

# TEACHING ENGLISH FOR OCCUPATIONAL PURPOSES: TEACHERS' COGNITIONS AND PRACTICES

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**Abstract:** As a branch of English for specific purposes, English for occupational purposes (EOP) is acknowledged to enhance students' employability. To contribute to the scant existing literature of EOP, this case study explores Vietnamese teachers' cognitions and practices of EOP teaching. Data were collected from classroom observations and interviews with six teachers in a context of Vietnam. Each of the teachers was observed twice, and the interviews were conducted after the classroom observations. The findings show a diversity in teachers' cognitions of different aspects of EOP teaching. Although observation and interview data reveal that they unpacked the curriculum and understood the objectives of the EOP courses, there were some differences in their EOP teaching. The results generally indicate the transfer of the teachers' cognitions into their practices. Three teachers also reveal that they did not receive adequate relevant training for EOP teaching. The implications for EOP teaching and teacher training are thus discussed.

*Keywords:* Beliefs, context, English for occupational purposes, teacher cognition, teacher training

## 1. Introduction

The current literature in the fields of applied linguistics and language education delineates a scholarly interest in English for specific purposes (ESP). Researchers and practitioners have endeavored to address “students' own specific purposes” (Belcher & Lukkarila, 2011, p.1) with a vast body of research on learners' needs (Qing, 2016), discourse analysis (Aguilar, 2018), and curriculum and materials design (Blagojević, 2013). However, according to Basturkmen (2020, p.9), there exists scant literature on “robust discussion of ideas and theories concerning teaching and learning” of ESP. Researchers (e.g. Hyland & Wong, 2019; Macaro, 2018) have called for more investigations into ESP teaching as the results might provide insights into ESP classroom processes.

Given the “specific purposes” of English learning, ESP is conceptualized as English for discrete disciplines, such as English for finance, English for business, and English medicine. Another division cutting across disciplines categorizes ESP into dichotomy: English for academic purposes (EAP) and English for occupational purposes (EOP) (Anthony, 2019; Hyon, 2018). This classification presciently specifies the strategic alignment of course objectives with the exigencies of distinct professional and academic domains. For example, while English for medicine suggests specialized terms that those working in the field of medicine need to learn, EOP may indicate the language competences that people in different positions in the field of medicine should achieve to perform their jobs successfully.

While EAP courses aim to train students in English for academic purposes, EOP courses teach English for a particular occupation. In contexts where English is used as a second language, there is generally a high demand for learning English for academic purposes as English is used

as a medium of instruction at school. However, in contexts where students learn English as a foreign language (EFL), students usually learn English to promote their employability, suggesting greater needs for English for occupational purposes in EFL contexts like Vietnam.

The interplay between teachers' cognitive frameworks and instructional practices in the realm of ESP is elucidated drawing upon Borg's (2011, 2015) conceptualization. The intricate nexus between prior education, professional development activities, contextual exigencies, and instructional practices shapes teachers' cognitive architectures. This interdependence underscores the dynamic nature of teaching, wherein educators recalibrate their instructional approaches in response to the contextual imperatives, thereby substantiating the symbiotic relationship between cognitive frameworks and instructional practices.

Although there is a proliferating research interest in EOP, there exists an underexplored domain pertaining to EOP teachers' cognitions and practices. The current qualitative inquiry is posited to scrutinize what Vietnamese teachers think and how they practice EOP teaching in the classroom, with the envisaged outcome of furnishing nuanced insights delineating the contours of EOP teaching within the Vietnamese educational milieu. This study is thus poised to augment the scholarly discourse on ESP pedagogy, underscoring its relevance and contextual nuances within the educational landscape of Vietnam.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 The foci of EOP education**

The proliferating interest in EOP education has spurred debates on the main focus of EOP teaching and learning. The primary concern revolves around the contention that the EOP curriculum should educate students for international communication at the workplace (Belcher, 2006). However, as Hyon (2018) put it, curriculum design should be context-contingent, necessitating consideration of local needs and student competencies (Macalister & Nation, 2020). This context-focused approach is well documented to be crucial in the current literature as failure to align educational content with employer expectations may undermine students' suitability for professional roles. Giving instructions on specialized terms solely might not develop learners' competencies. ESP teaching should not only provide students with lexical and grammatical resources but also create classroom interaction activities (Basturkmen, 2017; Cheng & Mok, 2008). Concerning these striking concerns, some researchers (Anthony, 2019; Mostafavi et al., 2021) propose that EOP education should aim to develop students' knowledge and skills to work in both local and global settings.

Despite heated debates on the concentration of EOP curriculum, prevailing scholarly consensus, articulated by researchers (e.g. Basturkmen, 2020; Nelson, 2000), suggests that EOP teaching and learning have five main foci: language, skills and strategies, discipline, needs, and learning. These elements should not be independent but multifaceted and coexistent in the curriculum. For instance, students' needs should be embedded in the curriculum during the development process, and students with different specializations may have different needs. EOP classroom activities should not shift from the teaching-focused but learning-oriented paradigm.

As for the linguistic purview, the literature predominantly accentuates the prioritization of language skills. Specialized terms and grammar features requisite for specific occupations are integral components. As Evans and Morrison (2011) and Paltridge (2012) note, EOP instruction

should not be considered an end in itself but a means to enable effective workplace communication. This suggests that authentic materials are employed to bridge academic content with real-world practices (Blagojević, 2013).

As the ultimate purpose of EOP education is to promote learners' occupation-related communication concerning their specialization, skills and strategies should be intergrated into the classroom process (Mostafavi et al., 2021). Some classroom activities, such as role play and simulated tasks, are recommended as these activities are supposed to place students in real-world scenarios for authentic communication (Hargie, 2019). Also, as occupation-oriented communication is discourse-sensitive (Hewings, 2002), intercultural issues are worth attention, particularly in English-as-lingua-franca (ELF) contexts. As Aguilar (2018) and Evans and Suklun (2017) noted, students will, sooner or later, communicate with people from different cultures in the current globalized world, and intercultural communication capacities may prepare students for workplace communication and therefore increase their employability.

As EOP is an interdisciplinary area, its teaching is expected to include aspects of general English and represent the discipline. An extensive survey of literature shows that EOP teaching should comprise grammar teaching, error correction and assessment, language use, intercultural issues, and communicative language learning strategies (CLT) (Bui & Le, 2022; Kim, 2008). As for the specialization of an EOP course, the foci should be on "the nature of language to be taught and learned, the learners, and setting" (Ibrahim, 2010). Teachers are advised to facilitate the learning, acquisition, and use of language, skills, and strategies.

Researchers have raised concerns about how and when to teach EOP. Some scholars (e.g., Posavac & Carey, 2003; Qing, 2016) suggest EOP should be taught in the workplace. Different companies may be different contexts and have different requirements. However, some other scholars (e.g., Kim, 2008; Safakis, 2003) recommend EOP should be integrated into language curricula in higher education to foster their employability. Dudley-Evans and St John (1999) acknowledge both views that English for specific purposes can "be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation" (p. 5). Thus, EOP courses should aim to develop work-related abilities in learners to improve performance in that the course design can conform to a five-step process: (1) analyse, (2) design, (3) develop, (4) implement, and (5) evaluate to improve the learning outcomes (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

Some journal articles and book chapters have reported studies on EOP teaching in Vietnam. Huan and Thu (2017) investigated Vietnamese college teachers' and students' perspectives on ESP. The quantitative data collected from two questionnaires showed that 150 sophomore students and eight teachers in civil engineering courses, aiming at both academic and occupational purposes, agreed upon "the need for tailoring the course contents and language skills to make the ESP courses appropriate and communicative to students with regard to quality" (p. 793). Acknowledging the effects of globalization on ESP teaching, Chi and Vu (2023) conducted a qualitative study on the benefits of ESP learning concerning employability. Students' self-reports revealed that "specialized language, knowledge, and generic skills" gained from ESP courses were vital to employability (p. 259). These researchers argued for the importance of needs analysis and practical scenarios that may occur at the workplace. Bui and Le (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study comparing teachers' and students' beliefs about EOP teaching. Considering EOP an interdisciplinary area, they introduced an framework for effective EOP teaching with

seven categories: (1) CLT strategies, (2) language use, (3) assessment and feedback, (4) discipline-specific knowledge and skills, (5) grammar, (6) culture, and (7) technology.

## 2.2 Teachers' cognitions and practices

Cognitions or beliefs are referred to as what individuals believe to be true (Borg, 2011). In language education, teachers' cognitions are a factor mediating the teaching and learning processes (Borg, 2015). As Phipps and Borg (2009) noted, cognitions can be divided into peripheral and core cognitions. The core cognitions have existed long in mind, are hard to change, and are influential than peripheral cognitions. The theoretical framework for teacher cognitions about aspects of language education merit researchers' attention, with a vast body of explorations into factors affecting teacher cognition, aspects of teachers' belief system, and impacts of teacher beliefs on teaching practices and learning outcomes (Borg, 2011, 2015). Most, if not all, of the research in this strand gives insights into the role of teacher beliefs in education and discusses implications for language teaching.

According to the model introduced by Borg (2011, 2025), teacher cognitions can be affected by prior education, in-service training, contextual factors, and practices. The context is acknowledged to influence both teacher cognitions and practices. The interaction between teacher cognitions and practices are also well-documented in the model.

Although the relationship between teacher cognitions and practices is presented by Borg's model, a vast body of recent studies on various aspects of English language education are inconclusive about if what teachers believe aligns with what they do in the classroom. For example, according to Ha and Murray's (2020) research on oral corrective feedback, this relationship is not always the case. The incongruences may depend on how prepared teachers are and if cognitions are core or peripheral. This finding confirmed that by Phipps and Borg (2009). However, the study Nguyen and Newton (2020) showed that contextual factors could hinder the transfer of teachers' beliefs to practices of pronunciation training. However, the study by Yan et al. (2022) showed that teacher practices were strongly predicted by their cognitions regarding classroom assessment. To further elicit this (in)congruence, Borg (2017, p. 87) argued that teacher cognitions and practices can be 'mutually informing and mediated by the sociocultural contexts that teachers are part of'.

## 2.3 Research aims and questions

The relationship between teacher cognitions and practices has been provoking a burgeoning body of investigations into what teachers perceive and do. Also, although EOP teaching has been emerging as an area of English language education in Asia, including Vietnam, this context is still underexplored. Therefore, it is timely to explore what Vietnamese EOP teachers believe and how they practice EOP teaching. To fill this gap, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do Vietnamese EOP teachers practice EOP teaching?
2. What are Vietnamese EOP teachers' cognitions about EOP teaching?

### 3. Research methods

#### 3.1 The setting and participants

This study was conducted at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam with a diversity of programs in terms of disciplines and levels. Recognizing the global trends, the university has recently made several curriculum reforms. The re-designed curricula for undergraduate students explicitly highlight the importance of teaching EOP, indicated in the aims, contents, pedagogy, and assessment. However, the main problem was in the shortage of teacher training to reach the proposed learning outcomes. Considering the number of students of different disciplines in EOP courses, the researcher decided to focus on English for Business Administration. According to the assessment policy, the total score of the EOP course was divided into two parts: classroom assessment and final test. EOP teachers were responsible for administering classroom-based assessment, constituting 40% of the total score. The final test, accounting for 60%, was administered by the school.

The participants of the current study comprised six teachers, in the age range of 29 to 45, who were randomly selected (see Table 1). After receiving permission from the board, an email invitation was sent to the faculty staff. However, only 10 teachers responded, and seven of them agreed to participate in the study. Finally, one participant was found inappropriate, leaving six teachers as participants. All of them had a master’s degree in applied linguistics or English language teaching. As teaching EOP is a new reform in Vietnam, these teachers do not have experience in teaching EOP, but have been generally assigned to teach English for Business from three to ten years. Each participant was then requested to choose a pseudonym to ensure the participant confidentiality. They were informed of their rights as participants.

**Table 1.** Teacher description

Participant	Gender	Age	Years of experience	Years of ESP teaching
Andy	Male	34	7	5
Jenny	Female	45	15	10
Jane	Female	41	13	10
Mike	Male	39	12	9
Emily	Female	29	5	3
David	Male	31	8	7

#### 3.2 Data collection

Data were collected from classroom observations and interviews in 2023. The classroom observations were conducted before the interviews. Each teacher was observed twice to reduce the effect of the lesson focus on the teachers’ practices, and the observations lasted 90 minutes each. During the observations, the researcher observer sat the back of the class to prevent distracting the class activities but was close enough to hear the teachers’ and students’ words. As I were not allowed to record the classes, I decided to make notes on the class activities. The observation form was based on Bui and Le’s (2022) framework for the observer to make qualitative notes.

After classroom observations, all teachers were then invited to participate in interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted 20-40 minutes. The interview scheme (see Appendix) consisted of guiding questions, such as “Why” and “How” to give the teachers opportunities to express their cognitions openly. The researcher, as the interviewer in this study,

began the interviews by asking lead-in questions (introduction to the purpose of the interview and the participants' rights). The main section mainly focused on aspects of EOP teaching.

### 3.3 Data analysis

Data collected from the two sources were analyzed thematically. The study deployed the content-based approach to data analysis. The analysis process was cyclical and inductive. It consisted of five main steps; transcribing data, reading transcripts, identifying themes and categories, refining themes, and refining categories (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). The study employed the analytical framework by Bui and Le (2023). At the start of the study, the researcher thought that there would be an emerging category beyond this framework; nevertheless, all data fell into the framework, and no additional categories emerged during the analysis process.

## 4. Findings

This section reports results from data analysis. As the results are presented in an attempt to address the research questions, this section is divided into two main parts: (1) teachers' practices of EOP teaching and (2) teachers' cognitions about EOP teaching. Representative quotes are given to illustrate the themes concerning teachers' cognitions.

### 4.1 Teachers' practices of EOP teaching

The observation data indicated a diversity in the teachers' practices of EOP teaching. Regarding the eight categories of EOP teaching, grammar teaching and assessment were marginally used in Emily's teaching. Her assessment was mainly to diagnose students' prior experiences and to understand students' uptake. While Mike rarely used CLT strategies, Jenny's and Jane performances almost did not integrate the relevant knowledge of business into language teaching. The data about Andy's and David's practices showed all the mentioned categories.

According to the observation data, all teachers could in general have unpacked the EOP curriculum. Their teaching practices showed the instructional objectives specified in the curriculum of the research site. For instance, in Lesson 4 titled "Managing across Cultures", the teachers not only taught the terms but also assigned group work activities. The representative topics for discussion centered around if multinational companies should adapt their management methods to the local culture in each country where it operates, what advantages and disadvantages of the hierarchical management structure are, and how management methods are affected by culture. The teachers confirmed their awareness of the learning outcomes. For example, Andy reported,

I often assign relevant topics to groups for discussion. It is explicitly documented in the curriculum that teachers need to cultivate students' communication competence and create opportunities for language use in the classroom. After students read a text, they can express what they think of it to their classmates.

Also, instead of making a lecture, the teachers employed interactive instruction to lead students to the target input. For example, in the lesson about management styles, David asked the whole class to list out their known words denoting a good manager, and communicatively explain the meanings of the words they suggested before presenting the target vocabulary required for the lesson. In general, from their exploration into the curriculum, the teachers knew the suggested

pedagogies. When asked, the teachers, except Mike, generally admitted that they regularly used CLT in their EOP classes. Jenny, for instance, responded:

CLT is the current interest in terms of language pedagogy. It can provide students with opportunities to use the target language and to express their opinions, resulting in improvement in students' communication competence. It is highly recommended in the EOP curriculum that teachers use CLT.

The teachers gave explanations about what they missed in EOP teaching. Emily's responses, for instance, showed her misunderstanding of assessment; she mainly formed an analogy between assessment and testing and had no idea of formative assessment. Feedback was not detected from the her class' observation data. Mike, however, explained that his instruction was hindered by the heavy workload, although he confirmed his awareness of CLT as required by the curriculum. Also, although Jenny and Jane understood the importance of integrating relevant content into language teaching in the EOP class, they admitted that they had very little knowledge of business, obstructing their integration of the relevant business knowledge into language teaching. Three teachers responded:

As required by the curriculum, the teacher is responsible for administering a midterm test to drive students towards progress and learning. In every lesson, assessment is not required. At the end of each semester, the teacher is required to submit students' scores to the school, which mainly stem from the midterm test which I wrote. (Emily)

According to the curriculum, a lesson is assigned to each class meeting. The classroom activities, such as instruction and group work, took most of the time, leaving no time for the use of CLT. (Mike)

I have received no formal education in business; therefore, my teaching mainly focused on explaining the target concepts in business and language. I assign tasks required in the textbook to group work as to give students opportunities to use the target terms in communication with peers. (Jane)

Also, all teachers used technology in teaching. They used PowerPoint to present input to students and illustrated their lessons with pictures.

Finally, the teachers mainly relied on the textbook. Most tasks which they employed were found in the textbook. While Jenny, Jane, Mike, and Emily used the activities suggested in the textbook, Andy and David re-designed the tasks. For example, instead of asking students to explicitly state their answers after matching up the given words and definitions in Lesson 1, Andy asked students to work in pairs and peer-assess their vocabulary learning. David, in a similar vein, asked the whole class to play "guess and check" game, in which one student volunteered to state the semantic properties of a word and the entire class guessed what word that student meant. Although Andy and David re-designed the tasks by conducting peer assessment, the tasks they employed were also suggested in the textbooks.

Data collected from the interviews provided the teachers opportunities to explain their teaching practices. In general, most teachers explored the curriculum before teaching and translated the course objectives into their teaching. Regarding what they missed in the class, their explanations were mainly about a shortage of training and heavy workload.

## 4.2 Teachers' cognitions about EOP teaching

Data collected from the interviews showed the teachers' cognitions about EOP teaching. What they perceived to be important for EOP teaching was generally influenced by prior education, in-service training, contextual factors, and experience. There existed a diversity of the teachers' cognitions about EOP teaching. Regarding the use of CLT in the EOP class, most teachers held a strong belief in the power of CLT in constructing students' relevant knowledge. In particular, CLT could help students absorb language input effectively. However, Mike construed that this approach was over-decorated and was not suitable for large classes. Accordingly, he believed that CLT might be better used to build up students' language fluency, but the EFL context of Vietnam stressed language accuracy. Two teachers answered:

CLT could improve students' English. I learned in my graduate program in applied linguistics that communication with an expert and/or peers may support knowledge development. Social interaction has embedded input and facilitates second language acquisition and learning. (Andy)

CLT is highly recommended in the current literature and curriculum. However, to the best of my knowledge, the hypotheses in CLT should be re-tested as a pedagogy may be suitable for one context but unsuitable for another. Considering the Vietnamese test-driven context which emphasizes language accuracy, I do not think that CLT is a good choice; students in general want high scores and grades. (Mike)

As for language use and assessment, the teachers' beliefs were quite homogeneous. Regarding the role of using English in the EOP class, all teachers' beliefs confirmed their teaching that using the target language (English) should be recommended by the teacher, but students could use their native language (Vietnamese) in case they were unable to use English. In other words, students should not be forced to use English in the EOP class. Concerning assessment, all teachers noted that teachers should not be responsible for summative but formative assessment only. They further added that a test bank could ensure test reliability and validity. As most teachers, except Emily, described, formative assessment proved effective in diagnosing students' problems, understanding students' uptake of the target input, and supporting students on their learning journey. However, as Emily reported that she had received no prior intensive training in formative assessment, she had no cognitions about it.

The fourth category pertains to content and language-integrated teaching. All the teachers agreed upon the importance of integrating content into language teaching. Although Jenny's and Jane's practices showed that this category was nearly missing, they also reported their awareness of the importance of this aspect of EOP teaching but their lack of training did not enable them to incorporate it. Jane stated:

I know that EOP teaching requires the teacher's relevant knowledge of the intended occupation. However, what I know about business is from communication with my colleagues. I have never taken any course in business in business at all.

Also, most teachers raised concerns about the role of grammar teaching in EOP classes. While Jenny, Jane, and Mike agreed upon the inclusion of grammar in the EOP curriculum but recommended reconsidering what grammar points students needed to learn, the other teachers believed that grammar should not be included in the curriculum but taught in case of students'



request in class. A close examination into the teachers' background suggested that the latter group had less experience and was younger than the former group. Two teachers said:

Although the course mainly focuses on EOP, training students to effectively use English related to the pre-determined occupation after graduation, I believe grammar is important as students might encounter language production problems if they do not know grammar points that function in the assigned scenarios or topics for group work. (Andy)

As students have already learned grammar in previous courses in general English, it is unnecessary to include it in the curriculum. The curriculum should be more focused on developing students' vocabulary knowledge and building up communication competence. (David)

Cultural issues and occupation-related skills were incorporated into tasks for group for whole class discussions. As the teachers responded, these issues should not be lectured. Instead, the teacher could provide specific scenarios for discussion as individual learners may have different perspectives on the issues. For example, according to Jenny, Lesson 4 aims to raise students' awareness of cultural issues in multinational companies. It is hard to explicitly state if large multinational corporations should adapt their management methods to the local culture in which they operate. First, answering this question persuasively requires an in-depth knowledge of business administration. Second, from the best of the teachers' knowledge, there are advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

All the teachers held a strong belief in the use of technology in teaching. Underlying the teachers' perspectives on using technology were the benefits that it could bring about: (1) better demonstration of the target input, (2) facilitative correction of students' errors, and (3) attraction of students' attention. The teachers reasoned that visuals could effectively illustrate an abstract concept. In case a teacher does not specialize in the discipline which the EOP course is for, the Internet could provide many references for the teacher. Emily said:

We cannot deny the important role of technology in education. In the classroom, technology can be used to illustrate the teacher's meaning and interest students in the target input. It may also assist the teacher in giving feedback.

Overall, the teachers reported their cognitions about aspects of EOP teaching. As they noted, they unpacked the curriculum to understand the course objectives and expected learning outcomes. The interview data showed that the teachers explained their teaching practices. The findings will be discussed in the following section.

## 5. Discussion

In an attempt to examine teachers' cognitions and practices of EOP teaching, data collected from classroom observations and interviews in this study revealed contextual factors affecting the cognitions and practices of six selected teachers in a context of Vietnam. Overall, the results provided recommendations for EOP teaching in the context and contributions to the literature of EOP.

First, the results confirm the theoretical framework of teacher cognition by Borg (2011, 2015). Accordingly, teachers' cognitions are closely related to the contextual factors and practices. Some contextual factors, as the findings showed, were the test-driven culture,

assessment policy, shortage of professional training, and student characteristics. Borg (2011, 2015) explains that teachers' experience and awareness of contextual factors could influence their practices and cognitions. Their teaching practices and experiences then form their cognitions, accounting for their successive practices. It is important to note here that what teachers think is not always correct. Their cognitions mainly reveal their pre-service and in-service , practices, and the context (Borg, 2017). Explorations into teachers' cognitions and practices may provide implications for education development.

Second, classroom observation and interview data indicated a lack of professional training affected the teachers' instruction. As Jenny and Jane did not receive any formal training in business, they could not integrate business knowledge into their EOP teaching, hindering their mediating role in classroom discussion. As for the teachers without an essential knowledge of business, material-driven and task-based teaching may assist them in teaching EOP ((Blagojević, 2013; Edwards, 2000; Kuchinke, 2003). As for Emily, formative assessment is well-documented in the literature in the field to cultivate students' learning, driving students on the academic journey to the expected learning outcomes. I would argue for the role of the administrators in teachers' professional development. Acknowledging the importance of language teachers' professional development, Taşdemir and Karaman (2022) explain that “ Teachers' professional development courses need to consider contexts, teacher needs, and practice. In other words, it might be essential that contextual factors and practical activities are taken into account in teacher training, resulting in changes in teachers' cognitions and practices.

Third, it might be necessary to clarify the roles of grammar teaching and CLT strategies. Data from the current study showed that the teachers, although they were aware of the inclusion of grammar and CLT in the curriculum, did not understand why they are included in the curriculum. According to Basturkmen (2017), Cheng and Mok (2008) and Kim (2008), if grammar is incorporated into teaching English for specific purposes, but it should not be described as the main objective. When it is necessary to teach grammar, it should not be taught in a way to solely develop students' linguistics knowledge, but to improve students' language skills necessary for the future jobs, and CLT can enhance students' communication competence. As EOP courses aim to build up students' language for communication in the workplace (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Paltridge, 2012), how language functions in particular scenarios may deserve the teachers' attention (Anthony, 2019; Brooks, 2009; Kim, 2008; Mostafavi et al., 2021).

Fourth, according to the classroom observations and interviews, the teachers did not make lectures on cultural issues and business contents, but these were incorporated into language teaching. I would argue for the appropriateness of this practice and belief. Many scholars (e.g., Hoa, 2020; Chau et al., 2023; Kim, 2008) suggest that incorporating culture into language teaching can build up students' intercultural communicative competence. It might be necessary for teachers to create simulated situations (Bremmer, 2010; Hargie, 2019), such as role play and communication activities, for students to practice culture-related issues (Aguilar, 2018; Chau et al., 2023; Evans & Suklun, 2017; Kim, 2008). Also, in courses of English for specific purposes, it could be important that content be considered in the core knowledge as students mainly use language to discuss content-related issues which students are supposed to deal with in their future jobs (Bremmer, 2010; Hargie, 2019). In this study, students' knowledge of business can be a prerequisite. Regarding this issue, Bui and Le (2022), Kim (2008), and Qing (2016) emphasize the essence of students' relevant knowledge and recommend that content can be set as a

prerequisite in the EOP curriculum or content and language can be integrated in an EOP course. However, concerning the expertise of the teachers in this study, I would argue that the former design may be appropriate.

This study expands the literature of EOP to a certain extent. Practically, the results provide recommendations for the context in terms of teachers professional development and contextual factors affecting teachers' cognitions and practices. Regarding the little existing literature of EOP, this case study illuminates the relationship between what EOP teachers do and think, contributing to the EOP mosaic.

## 6. Conclusion

Driven by the researcher's desire to provide implications for language education in the immediate context and beyond, this study examined Vietnamese teachers' cognitions and practices regarding EOP teaching. Data from the classroom observations and interviews showed a diversity in teachers' cognitions and practices of EOP teaching, affected by the contextual factors. In general, the teachers' responses in the interviewed confirmed their teaching. It is argued that in-service training in EOP teaching may be necessary for the teachers.

The study unavoidably shows a few limitations. First, as a case study, it investigated EOP teaching in a context of Vietnam; therefore, it lacked generalizability. Future research can explore EOP teaching in a large scale and in diverse contexts. Second, the study confined itself to teachers' cognitions and practices regarding EOP teaching. Although it is well documented in the literature that this research line can suggest what teachers need to develop professionally in a particular context, other research interests in EOP, such as effective teacher training and student-related issues, are also worth investigating. Finally, although this study examined teachers' cognitions and practices of EOP, results about the relationship between teachers' cognitions and practices was nearly missing. Researchers can continue this research strand by exploring the (in)congruences between these two domains.

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## **DẠY TIẾNG ANH NGHỀ NGHIỆP: NHẬN THỨC VÀ THỰC TẾ GIẢNG DẠY CỦA GIÁNG VIÊN**

**Tóm tắt:** Là một phân nhánh của tiếng Anh chuyên ngành, tiếng Anh nghề nghiệp được đưa vào chương trình hỗ trợ sinh viên tìm việc làm sau khi tốt nghiệp. Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu nhận thức và cách triển khai dạy học tiếng Anh nghề nghiệp của giảng viên ở Việt Nam. Dữ liệu thu được từ quan sát lớp học và phỏng vấn với sáu giảng viên dạy ở một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Mỗi giảng viên được dự giờ hai lần, và phỏng vấn thức hiện sau buổi dự giờ. Kết quả cho thấy nhận thức của giảng viên về dạy tiếng Anh nghề nghiệp khá đa dạng. Mặc dù dữ liệu thu được cho thấy giảng viên có nghiên cứu và hiểu khá rõ về mục tiêu chương trình dạy tiếng Anh nghề nghiệp của trường, cách triển khai bài của các giảng viên dạy khá khác nhau. Nhìn chung, cách triển khai bài dạy bị ảnh hưởng bởi nhận thức của giảng viên. Ba giảng viên thừa nhận chưa được đào tạo đầy đủ các nội dung liên quan để dạy tiếng Anh nghề nghiệp. Kết quả đưa ra khuyến nghị cho việc dạy học và đào tạo giảng viên dạy tiếng Anh nghề nghiệp.

*Từ khóa:* Bối cảnh, đào tạo giảng viên, nhận thức của giảng viên, niềm tin, Tiếng Anh nghề nghiệp

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### **Appendix**

1. Lead-in phase: This study investigates aspects of EOP teaching. All your information and responses will be kept confidential and be used for academic purposes only. Participating in this interview is voluntary, and you can refuse to answer any questions that you find inappropriate. Have you been assigned to teach EOP recently?
2. Questions about EOP teaching
  - How do you teach grammar, vocabulary, occupation-related issues, business-related content?
  - Do you apply technology to your teaching? How? Why?
  - Do you use communicative language teaching strategies? How? Why?
  - Do you think that teachers' knowledge of business is important to your teaching?
  - What problems have you ever encountered from your teaching?
  - How do you assess your students' learning and give feedback? Why?
  - Do you have suggestions to improve EOP teaching?