



## DESIGNING AN ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES (EBP) COURSE: A TASK-BASED AND PROBLEM-BASED APPROACH FOR PRE- INTERMEDIATE BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

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**Annotation.** This research explores the development of an English for Business Purposes (EBP) course tailored for pre-intermediate business professionals. The study focuses on employing task-based learning (TBL) and problem-based learning (PBL) approaches to enhance business communication skills. A detailed needs analysis is conducted to identify the language requirements of business professionals, emphasizing speaking, writing, and listening skills essential for workplace communication. The study also examines the role of discourse analysis in shaping course content and ensuring contextual relevance. By integrating PBL and discourse-based methodologies, the course aims to improve participants' linguistic competence, problem-solving abilities, and intercultural communication skills, ultimately preparing them for professional success in the global business environment.

**Keywords:** English for Business Purposes (EBP), ESP Course Design, Task-Based Learning (TBL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Needs Analysis, Business Communication Skills, Discourse Analysis, Intercultural Communication, Professional English Training, Workplace Communication

### INTRODUCTION

This ESP course is designed to assist business managers with the English language competence and communication skills required to be successful in their areas. For this ESP project, I have selected English for Business Purposes (EBP)



context as business English is highly desired skill in our modern world. Creating English for Business project provide me valuable information and skills. While creating Business context, my overall language proficiency is enhanced as it focuses on business related vocabulary and grammar, writing conventions that can be beneficial for communication skills. As an ESP practitioner, I need to have enough knowledge and skills such as communication competences and intercultural competence to accommodate my learners' need. As Woodrow (2018) "As the Business world keeps changing, it is an ongoing process to the map the knowledge, capabilities and skills that are required of international business professionals" (p. 247). I have chosen the framework of English for Lawyers by Jill Northcott from Woodrow (2018) article for my ESP project. This framework consists of Rational for ESP course, Participants, Lenth of course, Needs analysis, Approach to course design, Course aims, Syllabus list, Assessment, Special issues and constraints encountered, Course materials. This framework can be an asset for developing my ESP project for my selected EBP context. I have selected this framework as a model for my EBP context since it is well-designed and the course focused on enhancing English language proficiency to communicate with their clients and colleges like a EBP context. Northcott (2018) claimed that "The course has primarily targeted European commercial lawyers who need to develop their English for use either with clients from other jurisdictions and language backgrounds or colleagues from other law firms" (p. 206).

## METHODS

In ESP course, needs analysis play a vital role to design a specific course effectively and relevantly, and fulfill learners' specific needs. The target of needs analysis is to identify the main needs of participants in EBP course. As Serafini et al (2015) defined that "...a well-conducted NA can lead to courses designed to ensure that students will learn precisely what they need" (p. 1). To conduct effective and



relevant needs analysis, I will employ diverse strategies that include variety of data collection methods. I will also use course readings to get deeper insight about these methods. Flowerdew (2013) mentioned that “Needs analysis, carried out to establish the “what” and the “how” of a course, is the first stage in ESP course development, followed by curriculum design, materials selection, methodology, assessment, and evaluation” (p. 325). I will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct needs analysis since the combination of these methods provides a deeper insight of needs of a target group of learners, and it allows to compare and contrast the needs of different groups of learners. Woodrow (2018) defined that “Information about learner needs can be collected using quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, language audits and language tests, and/or qualitative methods, such as interviews, observations and discourse analysis” (p. 24). I will conduct semi-structured interviews with EBP participants to identify their target needs and problems. Questionnaire will be created according to interviews that was taken in the first step to identify the challenges, language and cultural backgrounds or personal goal for mastering English language and so on. Data gathered with the assistance of in-service professionals to determine the most difficult and important activities that EBP participants may experience during the course.

The following course articles will help me to organize needs analysis procedure for my EBP project. These are Needs analysis for specialized learner populations: Essential methodological improvements by Serafini et al (2015) and Needs analysis by Viana et al (2019). These course readings provide a clear procedure, methods, organization and guidelines to conduct a needs analysis by providing step-by step process. In terms of semi-structured interviews, it was organized to identify learners’ problems and their specific needs. A team of student researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with NS and NNS domain experts and in-service learners to identify target tasks and language barriers, identifying problem areas (Serafini et al, 2015).



The next step is questionnaire based on semi-structured interview to clarify learners' language backgrounds and some struggles while acquiring English language. Questionnaire findings may necessitate follow-up procedures, such as additional interviews and participant journals, if there are disparities in responses from different groups or methods. (Serafini et al, 2015). Organizing data for needs analysis is crucial for designing appropriate course syllabi and materials, despite the time-consuming and tiring process (Viana et al, 2019). By the help of these course readings, I will identify the specific needs of my participant in a EBP context. After gathering all information from the needs analysis, I will design ESP curriculum to accommodate the needs of my participant and achieve their success in their field.

I chose PBL (Problem-based learning) and Discourse analysis approaches for ESP course design. Since I picked an EBP setting for my project, I discovered that these approaches are acceptable and relevant for my target group of students. Furthermore, these approaches allow me to meet the demands of my learners, who are primarily concerned with improving their communication skills. Problem-based learning is a learner-centered learning strategy that aims to strengthen learners' critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication abilities by presenting them with problems to solve. It can help improve collaboration in the classroom by allowing students to collaborate in small groups to analyze and debate problems. As Woodrow (2018) mentioned that "The focus of the PBL approach to learning and teaching is based on the premise that learning occurs during the process of investigating and producing a solution to a problem" (p. 131). Furthermore, Woodrow emphasized the positives of PBL approach in his article, such as how it is student-centered, requires a high degree of communication, aligns with current methodological approaches, and is motivating to learners. For ESP practitioner, the content knowledge is not essential. According to Woodrow's (2018) explanation "The role of content in PBL is central. PBL can compensate for an ESP practitioner's lack of subject knowledge because of the student-driven nature of the approach. The





solution of the problem in PBL does not depend on the ESP practitioner's expertise" (p. 134). I will implement diverse discussions and debates according to my learners' field using authentic materials in this course. The second approach that I will use in my course design is the discourse analysis approach, which emphasizes the use of language in various contexts to produce meaningful interaction. As Woodrow (2018) defined that "Discourse may be classed as the central elements of ESP courses" (p. 110). It is relevant and appropriate for ESP students who need to comprehend and utilize English successfully in a variety of circumstances. As Woodrow (2018) claimed that "ESP learners need to know how to construct and understand situation-specific discourse in order to function effectively in the target communication situation" (p.110). Considering the participants in this program need to develop their writing and speaking abilities, as well as their grasp of English and context-appropriate language skills, I discovered that the discourse analysis approach is most applicable and beneficial to meet their goals and achieve success in business contexts. I can create dynamic and engaging learning environments in the classroom by including both PBL and discourse analysis methodologies into my course design. This mix of approaches is responsible for strengthening participants' communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

## RESULTS

Throughout the ESP course, I have acquired valuable knowledge that make educators professional in ESP field. Never have I taught ESP participants and I totally did not know to teach them, how to design ESP project. While studying ESP course with sophisticated professor, I have gained crucial knowledge that help me how to design my own ESP project. In TESOL program in my masters' degree, I have already mastered designing lesson plan, creating SMART objectives, developing materials, conducting needs analysis, creating assessments for courses. All I have mastered throughout the program was a great help me to design this ESP



projects. In ESP course, I have learners to select appropriate authentic materials to accommodate learners' specific needs, how to teach ESP participants according to their specific needs, interests, how to integrate approaches in ESP course design and how to overcome the challenges while integrating technologies and assessing ESP participants. While making in outlining and preparing my ESP project, I have read a lot of course readings to make my projects perfect. The course readings provided me valuable and crucial information about ESP and its different contexts, methodologies, frameworks that I can employ for my own ESP project. The most informative course reading is Woodrow's article as it provided the different ESP contexts that I have used as a framework for my ESP project. I have chosen EBP context for my project and I have selected English for Lawyers by Jill Northcott as a framework from Woodrow (2018) articles. This course reading gave clear instruction and model with each section such as who is participants, length of course, needs analysis and other important points. As Woodrow (2018) defined that "Each of the course outlines needs analysis, an approach to course design, course outlines and sample classroom task" (p. 185).

## DISCUSSION

I have made a decision to integrate PBL (Problem-based learning) and discourse analysis approaches for my course design. To select appropriate and relevant approaches for this course, the course readings provide me valuable information and give deeper insight about these approaches. Woodrow discussed clearly these approaches with relevant examples in his article. After reading and analyzing Woodrow' articles and perspectives about PBL and Discourse analysis, I found them the most appropriate and effective approaches for this course design to accommodate target participants' specific needs. Woodrow (2018) noted that "Discourse analysis, like genre, has had a significant influence on ESP knowledge and course design. In terms of knowledge, discourse analysis provides deep insights



into the demands of target communicative situations in ESP” (p. 110). In chapter twelve from Woodrow article, PBL and case-study approaches are discussed and gave advantages and disadvantages of PBL approaches in the table. Although PBL approach has some challenges, its benefits are appropriate for my course. My participants need to develop their problem-solving ability, collaboration ability when they will have crucial milestone or business meetings. Taking into consideration the advantages of both approaches according to the course reading, I found them the most suitable and effective approach for this target group of learners. After developing course approaches, I have design course objectives in separate content and language objectives. While creating course objectives Woodrow’s article is the best example and framework. However, creating content and language objectives, I needed to look through the course readings from Lesson Planning course. I have tried to use SMART objectives for this course objectives. All I have learned from ESP course allows me to design my own ESP course project. Although, this is my first ESP course project, I have gained a great body of valuable practical knowledge that make me mastered educator.

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