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From Real-World Communication and Critical Reflection in English for Specific Purposes for Stimulating Job Readiness

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ABSTRACT

The integration of pragmatic as part of real-world communication in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that specifically enhance work readiness and promote transformational thinking are still limited. To fill the gap, this study explores what are the learners' needs in English for specific classes particularly for some non-English departments, how to develop ESP learning model that integrate Critical Reflection and Real-World Communication (RWC) to support work readiness. How do RWC and Critical Reflection affects learners' job readiness. This study applies research and development by distributing open and closed surveys that evaluate non-English study program learners' job readiness for the workforce and focus groups and interviews with educators and practitioners. In analyzing the data, thematic analysis and descriptive statistic were employed to reveal the themes and dataset including mean, median, mode and visualized them in charts and tables. Findings reveal that learners' confidence and competency in professional situations are increased by implementing pragmatic methods, such as speech act, politeness strategies, cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, context-sensitive communication, critical reflection, and adaptive language use. This study also finds the value of transformative thinking in cultivating an attitude that values flexibility. The learners were given the tools they need to take an active role in their professional growth by encouraging critical thinking on language



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use and its consequences in diverse circumstances. Finally, efficient communication techniques can improve work preparation and foster life-changing learning opportunities.

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes; job readiness; pragmatic approaches; transformative thinking.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of job readiness remains complicated and unsolved in Indonesia. The gap between academic institutions and business sectors is shown by the incompatibility of graduates' abilities with industry demands. The competency levels needed in the industry are challenging for many university graduates to satisfy, particularly when it comes to communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking abilities (Nambiar et al., 2019). Graduates also struggle with cultural awareness of global contexts, which is made worse by their lack of local cultural knowledge. More importantly, the inadequate real-world communication in English, particularly in professional settings or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and low of Critical Reflection are a real obstacle to the competitiveness of the Indonesian labour force in the international marketplace.

Real-world communication (RWC) refers to the capacity to negotiate and communicate effectively in the actual world while taking cultural factors into account. Pragmatic skills as part of RWC lead the speakers to communicate ideas through language in a variety of real-life situations is known as understanding cultural norms, modifying communication tone, and knowing how to react appropriately in both formal and informal settings are. In addition, critical reflection refers to the capacity to assess experience and beliefs to identify areas for personal growth. One may evaluate job experience, comprehend strengths and flaws, and create better solutions in the future with the help of critical reflection. In the modern workplace, both critical reflection and real-world communication (RWC) are substantial abilities that can assist the capacity to cooperate, adapt, and solve issues in a range of complicated and dynamic scenarios.

Unfortunately, some learners still struggle with these two abilities: real-world communication (RWC) and critical reflection, because of teaching methods that primarily emphasize theory and memory with little regard for actual context. Because of this, graduates are frequently seen as less capable of handling difficulties at work, which lowers the standard of the workforce in both domestic and international markets. That condition is in line with the report that the number of labour force based on the National Labour Force Survey in August 2024 was 152.11 million people (Statistik, 2024). Based on education level,



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the largest contributor to unemployment in Indonesia is graduates of Vocational High Schools.

Vocational education and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are closely related in terms of preparing learners for the workforce since they both emphasize the development of skills that are important to business demands. While vocational education seeks to produce a ready-made trained workforce, ESP is intended to offer English language skills based on areas of specialization, such as tourism, health, agriculture, commerce, and others. It is also reasonable to argue that ESP has not been successful in promoting the development of critical professional communication skills in the workplace when vocational education fails to reduce unemployment rates. Work unpreparedness may be made worse by learners' incapacity to utilize English for practical communication and to handle expectations from around the world.

To increase graduates' preparation for work readiness, ESP can incorporate RWC and critical reflection. This is because learners may practice speaking English in authentic situations, including simulated job interviews, business negotiations, or cross-cultural conversation to learning the language conceptually. Conversely, critical reflection enables learners to assess their own learning, comprehend the communication obstacles they will encounter, and find solutions. Learners can develop practical skills useful to the workplace, enhance their critical thinking abilities, and become more receptive to professional demands in the workplace by integrating RWC and critical reflection in ESP. In addition to strengthening their proficiency in English, this develops graduates who can handle the complexities of communication in the age of globalization.

Separate studies have been carried out on employment preparedness, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), critical reflection, and real-world communication (RWC). For instance, some research have discussed the value of RWC in enhancing professional communication abilities, while others have emphasized the contribution of critical reflection to the development of critical thinking abilities and workplace flexibility. In a similar vein, ESP is frequently examined in relation to creating English especially for business purposes. However, there is currently very little research that specifically incorporates critical reflection and RWC into ESP learning as a combined approach to enhance work preparedness. Given that this integration has the potential to generate graduates who are not just linguistically competent but also able to communicate effectively, this presents a significant vacuum in the academic literature.



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To fill the gap, three research questions are formulated. First, what are the needs of learners in English for specific classes from some non-English departments, second, how to develop ESP learning model that integrate Critical Reflection and Real-World Communication (RWC) to support work readiness. Third, how do RWC and Critical Reflection affects learners' job readiness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In English for Specific Purposes (ESP), critical reflection and real-world communication (RWC) are related ideas. Each of the three contributes significantly to the development of work preparedness. While ESP adapts language instruction to professional demands, RWC provides an emphasis on interactions and situations which correspond to workplace circumstances. ESP fills the gap between language proficiency and employment needs. Critical reflection, on the other hand, drives learners to analyse their experiences, challenge presumptions, and cultivate critical and flexible thinking. Having the ability to think critically and adaptably can help you navigate challenging work circumstances. The three elements provide learners with the practical experience and transformational attitudes they need to succeed in a dynamic and diversified workplace.

2.1. *Real-world communication (RWC)*

Purposeful real-world communication plays an important role in learners' work readiness. Tentama et al., (2019) examined that self-efficacy in vocational education learners can improve learners' work readiness, including communication competence, and responsibility. Betta, (2015) pointed out that making learners work-ready requires a good education program that integrates research findings into the world of work. To develop communication skills for work readiness, Rangsarittikun & Todd, (2022) gave learners real-world communication tasks with social networks to improve their attitudes towards English and their communication skills. In addition, Sharndama et al., (2014) highlighted the importance of English for academic purposes in improving learners' language skills and preparing them for the demands of the labor market. Overall, these studies show that real-world communication for specific purposes is essential for developing learners' skills and work readiness.

(THOMAS, 1995) found that *real-world communication* as many of the business communication courses offered. Some workable solutions and efficient teaching strategies were offered to make the course more to be more real-world oriented and more beneficial



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for the business graduate. This was based on the worries of many employers that learners are not receiving the kind of real-world preparation they require in business communication. Additionally, recommendations on how to make better and more precisely prepare learners for the kind of communication activities were set. Therefore, learners would be required to perform in a corporate setting in their first post-graduation jobs.

2.1. English for Specific Purposes

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a field that aims to meet the specific English language learning needs of learners. This learning model focuses on the acquisition of language skills tailored to professional domains. Recent research has highlighted new approaches in ESP teaching to prepare learners for the demands of the world of work. Surani et al., (2023) Integrated technology into ESP course design for law learners. His findings showed there was an improvement in learning from student learning outcomes. However, the limited availability of materials and learning models for ESP encourages teachers to try to design these resources themselves but unfortunately the results have not been maximized. In the context of globalization, learning English is no longer justified for its own sake, but must be goal-oriented, as pointed out by Tran & Nhân (2022). ESP has become essential to help learners meet employer requirements in terms of communicating in English.

The following is a summary of recent studies conducted on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) throughout the last five years. With an emphasis on academic and professional settings, ESP has become a popular method of teaching English (Tan et al., 2023). English's rise as a lingua franca and the international market's growing globalization have propelled the field of ESP's major development during the past 50 years (Hyland & Jiang, 2021). Aspects of ESP such as needs analysis and course design have been the subject of recent research. According to research, needs analysis is crucial for matching the objectives and requirements of learners with the content and teaching methods of ESP courses (Ibrahim, 2020).

(Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014) revealed a six-step framework for teaching adult English language learners (ELLs) vocabulary related to learners' line of work. The researchers determined how these processes aided in the learning and use of work-specific vocabulary in three adult English Language Learners (ELLs), guided by research in ESL methodology and the transactional theory. Two levels of data were gathered: prior to and following training. Two topics were found in the first data analysis and utilized to create the curriculum for the training modules: (a) policies and procedures pertaining to federal and state laws, and (b) customer service. Following training, the second data analysis revealed two more



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elements that cut across the three cases: (a) employees' perceptions of their English language competency and (b) their development as writers.

2.1.1 Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is an important element in preparing learners for work. According to Miftāḥ et al., (2023), critical reflection is a process in which prospective learners can identify the assumptions of their actions, discover the source of problems associated with their learning experiences, question the meaning of their assumptions about events or experience, and develop alternative ways of taking corrective action. The process of critical reflection allows learners to interpret and develop the ability to work and take corrective action based on their experience, both ordinary and extraordinary.

Critical reflection also plays an important role in improving learners' ability to make attitudes and decisions. Zare & Biria, (2018) point out that responsibility for learning is central to the critical paradigm, and autonomous learners instruct themselves, assess themselves, and think through all the decisions they make. Although critical reflection is essential, it is often overlooked in English language learning for specific purposes. By developing these critical thinking skills, learners can improve their understanding and work readiness.

However, there are some challenges faced by instructors to integrate real-world communication and critical reflection into English for specific purposes teaching practices. They are insufficiency of authentic materials, heterogeneous student backgrounds having different competences, time limitation, resistance to change, and unstandardized of assessing real-world communication skills. Consequently, the strategy which can be applied to cope these challenges are building the collaboration with industries, designing project-based learning, support sustainable reflective practices through any case studies, adapt transformative assessment, and provide more chance both for instructor and learners to participate in faculty development programs. Furthermore, exploring local contexts and integrate them into global communication skills, ESP instructors should create challenging learning experiences that enhance both linguistic proficiency and critical thinking, for improving learners' job readiness.



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3. RESEARCH METHODS

Research and Development (R&D) is used to create an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learning model integrating Real-World Communication (RWC) and Critical Reflection to enhance learners' job preparedness, based on the research goals. This method involves several steps, beginning with requirements analysis, which identifies the gap between learners' skills and the expectations of the workplace. Next, a learning model based on the combination of RWC, and critical reflection is designed. After expert validation and discussion, the model is used in ESP classrooms and its efficacy is assessed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques.

326 learners who joined in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in various non-English department programs at several Indonesian universities served as the study's subjects. The study program's relevance served as the basis for the purposive selection process. To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the abilities required in the workplace, the study also included industry practitioners and ESP training professors. The study was carried out on February 20, 2024. Interviews, participant questionnaire distribution, and observations are a few of the steps that have been taken in the data collection process.

To identify the needs, difficulties, and opportunities to develop learning models, qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews with instructors, learners, and business professionals in addition to observations of ESP learning. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data on how well learners felt that the combination of Critical Reflection and Real-World Communication (RWC) had improved their abilities. The impact of implementing the learning model on learners' work preparedness was assessed using additional data in the form of pre-test and post-test findings. To make sure the data was reliable and genuine, triangulation techniques were used.

To find out patterns, themes, and insights regarding the use of Real-World Communication (RWC) and Critical Reflection in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learning model, qualitative data from observations and interviews were analysed with thematic analysis. Transcription, coding, and thorough data analysis are all part of this procedure. Meanwhile, the efficacy and perception of the suggested learning model were assessed using statistical analysis of quantitative data collected by distributing questionnaires to learners using descriptive approaches. A complete understanding of how the learning strategy affected learners' preparation for job readiness was then created by comparing and integrating the findings of these two types of study.

The implementation of transformative thinking in ESP teaching practice can contribute to long-term professional growth and adaptability. By stimulating learners to critically



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analyse the provided problem in real-live context, they can start to find the solution. Additionally, learners are encouraged to provide more problem-solving and decision-making in real-world contexts. By exposing critical reflection in the classroom learners can change their frame of reference to embraces resilience, and flexibility as they are the key in today's dynamic job market. Additionally, learners can better navigate complex workplace interactions, adjust to changing industry demands, and confidently participate in professional discourse with the support of transformative thinking, which ultimately equips them to thrive in a variety of global environments and continuously improve their skills.

4. RESULTS

Based on in-depth interviews and observations, the result is used to design the learning model. In addition, questionnaires result was used to gather quantitative data on learners' needs analysis and how well learners evaluate that the combination of real-world communication and critical reflection in ESP to support learners' job readiness.

4.1 Need Analysis Result

The total number of questions regarding learners' needs analysis are depicted in table 1.

Table 1. Results of the study.

No.	Indicators	Result A	Result B	Result C
1.	How important do you believe cultural understanding is in your field?	20	16	20
2.	Can you provide an example of a situation in your field where cultural awareness impacted communication?	12	20	16
3.	How often do you engage in critical thinking when communicating in English?	20	20	16
4.	What types of critical thinking skills do you think are necessary for effective communication in your field?	16	20	20
	Total	66	76	72



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4.1.1 Sub heading 2

For Figures 1, learners choose their preference and their fell about their level of their skill to be improved.

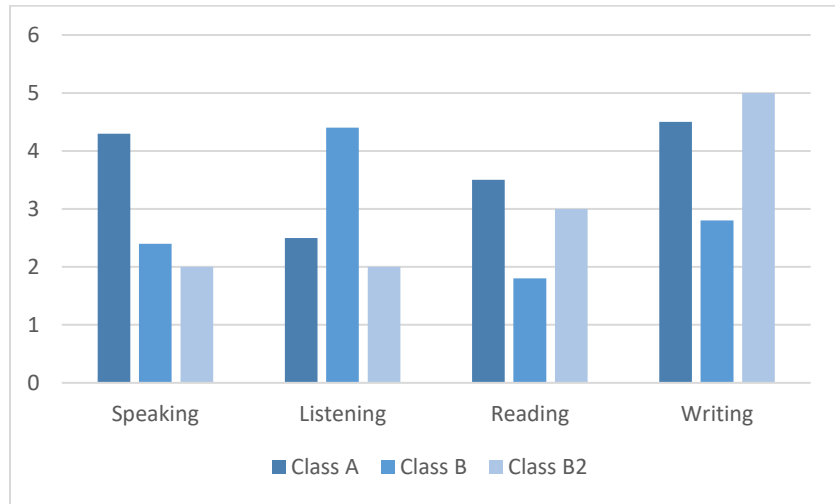
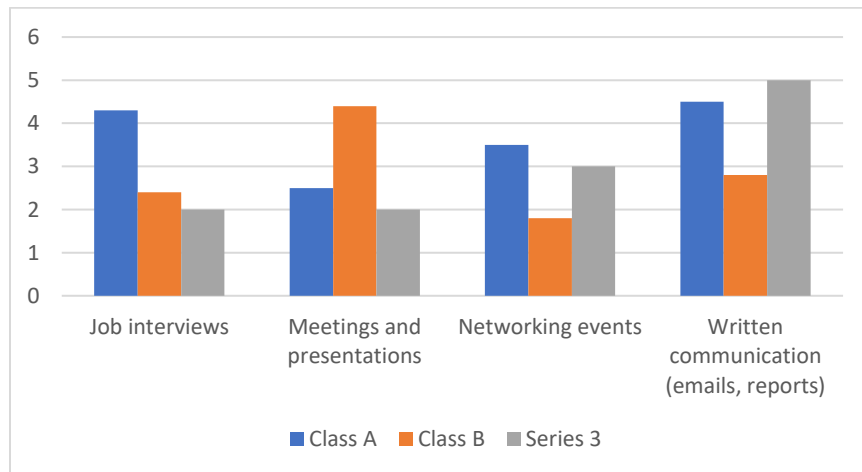


Figure 1. Skills do learners feel need the most improvement





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Figure 2. Professional contexts Learners anticipate using English

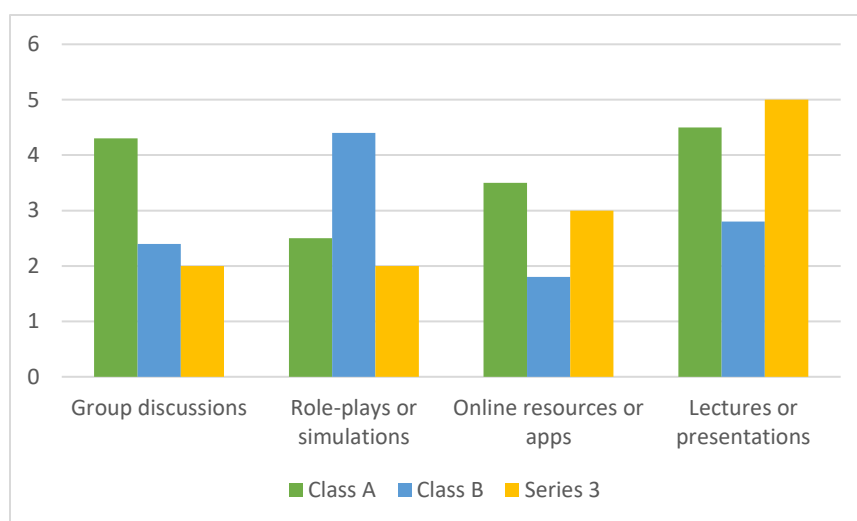


Figure 3. The most effective learning methods for improving language skills

1.2 The Integration of real-world communication and critical reflection in ESP to support learners' job readiness

To support learners' Job readiness, the learning model consist of some English skills such as Speaking Listening, Reading, and Writing. Regarding the learning activities the learning model covers Job interviews, Meetings and presentations, Networking events, Written communication (emails, reports), Other (please specify). Additionally, for the learning scenarios it covers Group discussions b. Role-plays or simulations c. Online resources or apps d. Lectures or presentations e. Other (please specify). The visualization of the learning model integrating Real-World Communication (RWC) and Critical Reflection in an ESP context is depicted in figure 4 and 5.

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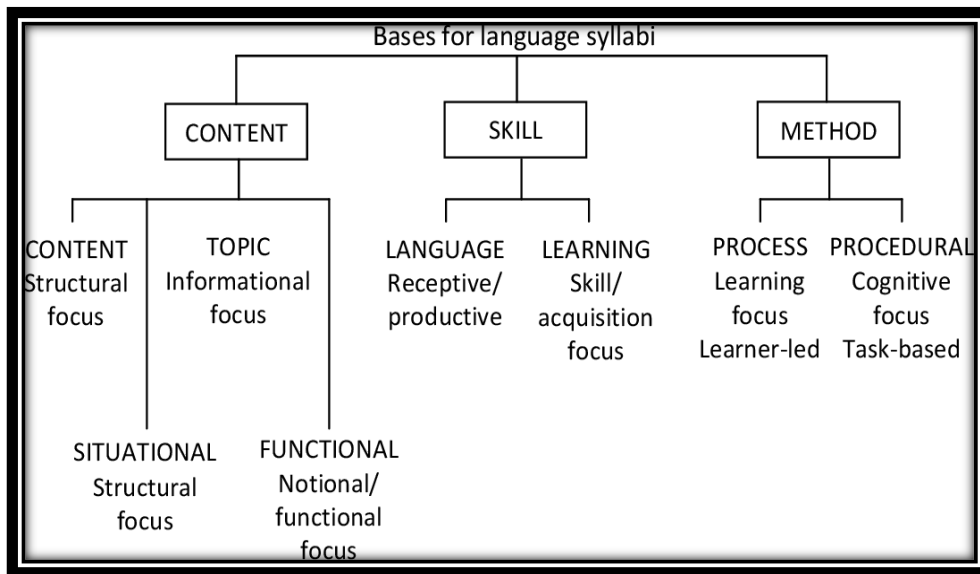


Figure 4. The learning model framework

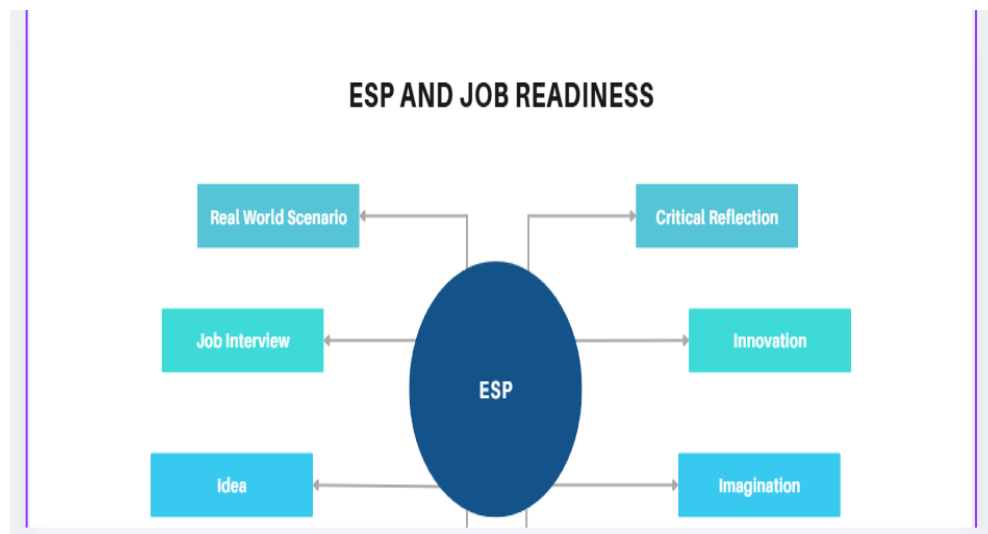


Figure 5. The learning models



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1.3 Learners' evaluation toward the proposed learning model based on the integration

Findings show that Real-World Communication and Critical Reflection improves learners' perceptions of their preparedness for the workforce. Most learners reported that their feeling were more confident, having better communication skills, and knowing what is expected of them in the job. It is advised to keep adding these components to the curriculum going ahead while addressing any areas that learners have pointed up as needing further work. Once real replies have been gathered, this summary can be tailored using certain data points. It gives a concise summary of how well the learning model is doing at getting learners ready for the workforce.

5. DISCUSSION

The demands of learners in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes from different non-English Department study programs are demonstrated by the research's findings. According to the research findings, learners require an ESP learning approach that incorporates Real-World Communication (RWC) and Critical Reflection in addition to technical language proficiency. The method must be created to help learners become more employable by developing their capacity to assess, analyse, and use English in authentic contexts. According to the study's findings, learners' job preparation is greatly impacted by the integration of RWC and Critical Reflection as their professional communication abilities, critical thinking abilities, and cultural sensitivity in a global workplace all improve. In the age of globalization, this learning approach is anticipated to be a pertinent innovation in meeting the demands of English language instruction for certain objectives.

Technically, there are some steps in bringing real-world communication (RWC) and critical reflection to enhance students' practical communication skills, particularly those in non-English departments to meet industry demands.

- Designing a project-based industry simulation and **authentic workplace scenario** such as meetings clients, presentations for job interviews, offering help, interactions and handle a meeting.
- Providing **real case studies for role-plays through** developing problem-solving skills.



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- Designing framework for **Industry-driven** communication such as **speech acts in workplace (negotiating, making request, and asking for suggestion)**
- **Integrating cross-cultural communication skills** and **politeness strategies** for work environments.
- Understanding communication norms in different industries by using **professional discourse analysis**.
- Encouraging students to perform their speaking project and **reflect their communication performance** (e.g., appropriateness, clarity, effectiveness).
- Peer feedback sessions with industry-specific rubrics improve **awareness of professional expectations**.
- Designing interactive sessions by inviting **guest speakers from industries**.
- Exposing students to gain workplace discourse and encourage them to communicate professionally through **internships and job-shadowing experiences**.

Learners' job readiness can be greatly enhanced by integrating English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and critical reflection to the real-world communication. This finding is in line with research done by (Lin, 2018). Learners may practice language skills related to their future careers in contextual communication scenarios, and they can evaluate and enhance their communication techniques by engaging in critical reflection (Jian, 2019).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) becomes more important as a necessary component of work preparedness. The unique communication requirements of learners in a variety of professional domains, including banking, healthcare, and tourism, are catered for in ESP courses. This focused approach gives learners the appropriate vocabulary and abilities they need for their vocations in addition to improving their language ability. Employers frequently give preference to applicants with specific English abilities that meet their business demands, according to research.

Gaining knowledge about ESP enables learners to advance their careers and increase their employability. Programs tailored to certain employment sectors assist learners in concentrating on pertinent terms and procedures, which can improve work performance and career progression. Furthermore, by focusing on the precise language abilities required for certain occupations, ESP training can expedite the learning process and save time.

Real-world communication (RWC) and critical reflection refers must be incorporated in ESP to improve work preparation. Building Real-world communication (RWC) English proficiency can open local and international prospects, which is especially pertinent in linguistically varied environments ("Introduction", 2022). To prepare learners to handle



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difficult societal issues, critical reflection is essential in this process since it fosters transformative thinking, and social responsibility (Perse, 2024). Additionally, contextual practice and cross-cultural experiences are emphasized in a paradigm for teaching global preparedness, since they are essential for preparing learners for a workforce that is internationally interconnected (Kerkhoff, 2017). Furthermore, ESP teacher training that incorporates transformational learning theory can help educators overcome the difficulties they encounter and make sure they are prepared to promote these abilities (Živković, 2014)

Critical reflection and the capacity to modify information for new situations lies in two aspects of transformative thinking. Fostering this kind of thinking in the classroom is essential for preparing learners for lifelong learning as well as for the workforce. This method improves learners' flexibility in international job markets by encouraging them to critically evaluate their learning experiences and use them in a variety of contexts.

More significant educational results may result from ESP courses that incorporate transformational thinking. Teachers may assist learners in cultivating a mentality that welcomes change and innovation by urging them to consider their professional settings as they learn the language². This is especially crucial in a world economy that is changing quickly and where flexibility is a valuable skill.

The concept of bridging local contexts with global opportunities emphasizes the need for education systems to align local training programs with international standards and expectations. This alignment can be achieved through ESP by focusing on global industry trends while respecting local cultural and economic contexts.

Pragmatic approaches in ESP involve using real-world scenarios and case studies that reflect both local and global challenges. Such methods not only make learning more relevant but also prepare learners to face the complexities of international work environments. This dual focus enhances learners' confidence and competence in navigating diverse professional landscapes.

Local culture is crucial to pragmatic ESP teaching practices because it influences communication norms, workplace goals, and interaction patterns. By incorporating cultural awareness into the curriculum, contextualizing language in situations that are both industry-specific and culturally relevant improves students' real-world communication abilities. While conversations on cultural differences, etiquette, and negotiation hone critical thinking for global workplaces, case studies, workplace simulations, and role-playing aid in the development of pragmatic flexibility and language fluency. The necessity of an ESP curriculum that promotes intercultural competency, flexibility, and pragmatic skills in addition to language fluency is highlighted by research. ESP courses can better prepare students with the language and



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cognitive abilities required to function in dynamic, multicultural workplaces by integrating reflective learning, case studies, and real-world business scenarios.

6. CONCLUSION

Real-world communication (RWC), critical reflection, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are fundamental concepts in language instruction and job preparedness that are combined in this study. Each has been acknowledged as a crucial component in fostering the growth of professional abilities. Although RWC's function in professional settings and critical reflection to improve critical thinking and decision-making has been examined in earlier research, its use in ESP learning to promote work preparedness is seldom covered in an integrated way. As a result, this study presents an integrated strategy in which ESP instructional design and practice simultaneously include RWC and critical reflection. This method attempts to develop learning that is reflective, contextual, and focused on the demands of the workplace. As a result, ESP may contribute to the literature on ESP and the creation of competency-based curricula while also bridging the skills gap between graduates and professional demands.

This study offers an innovative way to enhance graduates' job preparation by including critical reflection and real-world communication (RWC) into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction. This method offers a fresh framework that blends practical skills with critical reflection to provide English learning that is pertinent to the demands of the workplace, but it has not been extensively investigated, particularly in the context of vocational and professional education in Indonesia. This research will benefit various parties, including learners who will be better prepared to face professional challenges, ESP lecturers and teachers who will gain new teaching strategies, and employers who will receive a more linguistically and professionally competent workforce. In addition, educational policy makers can also use the findings to develop curricula that are more relevant to the needs of the labor market. Employers will get a more linguistically and professionally competent workforce, ESP professors and instructors will acquire new teaching techniques, and learners will be better equipped to handle professional problems because of this research. The results can also be used by educational policy makers to create curriculum that better meet the demands of the job market.



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The findings of this research on RWC and critical reflection inform future ESP curriculum development to better equip students for the rapidly changing demands of the global workforce by two actions.

Equipping learners with RWC and critical reflection are important. RWC is represented linguistic and critical reflection is for soft skills. Integrating the two domains in ESP help learners in coping with the industry need as well as aligning with the linguistic needs and students' expectations getting job after graduate. An effective ESP curriculum must not only focus on language proficiency but also incorporate RWC and critical reflection concrete in teamwork, problem-solving, and type of communication. Critical reflection encourages students to create their learning pathways and enhances their self-awareness which is crucial for their readiness in professional environments. RWC fosters a realistic learning, which is essential for developing communicative competencies required in the workplace. Furthermore, needs analysis is fundamental in initiating how RWC and critical reflection are integrated in ESP curriculum development as it involves identifying the specific language skills and competencies that learners require in their respective fields.

Therefore, this study should be continuous by supporting instructors to adapt the curriculum based on need analysis both from students and industry stakeholders. The attempt can be used to understand the gaps in students' competencies, particularly in communication. By incorporating real-world communication and critical reflection into the curriculum, instructors can ensure that students are not only learning language skills but also applying them in contexts that reflect their future workplaces. Critical reflection plays a pivotal role in this process as it encourages instructors to evaluate their teaching practices and the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting students' needs. Moreover, the integration of RWC and critical reflection can enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are increasingly valued in professional. In conclusion, the development of ESP curricula that effectively prepares students for the global workplace requires a comprehensive integration between real-world communication skills with critical reflection. By aligning RWC and critical reflection into ESP curriculum as well as considering learners' specific needs, learners can enhance their readiness for their future careers.



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