

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**AN EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH FOR
SPECIFIC PURPOSES CURRICULUM IN A
MALAYSIAN POLYTECHNIC**

HARLINI KHAIRUDDIN

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master in Education (TESL)

Faculty of Education


MARCH 2011

Candidate's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This dissertation has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event that my dissertation be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree to be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

Name of Candidate : Harlini binti Khairuddin
Candidate's ID No. : 2008264678
Programme : Master of Education (TESL)
Faculty : Education
Dissertation Title : An Evaluation of the English for Specific Purposes Curriculum in a Malaysian Polytechnic

Signature of Candidate : 
Date : 7.6.2011

Abstract

The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum in the General Studies component of Malaysian polytechnics holds the objective of equipping the learners with necessary workplace English language skills as well as technical contexts in order to enable them to perform in the workplace. It plays a vital role to ensure the polytechnic graduates are able to compete in the job market with adequate proficiency in English language. Henceforth, this study sets out to evaluate the current English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum in Politeknik Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent the ESP curriculum is adequate and relevant in preparing the students for their workplace by looking into its' syllabus, module as well as the feedback from the students and English language lecturers. The study adopted a mixed method research design whereby a quantitative survey method was complimented by qualitative interviews and document analyses in obtaining all the data from samples and relevant information. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 17 to produce descriptive statistics. Data from the interviews were analyzed according to theme and categories. A total of 90 final semester students of Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (Automotive) and 5 English language lecturers from Politeknik Kota Bharu were involved in this study. The findings disclosed that 84.4% of the students agreed that the ESP A5003 English for Technical Purposes course is relevant. As for the English language lecturers, although they felt the course's content seems to be insufficient in certain aspects, nonetheless they believed some of the course's content was still relevant in preparing the students for the work place. Next, in deciding the adequacy of the ESP A5003 English for Technical Purposes course, majority of the students (82.2%) were satisfied with the adequacy of the content and felt that the course was sufficient to train them for their future work place. All the English language lecturers involved had felt the same about the course. Results also revealed that the students considered all the English language skills in the ESP A5003 English for Technical Purposes course were important for their future work place with speaking skills indicated the most important (mean=3.767, s.d=1.0815), followed by listening skills (mean=3.733, s.d=1.0579), reading skills (mean=3.667, s.d=.9481), and writing skill (mean=3.622, s.d=1.0120). As for the English language lecturers, they agreed that all the four skills were equally important for the students. Majority of the students felt that the topics in the ESP A5003 English for Technical Purposes module were very useful in preparing them for the future work place although all the lecturers believed that the content and presentation of the topics were totally out dated and it was critically in need to be reviewed. Several recommendations related to the ESP curriculum were promoting autonomous learning to the students, changing the roles of the lecturers as facilitators, English language lecturers be given proper courses on how to teach and design ESP materials, adding more contact hours to the ESP course to include more communicative activities and to produce an additional manual that offer the background knowledge, terminologies and useful phrases of the related disciplines for use by the students and the English language lecturers. It is recommended that similar study be carried out to involve all polytechnics in Malaysia and also involving students of other programmes as well.

Abstrak

Objektif kurikulum 'English for Specific Purposes' (ESP) di dalam komponen pendidikan politeknik Malaysia adalah untuk melengkapkan para pelajarnya dengan kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris dan juga aspek teknikal agar dapat bersaing di tempat kerja. Kurikulum ini juga berperanan untuk memastikan para graduat politeknik berkemampuan untuk berdaya saing di pasaran kerja dengan kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris yang mencukupi. Justeru, kajian ini dilakukan untuk menilai kurikulum semasa Bahasa Inggeris untuk Kemahiran Tertentu (ESP) di Politeknik Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Tujuan kajian ini dilakukan adalah untuk membuat penilaian berkaitan kurikulum (ESP) sama ada ia mencukupi dan relevan dalam menyediakan para pelajar menempuh alam pekerjaan sesudah tamat pengajian kelak. Penilaian dilakukan dengan merujuk kepada sukatan pelajaran yang telah ditetapkan, modul pembelajaran dan juga maklum balas dan pandangan daripada para pelajar dan juga pensyarah-pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini menggunakan dua cara teknik kajian iaitu kuantitatif (borang soal selidik) dan kualitatif (temuramah dan analisa dokumen) dalam mengumpul semua data-data dan maklumat yang diperlukan. Data-data daripada borang soal selidik telah dianalisa menggunakan perisian SPSS versi 17 untuk menghasilkan huraian 'descriptive statistic'. Data-data daripada temuramah dianalisa berdasarkan tema dan kategori. Seramai 90 orang pelajar semester akhir Diploma Kejuruteraan Mekanikal (Otomotif) dan 5 orang pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris telah terlibat di dalam kajian ini. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan 84.4% daripada para pelajar setuju bahawa kursus (ESP) masih relevan. Pensyarah-pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris pula berpendapat walaupun terdapat beberapa aspek yang masih perlu diperbaiki, mereka juga percaya kursus (ESP) masih relevan dalam membimbing para pelajar untuk menempuh alam pekerjaan. Seterusnya dalam menentukan sama ada kursus (ESP) masih mencukupi, 82.2% daripada para pelajar berpuashati dan merasakan kandungan kursus tersebut mencukupi walaupun beberapa aspek perlu di tambah dan diperbaiki sebagaimana pendapat yang di sarankan oleh pensyarah-pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris. Dapatan kajian juga mendedahkan para pelajar beranggapan kesemua kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris di dalam kursus (ESP) adalah penting untuk menempuh alam pekerjaan dengan kemahiran bertutur (min=3.767, s.p=1.0815), diikuti dengan kemahiran mendengar (min=3.733, s.p=1.0579), kemahiran membaca (min=3.667, s.p=.9481), dan kemahiran menulis (min=3.622, s.p=1.0120). Pensyarah-pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris juga bersetuju kesemua kemahiran tersebut adalah sama penting untuk para pelajar. Majoriti para pelajar juga berpendapat topik-topik di dalam modul (ESP) sangat berguna dalam mempersiapkan mereka untuk menempuh alam pekerjaan meskipun pensyarah-pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris berpendapat kandungan dan cara penyampaian topik-topiknya sudah lama dan perlu dikaji semula. Berdasarkan kajian ini juga, antara beberapa penambahbaikan berkaitan kurikulum ESP yang dibincangkan ialah menggalakkan pembelajaran secara 'autonomous', peranan pensyarah sebagai fasilitator, pensyarah-pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris diberikan kursus-kursus berkaitan ESP, penambahan masa untuk kursus ESP di politeknik agar lebih banyak aktiviti komunikasi dapat dimasukkan dan menerbitkan manual tambahan dalam Bahasa Inggeris yang memberi input tentang pengetahuan asas, istilah atau frasa yang berkaitan dengan setiap kursus teknikal untuk rujukan para pelajar dan juga pensyarah-pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris. Turut disarankan untuk tujuan penyelidikan di masa akan datang agar kajian yang sama dilakukan dengan melibatkan semua politeknik di Malaysia termasuk para pelajar dari program yang berlainan.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Allah S.W.T, for His Blessing in giving me the strength, courage and wisdom to complete this study. It is indeed a challenging and yet a very meaningful academic experience for me in completing this dissertation. Without the support, patience and guidance from special people around me, this journey would have been tougher and perhaps would not be achieved.

My deepest appreciations and thanks to my dedicated supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Abu Bakar Haji Ibrahim, for his time and patience assisting me in completing this dissertation. Without his guidance, I would have never seen the light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you very much for your advice, support and encouragement in guiding me to fulfil the required expectation for this study.

Sincere appreciations are also dedicated to all my beloved lecturers that have shared their precious knowledge and experiences with me and my friends in our academic journey in Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

My sincere gratitude to the Department of Polytechnic Education and the Scholarship Division of Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia for the opportunity given to me in pursuing my dream.

This dissertation is especially dedicated to my parents, Khairuddin Haji Abdul Rahman and Zainiah Haji Samsi, who instilled in me the love towards learning as well as for their endless loves, sacrifices, patience and encouragements especially when the going gets tough. Also to my siblings (Harliza and Faizal) and my cousin (Nurul Izzati) for their endless love, understanding and moral support that keep me going.

My special thanks also goes to Suria Mokhtar, Zanariah Ridzwan, Masniza Mansor and all my friends and classmates for their support and concern as well as the precious moment we spent together in completing the study.

Last but not least, to others who are directly or indirectly involved in the completion of this dissertation, my sincere thanks to all of you. May Allah bless you for all the kindness and support.