahman, M., & Arefin, S. ,2023). The exploration from corpus perspective (Paquot, Magali, et al.,2022; Pérez-Paredes, P., & Curry, N., 2025, Viana, V., & O'Boyle, A. ,2021). The needs analysis of English for specific purpose (Chemin, S., & Kitila, T. , 2022; Eligindi, H. E., & Hoque, M. S. ,2022). The teaching practice of teaching English for specific purpose (Prasetya, R.E. ,2021; Fakhrurriana, R., & Ningsih, W. A. 2023). It can be found that seldom has any research to explore the preparation of conducting English for specific students. What' more, even those many research focus on the need analysis, but seldom has any research analyze the need of students who are from southwest region of China. Therefore, this research tries to address the research gap.

Li（2017）indicated that the teaching materials of English for specific purpose， which are deeply related with the students professional major, are extremely scarce. However, Xu (2022) pointed out that the developing of teaching materials is quite necessary, and scientific theories must be used for the construction of the structure of the teaching materials of English for specific purpose. Cai (2017) believed that the orientation of educational policies is of great significance to the teaching English for specific purposes. Gu (2022) also pointed out the country's macro education policies and the reform and development of the specialized language English are inseparable. It can be found the teaching policy are also a very important variable in influencing teaching English for specific purpose (Cai, 2014). What's more, the arrangement of the course structure for teaching English for specific purpose also means a lot (Cai Jigang, 2023; Gu Zhihzong, 2022). Besides, conducting the English teaching for specific purpose requires the English college teachers knows well about the specialized knowledge, so teachers teaching competency for English for specific purpose are also very necessary (Cai Jigang, 2023). Douglas, D. (2025) proposed that the assessment of English teaching for specific purposes is also very important, as it can help the instructor to know how well the teaching is, to figure out if the teaching objectives is achieved or not. In summary, the appropriate teaching materials, the specialized teaching policy, the arrangement of the course structure, the teachers competence, the establishment of the evaluation system are necessary variables to measure the degree of readiness for conducting the teaching experiment.

METHODS

In this research, two research questions are proposed. The selection of the research method is totally related to the research questions need to be answered. For the research question one, the purpose of proposing this question is to obtain deep information about students' willingness, and the reasons why students are willing or refuse learning English with a business purpose. So qualitative research method is adopted. For the research question two, the purpose the research question is to

investigate the factors that influence conducting the English teaching for business purpose. A quantitative method is adopted to explore those factors. To sum up, the mixed research method is, including both qualitative and quantitative method, is used to the research questions. For the qualitative research method, the instrument for collecting qualitative data is a semi-structured interview outline for exploring students' willingness towards teaching English with business purpose. The instrument for collecting quantitative data is a 5-point Likert scale for exploring the factors that determining teaching English with a business purpose. The participants chosen are also deeply related to the researcher questions. To answer the research question one. Students form University A are selected as the participants. 5 students who learning business administration are specially selected by purposive sampling to answer research question one. To answer the research question one, teachers who are teaching business administration, English language, education administrators, experts in English for specific purpose are from University A are selected are the participants. The population is 98, and all of them are invited to take in the investigation to obtain quantitative data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The interview outline is designed based on the research purpose. Before using the interview outline into the formal research, expert validation is used to make sure the validity of this instrument. 2 experts who are engaged in the field of English teaching for specific purpose are invited to do the expert validation. Based on the experts' comments and advice, the interview questions are further revised. The interview questions will not be used in formal research until the experts are satisfied. After getting experts' satisfaction, the interview questions will be used in the formal investigation. For the interview question one, "Do you know what is teaching English for business purpose?". All the five interviewed students declare that they know what teaching English for business purpose is. Some students explain their understanding from the own definition's perspective. Like Student 1 points out that teaching English for business purpose means the professional knowledge of business administration will be explained and analyzed in English language, rather than in Chinese. Student 3 also stresses that English teaching is no longer focusing on the general knowledge but adding our professional knowledge. Student 5 declares that English teaching for business purpose is the integration of professional knowledge and language learning.

Some students explain the meaning from the perspective of what they can benefits. Student 2 states that teaching English for business purpose is a preparation for their future career, and cultivation the students in this way can support them to become the international talents. Student 4 believes that teaching English for business purpose can help them expand the scope of employment. To sum up, all the interviewed students have the awareness of what teaching English for business purpose, and they can explain the meaning of teaching English for business purpose in two ways, one is the nature of teaching English for business purpose, and the other is what students can benefit from teaching English for business purpose.

The second interview question is, "Do u need to learn English for business purpose, and why?". All the students replied with positive response "yes", indicating that students have a high need in

learning English for business purpose. Their reasons for learning English for business purpose could be divided into three parts. The first reason was the development for further career. The second reason was the enhancement of the pertinence of English learning. The third reason was to expand the depth of professional learning. Three students stressing the reason why it is so necessary for students to learn English for business purpose was the development for further career. High- quality employment was a very important matter for all the graduates, as mentioned by student 1. He said, the contemporary employment pressure was relatively high for the current generation. If students are cultivated with the ability of English for business purpose, they can find jobs in the international market, instead of only seeking for jobs in China.

Student 2 also said, almost every university I know has the business administration major, so a lot the graduates who learn business administration will be my potential competitors in the workplace. Learning English for business purpose will equip me with more skills and help me win the future competition. Student 5 believed that learning more English for business purpose can improve my ability in both English language proficiency and professional knowledge ability, which can help me to find a good job, as I was armed with ability to do the work of two people, and I possess the capabilities of both an English major student and a business administration major student.

Student 3 explained that her desire of learning English for business purpose from the perspective of language learning. For a long time, she learned college English for o general purpose, and she was not interested, and had always been passive learning. In some degree, the time using for learning English for general purpose was wasted. But the English could be taught with a specific purpose, then the efficiency of time utilization will be higher.

Students 5 also explained this in a same way. “To be very frank, I am learning college English for the purpose of passing the final examinations and getting the relevant credits, so my learning motivation is low. What’ more, I only work hard in practice my test-taking sills, so in some degree, I waste my time.” He added, “If we can learn English for business purpose, that will be deeply related to my needs, and I will cherish every minute of learning that.” Student 4 indicated that he had a plan to get a master’s degree and wanted to engage in academic exploration in this business administration. learning English with business purpose could improve his level of professional English and support him to read and explore the frontiers in business administration.

To sum up, students had awareness of the concept of English teaching for business purpose. And their need’ for conducting the English teaching for business purpose could be summarized for three aspects: the development for further career, the enhancement of the pertinence of English learning, the depth of professional learning. The instrument used for investigating the factors that influence teaching English for business purpose is made in this research. As is summarized in literature review part; this instrument includes five dimensions: the appropriate teaching materials, specialized teaching policy, the arrangement of the course structure, the teachers competence, the establishment of the evaluation system. There are 6 items in each dimension. A total of 30 items for the whole questionnaire scales. The scale adopts a Likert five-point scale, with options set and values attached: Completely agree =5 points, agree =4 points, uncertain =3 points, disagree =2 points, completely disagree =1 point.

As this instrument is made by this research, the reliability and validity should be fully guaranteed before using the instrument in the formal research. The research firstly establishes a face validity. Experts in ESP teaching, education administrators are invited to review the questionnaire for face validity. The results show that all the reviewers are clearly about what all those items are about and adequate for its purpose, and those items are clearly relevant for what it's measuring. What' more, the reviewers indicate that all the items are appropriate for the participants.

After the face validity, this research tries to explore the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha is used reliability assessment in this research. Cronbach's Alpha (a) is normally used to measure the internal consistency of a scale, which can indicate how closely related a set of items are as a group in a questionnaire and assesses how well all the items in a scale consistently measure the same construct (Stensen, K., & Lydersen, S. ,2022). The Cronbach's Alpha value ranges from 0 to 1. The closer the value is to 1, and the greater reliability of the scale is. On the contrary, the closer the values is to 0, and the worser the greater reliability of the scale is. Generally speaking, the Cronbach's Alpha value (a) ≥0.9, indicating that the scale has an excellent reliability. If the Cronbach's Alpha value (a) is equal or greater to 0.8 but less than 0.9, it means that the scale has a good reliability. If the Cronbach's Alpha value (a) is equal or greater to 0.7 but less than 0.8, it means that the scale has an acceptable reliability.

However, if the Cronbach's Alpha value (a) is equal or greater to 0.6 but less than 0.7, it means that the scale has a questionable reliability. If the Cronbach's Alpha value (a) is less than 0.6, it means that the scale has a poor reliability (Nunnally, 1978). In this research, if the Cronbach's Alpha value (a) is higher than 0.7, it indicates that the scale has an acceptable reliability, and can be used in the formal research. The data for pilot test of verifying the scale's reliability is analyzed by SPSS 26.0. Table 1 below shows the reliability results of this scale.

Table 1: Reliability statistics of the questionnaire scale of this research

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.839	30

As is shown in table 1, it can be easily found that the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.839, which is obviously higher than 0.7, indicating that the scale made in this research have a good reliability. This research then using the scale in the formal research. 98 participants are invited to participate in the investigation. A total of 98 questionnaires were distributed in this survey. 92 questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire recovery rate is 93.9%. 91 out of 92 questionnaires were valid. The effective questionnaire rate is 92.9%. The mean value of preparation of conducting English teaching for business purpose is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: the mean value of the preparation of conducting English teaching for business purpose.

	Teaching materials	Teaching p olicy	The arrangement of the course structure	Teacher competence	Evaluation system
Mean	2.478	3.514	2.899	2.653	2.511
N	91	91	91	91	91
Std. Deviation	.3373	.3298	.3164	.3458	.3267

As is shown in table 2, the mean value of teaching materials is 2.478. The mean value of teaching policy is 3.514. The mean value of the arrangement of the course structure is 2.899. The mean value of teacher competence is 2.653. The mean value of evaluation system is 2.511. The highest mean value is the teaching policy part, which is 3.514, indicating that the teaching policy is well-made to support the development of teaching English with a business purpose. However, the other parts like teaching materials, the arrangement of the course structure, teacher competence, evaluation system have a mean value below 3. Apart from the education policy, the other parts' mean value from high to low, are as follows, the arrangement of the course structure, teacher competence, evaluation system, teaching materials. From the quantitative data, it can be summarized that the teaching policy is now well- formulated, but other parts like the arrangement of the course structure, teacher competence, evaluation system, teaching materials needs to be further prepared.

CONCLUSION

This research only focuses on explore students' needs towards English for business purpose and the readiness for English for business purpose in university A. There are two major finding in this research. The first finding is that the students are willing to learning English for business purpose as they thought learning English for business purpose may help them develop future career, and enhance the pertinence of English learning, and deepen professional learning. The second finding is readiness of conducting English for business purpose. The teaching policy is well-developed, but the preparation of teaching materials, the arrangement the course structure, and the teachers' competence, and evaluation system are far from satisfaction, and need further improvement.However, this study has some research limitations. The first limitation is the research subject. A total of 5 participants for research question one and 98 participants for research question two are selected. The research result can only represent those participants' understanding. The second limitation the instrument only test for one-time of validity and radiality and failed to have a chance to pass multiple rounds of inspection. In this study, the weakness part of conducting the English teaching for specific purpose are summarized. For the future research, strategies for improving all the requirements of conducting English teaching for specific purpose should be further proposed.

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