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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP): PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF LEARNING NEEDS AT A VIETNAMESE SCHOOL.

Huan Nguyen and Thu Nguyen.

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Abstract

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is generating considerable interest and expectation for the quality teaching and learning through the medium of English instruction in Vietnam; however, instructional contents and set course books made by teachers are observed to have little connection with learners' needs at vocational schools or colleges. This paper therefore provides insights into the perceptions of students and teachers at a vocational college in Vietnam about the needs of students in the ESP classes in civil engineering. In particular, this paper is aimed at finding out academic and occupational English language needs of civil engineering students from the perspectives of the students themselves and their ESP teachers in attempt to meet the increased learning needs of students. Using a quantitative descriptive study, two questionnaires were undertaken with one hundred fifty second-year students majoring in civil engineering and eight teachers who were currently working with ESP programs at this construction college. The findings indicate that both teachers and students shared similar views on the need for tailoring the course contents and language skills to make the ESP courses appropriate and communicative to students with regard to quality.

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Introduction:-

The central focus of this paper is on the perceptions of students and teachers about the needs of ESP learning resources at a vocational college in Vietnam. ESP therefore plays a vital role in Vietnamese higher education institutions since "science, a key economic priority, is taught through English" (Nguyen, 2013, p. 26). Priority was given to curriculum development that meets the needs of learners, as one of the government educational policies in Vietnam. The current Vietnamese government highlights the goal that education at colleges and universities should help students gain profound knowledge and practical skills in their jobs with "the ability to work independently and creatively as well as solve problems in the field of study" (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2005, p. 16). To support this strategic plan, the Ministry of Education and Training also launched the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project that addresses the need for the quality of using foreign languages at all levels to satisfy learners' needs (The Government of Vietnam, 2008). This government policy therefore calls for dramatic changes and commitment of teachers to design materials that promote student learning in ESP classes. However, few studies have examined teacher delivery of ESP practice in such classes at tertiary levels in Vietnam, this paper therefore examines both teacher and student perceptions of academic and vocational needs of civil engineering students at a vocational college. The research question that guided the study was "How do teachers and students perceive the academic and occupational needs of ESP learning materials in civil engineering at a vocational college?"

The literature on ESP and needs assessment will be summarized and then clarified how these terms are defined for this study.

English for Specific Purposes:-

Research into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has addressed its role in language and teaching English to respond to learners' needs of professional and vocational purposes over three decades (e.g., Hui, 2017; Pham, 2013; Ramirez, 2015), and this influence continues to grow in international contexts of trade, communication and economy. In Vietnam, ESP teaching and learning is a young and developing branch of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). ESP has shown a slow but definite growth over the past few years. This trend has witnessed ESP as a predominant discipline to keep up with specific-subject teaching and curriculum development since Vietnam has implemented its open-door policies in 1986 and entered WTO in 2007, thereby particularly placing increased pressure on teachers to make instructional changes and perceptions of how to promote student learning.

ESP is often related to a process of identifying 'learner needs', and initiating 'goal oriented' teaching practices and 'process oriented' learning (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Nunan, 1988b; Widdowson, 1983). In particular, ESP courses are designed to meet not only learners' current needs, but also their specific future needs (Dudley-Evans & St-John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, 1999). ESP course design therefore encompasses teacher knowledge of the nature of the students, their needs, and how English should be taught in relation to specific curriculum contexts.

The emergence of ESP has compelled many teachers to critically evaluate what is the 'backbone' of their courses (Basturkmen, 2006; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; West, 1994). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP is one important branch of EFL / ESL (English as a Foreign / Second Language) system that functions as the main branch of English language teaching ELT. Therefore, ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, but rather an approach to language learning whose contents and methods are based on learner's needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Similarly, Dudley-Evans and St- John (1998) view ESP as an approach, not a product, as a result of transmission of science and technology, internal and international communication.

While it is very important that teachers take account of the ESP discourses, the wide variation in students English language proficiency across the provinces in Vietnam, including those at colleges and universities is a major issue for ESP teachers, especially when teaching a specialist subject such as science like civil engineering. In addition to the diversity of English language proficiency, there are also the challenges in relation to large classes, unqualified teachers who lack specialised knowledge, and the students' passive ways of learning, and teacher-made learning materials.

In the light of these sophisticated challenges, teachers are encouraged to take responsibility for changing their roles and making instructional changes to suit students' learning specific needs. Moreover, once students come to see their roles in ESP learning, they can become independent learners in their learning process of particular disciplines through their teachers' effective instructional approaches and needs analysis or assessment.

Needs Assessment:-

Several studies have examined students' needs from the perspectives of the learners and content teachers (Ali & Salih, 2013; Arik, 2002; Boran, 1994; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Jenkins, Jordan, & Weiland, 1993; Johns, 1981).

In a quantitative study with 100 students, 10 tourism lecturers, and 3 ESP lecturers, Boran (1994) collected data through a questionnaire to investigate the English language communication needs of students in a department of tourism education. The results showed that the students did not practice frequent speaking and listening skills in their ESP classes although these two skills were assumed to be the most important language skills in the students' future work. Students found it difficult to learn due to lack of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence word order issues. Boran also revealed that students and tourism lecturers perceived translation as the least important skill, whereas ESP lecturers viewed translation to be the third most important skill for students' target, after speaking and listening. Therefore, these challenges have indicated that more practice for these essential skills is needed to provide to students in ESP classes. The discrepancy among participants' perceptions implies that the roles of ESP lecturers should be considered in designing appropriate learning materials while identifying the English language needs of the learners.

A study by Arik (2002) examined learners' English language requirements in a Turkish medium university through a questionnaire from 177 content teachers. The results revealed that priority was given to reading skills as English language needs of the learners. This might indicate that these teachers found reading more important than other English language skills (listening, speaking, and writing) for students to learn ESP.

Two studies in the Vietnamese context (Duong, 2007; Nguyen, 2008) using mixed methods study were conducted to identify the students' needs, both for English as a Second Language (ESL) and as a foreign language (EFL) and English for Specific Purposes. In a study by Duong (2007) entitled *Meeting Students' Needs in Two EAP Programs in Vietnam and New Zealand*, she utilized class observations and interviews to explore students' needs, programs, and the level of focus and practice. In the New Zealand case, needs analysis was a central focus of the program, whereas, in Vietnam, students' needs were considered by course developers through informal exchanges with students, or teachers' personal observation and experience. Thus, formal needs analysis or assessment should be taken into account for the current study.

In a needs assessment on "A study on congruence between ESP course objectives and students' needs at Business Management Department, Vietnam Forestry University", Nguyen (2008) collected the data through two different questionnaires, one questionnaire for 187 students and another one for three teachers of Business Management Department of Vietnam Forestry. The results revealed that there are gaps between ESP course objectives and students' needs. This led to the need for insightful looks into how to improve the quality of ESP course at the university under investigation reported in this paper.

In a study using questionnaires to explore perceptions of 55 teachers in four colleges about the value of needs analysis of materials writing, Ali and Salih (2013) found that these teachers preferred using needs analysis as this type of analysis or assessment because it was noticed to be an important factor in developing ESP materials in Oman teaching context with regard to preparing qualified learners for both academic and non-academic skills.

Although the studies above have focused on language needs of students at different levels through the perceptions of students, administrators, and teachers of English and content teachers, English language learning needs from the perspectives of occupational purposes at a teaching and learning context such as that of Vietnam are not examined. This paper therefore provides insights into the needs of the students majoring in civil engineering at a vocational college.

Setting and Participants:-

At the college context for this present study, three majors students enrolled in include civil engineering, accounting and water supply and drainage engineering. Specific-subject teaching and learning materials or instructional approaches depended on students' future jobs. Thus, the course has not been developed timely or appropriately because the materials used in class were a mixture of various kinds of textbooks with unrelated topics. The text organizations based on reading tasks were provided to students with no guidelines. As a result, both teachers and learners met several problems and then they were likely to feel dissatisfied with these problems with regard to the course content and tasks in ESP courses. Such challenges in ESP classes presented as the setting for this present study become the key area of research in which account is taken into students' perceptions of their learning needs in relation to their academic and occupational purposes, materials development, and assessment.

There were two groups of participants in this study. The first group was made up of the second-year students of civil engineering of a vocational college. Their age ranged from 18 to 20 and their predominant gender was male. The second group was made up of teachers of English for Specific Purposes (ESP teachers) of this college. All of them have at least four-year experience in ESP teaching, and four of them got MA degree of TESOL.

One hundred and fifty students of civil engineering and eight teachers at English Department at this vocational school participated in this study. Ninety-six students (64%) had studied English for seven years at high school (a seven-year English program) while only forty students (2.7%) had learnt English for three years (a three-year English program) and twenty students (1.3%) had never studied English before since they had to learn French as a foreign language. However, before taking the ESP course at college, all of the students were required to study General English in the first semester of their first academic year.

Research Design:-

A quantitative, descriptive design was used to identify how students and teachers perceived the learning needs of civil engineering second-year students. In this paper, insights into the perceptions about learning needs were gained through two main questionnaires. The purpose of using questionnaires was to collect a huge amount of information from a large population within only little time and little extended writing from the participants, as noted by Oppenheim (2000) and Fraenkel and his colleagues (2012).

The questionnaires employed in this present study were adapted from those of Çelik (2003). There are four parts of questionnaires, namely, students, former students, content teachers, and employers. Each part consists of question items of four language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. In the present study, two questionnaires focused on students and teachers only. The questionnaires for students consist of twenty-eight items; while those for teachers include twenty items. The question items were made up of two types: five-point Likert-scale and multiple response ones. The first section included an enquiry into the general information about the importance of English to participants and the second section was asked about language skills. The questionnaires were initially designed in English and then translated into Vietnamese in order for respondents to the questionnaires to feel comfortable and to ensure no information was missing or confusion made, even to the respondents who were not good at English language use could understand the questions and complete the questionnaires. There were four different types of Likert-scale questions in the two questionnaires. A five-point response scale was used to explore participants' perceptions about ESP course and students' English proficiency (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). A four-point response scale was used to identify the frequency of civil engineering students' use of English (1= everyday; 2= a few times a week, 3= a few times a month, 4= never). The second four-point scale was used to determine the civil engineering students' English language use ability from the perspectives of students and those of teachers (1= very well, 2= well, 3= not very well, 4= not well at all). The third four-point scale was used to specify the required English language ability for the civil engineering students with regard to their success in future occupations (1= very important, 2=important, 3= somewhat important, 4= not important).

The first two questions were about the necessity of the ESP course for the students' success at the college, and in their future occupations respectively. The third question is associated with whether there would be a relationship between the ESP content and that of the set course text of the civil engineering department. The fourth question asks the need for a connection between the English course book and the ESP courses. The last five questions focus on students' English proficiency in relation to college studies and their future jobs. The questions in the second part of both questionnaires, labeled as "skills", include questions about the use of language skills related to civil engineering. The rationale behind these questions was to find out what students' English skills requirements are, and thus discovered their expectations of the ESP course.

The questionnaire for the students was piloted in one random class among the nine classes of the same course of the vocational college. This questionnaire was piloted with 20 students. The questionnaire for ESP teachers was delivered to five teachers of the community college since this school had civil engineering students. The Cronbach's alphas were calculated so that the reliability coefficients of the questionnaires could be determined. The reliability coefficient (α) values are 0.76 to the questionnaire for students, and 0.86 to the questionnaire for ESP teachers. These results indicate the reliability of the questionnaires as a whole.

Findings:-

The research question was focused on how teachers and students perceived the academic and occupational needs of ESP learning materials in civil engineering at a vocational college. The analysis of the questionnaires revealed that both teachers and students shared similar views on the needs for tailoring the course contents and language skills to make it communicative to students, as shown in the following tables.

Students' perceptions about their English language proficiency:-

Table 1 presents students' perceptions of their English language proficiency.

Table 1:- Students' perceptions about their own English proficiency

Skills	Mean	SD
Listening	3.35	0.73
Speaking	3.53	0.64
Reading	3.14	0.83
Writing	3.61	0.70

As mentioned earlier, the response scale from 1 to 5 was used to examine participants' perceptions about students' English proficiency, specifying that with 1 as 'strongly disagree' and 5 as 'strongly agree'. Table 1 shows the overall mean scores for the perceptions of the students' English proficiency ranged from 3.14 to 3.61, indicating that students thought they were not good at four language skills. In particular, the results reveal that writing ($M=3.61$) was reported the skill to be least known in their studies, corresponding to the option of 'not well at all' ($M= 3.26-4.0$) while reading ($M=3.14$) was to some extent specified to be not very well practiced ($M=2.51-3.25$), equivalent with 'not very well'.

Table 2 shows the students' responses to the frequency of their English language use outside the classroom. They were asked to rate four different skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The frequencies and percentages were obtained.

Table 2:- Frequency of students' English language use

Skills	everyday	few times a week	few times a month	never
Listening	4 2.7%	11 7.3%	46 30.7%	89 59.3%
Speaking	3 2%	9 6%	35 23.3%	103 68.7%
Reading	3 2%	11 7.3%	46 30.7%	90 60%
Writing	2 1.3%	5 3.3%	26 17.3%	117 78%

As indicated in Table 2, the descriptive analysis reveals that more than half of the students never used any of the four English language skills outside the classroom. Particularly, 89 respondents (59.3%) specified that they never listened to English, 90 students (60%) reported never read English materials, 103 students (68.7%) and 117 students (78%) never spoke and wrote English at all during their ESP courses respectively. About one-third of the students ($n=150$) believed that listening and reading were the skills they used only few times a month (30.7%), and 11 students (7.3%) reported using these two skills only a few times a week. For the most frequently used skill, only 4 students (2.7%) reported listening to English every day and 2 students (1.3%) reported writing English outside the classroom practice.

Table 3 shows the students' perceptions towards the reasons for their failure in the ESP course.

Table 3:- Students' perceptions towards the reasons for their failure in the ESP course

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
not taught grammar	24	16
not taught vocabulary	58	38.7
not taught specialist vocabulary	112	74.7
not enough practice in reading	98	65.3
not enough practice in pronunciation	130	86.7
not enough practice in listening	119	79.3
not enough practice in speaking	139	92.7
not enough practice in writing	107	71.3

As can be seen from Table 3, when asked whether students had any difficulties in learning ESP course, most of them specified that lack of speaking and pronunciation practice caused difficulties for them to study ESP course, followed by listening (79.3%), specialist vocabulary (74.7%), writing (71.3%), and reading (65.3%) problems. However, only a small group of students perceived lack of grammar instruction and general vocabulary of English as problematic during their ESP studies (16% and 38.7%, respectively).

Students' and teachers' perceptions towards current ESP course contents:-

Table 4 below presents students' perceptions towards the ESP course contents. There are two questions for this subject. In the first question, students were asked about the necessity of a course book in the ESP course. The five items of the second question focused on the students' responses to evaluate the ESP course contents. In particular, the five-item question is about the quality of materials (Q2a), the total number of course hours (Q2b), the audio-

visual aids (Q2c), the relevance of textbook (Q2d), and the key terminology (Q2e) These questions were rated by five-point Likert-scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

Table 4:- Students’ perceptions of the ESP course contents

Questions	Q1	Q2a	Q2b	Q2c	Q2d	Q2e
Mean	4.26	2.0	1.92	1.73	1.33	1.61
Standard Deviation	0.68	0.73	0.74	0.68	0.47	0.71

With regard to the first question about the necessity of a course book for the ESP course, as shown in Table 4, , the mean score ($M= 4.26$) of students’ perceptions of the ESP course contents indicates that there was the strong need for the inclusion of a course book for the ESP course. The mean scores of the quality of materials ($M= 2.0$) and the numbers of the course hours ($M= 1.92$) corresponding to “disagree” on the five-point response scale indicate that students thought that the materials were of no quality and that the total amount of time spent to learn ESP course was limited. Similarly, the results of the last three options of the second question regarding the adequacy of the audio-visual aids ($M=1.73$), the text books ($M=1.33$) and key terminology ($M=1.61$) reveal strong disagreement among the students. It can be concluded that these students perceived the importance of having an improved ESP course material.

Table 5 below shows the perceptions of students and teachers towards ESP course and students’ English proficiency. Based on the mean scores, it was observed that both students and teachers strongly agreed with the stated item in the survey ($M=4.23$ and $M= 4.50$), given the five-point response scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 as strongly disagree; 5 as strongly agree; and 3 as unsure). In other words, they specified that the ESP course needed to be included in the program to ensure the students’ academic success at college. Similarly, they also acknowledged that the reasons for student learning ESP were for their future careers ($M=4.23$ and $M=4.38$). However, whereas students’ responses indicate that the ESP course contents and the delivery of their content subject courses were strongly related ($M=4.33$), teachers tended to agree with this connectedness ($M=3.75$). Both students and teachers to some extent agreed on the statement that there was a connection between ESP coursebook and students’ content courses ($M=3.39$ and $M=3.75$). It can be concluded that the ESP coursebook that students were currently learning did not match their needs with regard to their career targets. Neither did the students nor teachers reach a general consensus on the adequacy of students’ English language proficiency ($M=2.0$ and $M=2.25$, respectively) in response to the existing ESP course design.

Table 5:- Student and teacher perceptions of ESP course and students’ English proficiency

Questions	Participants	Mean	SD
1. the necessity of the ESP course for students’ success at college	Students Teachers	4.23 4.50	0.55 0.53
2. the necessity of the ESP course for students’ success in future occupations	Students Teachers	4.23 4.38	0.68 0.52
3. the connection between the ESP contents and students’ content courses	Students Teachers	4.33 3.75	0.70 0.46
4. the connection between the ESP course book and students’ content courses	Students Teachers	3.39 3.75	0.68 0.46
5. sufficiency of students’ English language levels for their future professional success	Students Teachers	2.0 2.25	0.63 0.46

Table 6 below shows the students’ perceptions towards the need for designing ESP course. 114 students (76%) specified that they did not agree that designing ESP course design was needed, whereas only 15 students (10%) reported the need for this necessity.

Table 6:- Students’ perceptions about the design of the current ESP course

	strongly disagree	disagree	not sure	agree	strongly agree
Frequency	42	72	21	7	8
Percentage	28	48	14	4.7	5.3

Table 7:- Student and teacher perceptions about students' reasons for learning English

Purposes	Participants	Frequency	Percentage
to pass the English courses	Students	103	68.7
	Teachers	6	75
to serve future careers	Students	89	59.3
	Teachers	5	65.5
to pursue further education	Students	36	24
	Teachers	3	37.5
to communicate with foreigners	Students	82	54.7
	Teachers	4	50

As can be seen from Table 7, 68.7% of the students acknowledged that they needed English to pass their English courses and more than half of them claimed that they were learning English for their future careers (59.3%). It can be interpreted from these two responses that they recognized the importance of studying English towards academic and occupational purposes. So did the teachers. However, both students and teachers did not think English could assist students in doing further their education while it was intended for communicative purposes with foreigners.

Table 8 below indicates perceptions of students and teachers towards the English language skills needed for civil engineering students' future career success.

Table 8:- Student and teacher's perceptions about English skills for students' careers

Skills	Participants	Mean	SD
Listening	Students	1.94	.74
	Teachers	2.38	.74
Speaking	Students	1.52	.72
	Teachers	2.0	.76
Reading	Students	1.39	.61
	Teachers	1.75	.71
Writing	Students	2.12	.69
	Teachers	2.25	.46

Given the response scale from 1 to 4, with 1 as 'very important' and 2 as 'important' as described earlier, the mean values ($M=1.94$ and $M=2.38$) would indicate that while students considered the listening skill as very important for them to succeed in their careers, teachers perceived this language skill as somewhat important. With regard to speaking, there was a slight difference in the ways teachers and students responded to the role it played. While teachers recognized its importance, students considered it very important and they needed in their future careers. There was a strong agreement among teachers and students when they specified that reading was the most important language skill needed in students' future work ($M=1.75$ and $M=1.39$, respectively). The similar mean scores about the writing skill were observed by both teachers and students ($M=2.25$ and $M=2.12$), indicating that this skill was important.

Table 9 presents perceptions of students and teachers towards reading and speaking skills for students' future careers.

Table 9:- Perceptions of students and teachers about reading and speaking skills

	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
READING	Teachers		Students	
Exam books	3	37.5	94	62.7
Reference books	7	87.5	92	61.3
Articles, papers	5	65.5	98	65.3
Business letters, contracts	6	75	98	65.3
Internet materials	7	87.5	127	84.7
SPEAKING				
presentations	6	75	82	54.7
professional meetings	5	65.5	109	72.7
Arranging appointments	6	75	110	73.3
Talking to foreigners	7	87.5	148	98.7
drawings and designs	7	87.5	131	87.3

As can be seen from Table 9, with regard to reading materials, both teachers and students had positive perceptions towards the impact of Internet materials on students' careers. While teachers specified that reference books were equally important to Internet materials, students considered articles and business letters or contracts as the second most important. Exam and reference books were seen as needed by more than half of the students (62.7% and 61.3%, respectively) while only 37 % of the teachers regarded exam books as the least important of the five sub-reading materials.

With regard to the question about speaking materials, while teachers were aware of the benefits that students could have by talking to foreigners and interpreting drawing and designs, almost all students (98.7%) recognized talking to foreigners as the most important part needed for their future careers. The tasks of arranging appointments and making presentations related to ESP was ranked second by the teachers (75%), whereas, the latter was seen the least important by students (54.7%). Contrary to what more than half of the teachers (65.5%) considered professional meetings as the least important, nearly two thirds of students (72.7%) ranked this category the fourth. Interpretation of drawings and designs and arrangement of appointments were perceived as second and third respectively by the students.

Table 10 shows perceptions of students and teachers towards writing skills required of civil engineering students' careers.

Table 10:- Perceptions of students and teachers about students' writing requirements

	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
WRITING	Teachers		Students	
Job application letters	8	100	145	96.7
Job acceptance and refusal letters	5	65.5	84	65
Project reports	6	75	116	77.3
Business letters	6	75	115	76.7
Contracts	7	87.5	140	93.3
Invitation, thank-you letters	4	50	65	43.3
Note-taking in meetings	5	65.5	115	76.7
CV or resume	8	100	141	94
emails	7	87.5	98	65.3

As can be seen from Table 10, there was a general consensus between teachers and students about the need to include writing job application letters and résumé in the ESP course. They recognized these two skills as the most important of the nine writing contents. Similarly, they shared similar views that the ESP course should focus on writing contracts as the second, writing reports, letters as the third, writing acceptance or refusal letters and note-taking in meetings as fourth, and writing invitation or thank-you letters as the last.

Discussion:-

The purpose of the present study was to investigate how teachers and students perceived the learning needs of civil engineering students at a vocational college in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. Much research has advocated the view that once the needs of the learners are identified, teachers can determine or find out how to facilitate students to better learn their subject majors, as noted by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Nunan (1988a), and Dudley-Evans and St-John (1998). In particular, this study attempted to determine the academic and occupational English language needs of the target group by considering audiences (students and teachers) as defined by Holliday and Cooke (1982), Brown and Armstrong (1997), and Jordan (1997).

The findings show that the participating students and teachers held positive perceptions about the necessity of an ESP course for civil engineering students in a vocational college. Although there were some variations between ESP teachers and civil engineering students, there is a general tendency among respondents that the ESP should reflect the content courses and language skills that meet the students' current and future academic and occupational purposes.

The findings of the needs for the inclusion of ESP instruction in the present study provide insights into how teachers can be encouraged to design new ESP curriculum or syllabi because this supports the claim by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Dudley-Evans and St-John (1998), and Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) who highlight that ESP

courses are centered on meeting specific needs of the learners. ESP course designers therefore must consider how to incorporate students' learning needs into specific contexts in relation to their future jobs, thereby preparing them for work quality. Although analysis of students' perceptions of their formal English language proficiency revealed that they were not good at or even never used any of the four English language skills, it was observed that there is a need to include language skills in ESP course, as advocated by Gatehouse (2001), Tsao (2011), Sharhriari and Behjat (2014), and Pham and Ta (2016). Gatehouse (2001) also confirms that ESP is characterized by learning-centred approach; therefore, it is the teachers who know best to identify the changes in learners' needs and then to tailor their ESP syllabi by integrating four language skills into their lessons, thereby making subject content knowledge accessible and communicative to students.

The specific problems of the course perceived as inadequate by the students include the quality of materials, audio-visual aids, total numbers of course hours, the coursebook, and key terminology. Lack of practice on speaking and pronunciation was reported to be the most prominent reason for their failure in ESP learning. This finding supports the challenges these students encountered as mentioned earlier, and therefore, it can be inferred that neither were these two skills taught nor such abilities of students assessed. Other skills such as listening, writing, and reading which were also reported inadequate reveal that students were likely not to be exposed to different skills contexts and thus, there is a strong need for having a renewed and improved ESP course material to adapt to civil engineering students. However, the teachers felt that listening skills, for example, were needed in students' occupational success or regarded as target needs (e.g., Belcher, 2004; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Salehi, Khadivar, Babaei, & Singh, 2015; Shrestha, 2015). Therefore, curriculum developers and EFL teachers should focus on students' target listening needs as one further step of determining the goals and objectives of the course to reach the target needs.

The findings show that both students and teachers' responses were highly weighted towards materials on the Internet. Since the reading materials accessible on Internet are authentic, these allow students to expose to real language applicable to meeting their academic and occupational needs. On the other hand, once timely and appropriately designed and implemented, these content-related materials can serve as a base for an ESP curriculum (Dumitrescu, 2000; Tomlinson, 2012). This understanding suggests a positive recognition of the explosion and information technological advances and the Internet, which may fit well with the notion of ESP as a learner-centered and content-based approach, as Chien and Hsu (2010) and Rahman (2015) emphasize. In addition, most of the other reading materials were also perceived as important for the students' success by most of the participants. However, what ESP teachers perceived reference books, textbooks, and business letters as important at a higher level compared to students' implies that the teachers were more aware of the students' academic reading requirements in terms of the types of materials and the frequency of reading requirements required in the workplace.

Conclusions:-

The findings from the current study provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of considering students' needs in the ESP course design and have given them a forum to express their voices in relation to their English language proficiency and course requirements.

The present study sheds new light on understanding of student and teacher perceptions of civil engineering students in a vocational college and also addresses some pedagogical implications for ESP teachers and curriculum developers in this subject area. Firstly, awareness of the need for an innovative ESP course taught to civil engineering students in this college necessitates changes in teachers' roles and instructional approaches in order to engage students in more effective learning in ESP classes. Once the learning needs assessment of students are considered toward the course contents, teachers are encouraged to question and improve the quality of their syllabi or lecture notes, which ensures the inclusion of the English language skills integration match occupational needs required in ESP classes. Secondly, teachers should take into account the potential problems of English language use students may encounter in their learning ESP contexts which influence their expected outcomes. In doing so, this renewed ESP course can empower the learners for their future careers from the learning-centered perspectives. Thirdly, as responses to the importance of speaking skills needed to be included in ESP course, both teachers and curriculum developers or designers should pay much attention to interactive speaking activities including face-to-face conversations, efficient presenting techniques in English, job-related meetings, discussions in job-related meetings, interpretation of drawings and designs, or arrangements of appointments and the like. These interactive speaking activities, if timely and appropriately incorporated into the new course, can maximise student speaking skills, which aligns with the key feature of ESP, communicative-based. It is rewarding and encouraging thing for ESP teachers to endeavour to create new teaching materials and strategies that suit students' current learning needs

and their future occupational needs since this action helps teachers develop their professional knowledge and careers themselves.

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