

**Original article****Evaluation of ESP Effectiveness in Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao<sup>a</sup>, Nguyen Dong Phuong Tien<sup>b</sup>, Nguyen Duc Hai<sup>c</sup>, Truong Van Dat<sup>a\*</sup><sup>a</sup>Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam;<sup>b</sup>Department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Basic Sciences, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam;<sup>c</sup>Department of Health and Environment, Faculty of Public Health, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.*Received September 23, 2017; Accepted November 08, 2017; Published online December 21, 2017*

**Abstract:** Since 2011, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum in Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) has been changed in accordance with pharmaceutical specialization orientation and did apply the active learning-learner centered teaching methods. Our study used three self-administered questionnaires to collect the feedbacks from sophomores, final-year and pharmacist graduating in 2016 in evaluating ESP course effectiveness. Data analyzed with STATA 13 indicated that English lecturers made efforts to organize the active learning activities in ESP class but their target has neither been effective nor met the required students' needs in academic purposes as well as their occupational purposes. In addition, students' passivity and lack of apparent motivation made it more difficult to apply the active learning method. Generally, final-year pharmacy students and newly graduated pharmacists, besides their moderate English competence, had a low frequency in using English. It is also found that there exists the relationship between final-year pharmacy students' frequency of using English, their English competence and pharmaceutical specialization as well as that between English use frequency and occupation.

**Keywords:** Active learning, English for Specific Purposes, Pharmacy students, UMP.**1. INTRODUCTION**

In our modern world, English becomes the lingua franca of almost all professional and academic settings and has come out in non-English speaking countries as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Ghanbari & Rasekh, 2012) [9]. According to Hutchinson and Water (1987) [12], ESP is a learner-centered approach to teaching English as an additional language, which meets individual learner needs for academic studies or vocational purposes. Therefore, ESP courses are designed for the learners who would like to use English for their occupation in post-academic settings or academic purposes in pre-occupational settings (Javid, 2015) [13].

At Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City (UMP), ESP curriculum is provided to the students in their first three semesters. English

curriculum is designed to match the specialized orientation (including clinical pharmacology, pharmacognosy, drug quality control, pharmacy administration, pharmaceutical manufacturing and development) and applied the active learning (learner-centered) teaching methods. English lecturers organized the active learning activities; like individual assignments, brainstorming, role-play, think-pair-share, small or whole group discussion in order to stimulate students' critical creative thinking as well as create the environment in which students can practice language skills and learn from each other (Lyman, 1992; Faust & Paulson, 1998; Frederick, 2002) [7, 8, 15]. The main aim was to provide the specialized vocabularies, the essential specialized knowledge and the language skills for students

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before approaching their disciplines in the following semesters as well as their future occupations.

However, to improve the language teaching methods and to enhance ESP courses quality, the ESP curriculum needs evaluating. "Program evaluation" was defined as the systematic collection and the analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote curriculum improvement and to assess its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved (Brown, 2001) [3]. There were many researches on evaluating the effectiveness of English for various disciplines courses in the universities all over the world (Hatam & Shafei, 2012; Liton, 2012; Delvand & Albassy, 2013) [6, 11, 14]. The main objective of these studies was to collect the feedbacks from students who have completed all their ESP courses about the content of curriculum or teaching method and to explore their language needs or the difficulties they met during courses.

Regarding to the medical education fields, Chowdhury and Haider (2012) [4] conducted a study to evaluate the efficacy of EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses offered to the pharmacy students at University of Asia Pacific (UAP), Bangladesh. This research examined the content and structure of EAP courses and explored the academic as well as work-related needs of potential pharmacy professionals to formulate strategies that may reinforce the overall effectiveness of such English language programs. Although the ESP approach is widely used in English programs, few applications have been conducted to customize ESP courses to suit the work environment. The medical field has represented this challenge since English was used as a communication tool in the Saudi medical field. That is the reason Alharby (2005) [1] executed a study to investigate the English communicative needs of health professionals (such as physicians, pharmacists, dentists, applied medical technicians) in their workplace. The findings revealed that the English courses that health professionals took at the college level were inadequate in relating the English use to their medical needs. Similarly, a research by Srisuwan and Maporn (2014) [18] explored the industrial pharmacists' English use and problems in their work environment – the multinational pharmaceutical manufacturers to provide the valuable sources of target language events which can benefit ESP educators and pharmaceutical trainers in the development of ESP courses. From these researches, it is apparent that, besides of collecting feedbacks from students who have just completed in ESP courses, investigating the actual English language needs of the ex-students or professionals in specific fields also plays an important role in the improvement of language teaching method and enhancement of the quality of ESP curriculum.

Perceiving English language is an essential need in pharmacists' approaching specialization in future occupation as well as the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of ESP courses, especially it has been in teaching-method change and improvement process, our study was conducted with three main objectives:

1. Collecting feedbacks about the active learning and teaching activities in ESP classes from second-year pharmacy students.
2. Investigating English use frequency, English competence of final-year pharmacy students as well as their relationship with student's specialization.
3. Investigating English use frequency, English competence of pharmacists graduating in 2016 as well as their relationship with pharmacist's current occupation.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

### 2.1. Research participants

The participants of this research were the whole of 252 second-year pharmacy students who have just completed all three ESP semesters, 268 final-year pharmacy students who started to learn the specific disciplines in academic year 2016-2017 and 243 pharmacists who graduated in 2016 from the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

### 2.2. Research instruments

The research instruments were three self-administered questionnaires designed for corresponding groups of participants.

The questionnaire design for the sophomore students was based on background of previous studies on effective evaluation combined with consideration of the actual teaching and learning situation at Faculty of Pharmacy (UMP). The initial draft of questionnaire was piloted with 20 third-year students completing ESP courses in order to check its clarity and comprehensibility. A Cronbach's alpha test was applied to confirm the reliability of this questionnaire with ESP teaching and learning activities, the content and assessment of ESP courses, students' difficulties were 0.920, 0.889 and 0.950, respectively. Ultimately, the official 56-item questionnaire was composed of 3 sections; such as ESP teaching and learning activities according to active learning method (items 1 to 20), ESP curriculum content and its assessment (items 21 to 33) and students' difficulties with four English language skills (items 34 to 56). A five-point Likert agreement scale used in the first and second sections ranged from 1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree. The third section used a five-point Likert frequency scale ranging from 1=never to 5=very frequently.

Two questionnaires for the final-year pharmacy students and the pharmacists graduating in 2016 were constructed on the basis of the literature review and pharmacy students' actual English language needs for academic purposes and pharmacists for their occupations through the preliminary investigation with some final-year students and pharmacists working on different fields (pharmacists as lectures, medical representative, clinical pharmacist, industrial pharmacist, master's student). After conducting two pilot studies with

25 final-year pharmacy students in transition course and 16 pharmacists graduating 2 years ago, the reliabilities of two questionnaires were measured by Cronbach's alpha test with frequency of using English and English competence were 0.850 and 0.913, respectively in the questionnaire for the final-year pharmacy students, 0.863 and 0.907, respectively in the one for pharmacists. Finally, two official 22-item questionnaires were composed of 4 sections, such as personal information including gender and specialization or pharmacist's occupation (items 1 to 2), student's or pharmacist's English use frequency (items 3 to 10), student's or pharmacist's English competence (items 11 to 18) and student's or pharmacist's opinions about ESP courses (items 19 to 22). A five-point Likert frequency scale used in the second sections ranged from 1=never to 5=very frequently. The third section items were ranked on a five-point Likert quality scale ranging from 1=very poor to 5=very good. Finally, in the fourth section, a five-point Likert agreement scale was used which ranged from 1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree.

### 2.3. Data collection

In April 2017, the questionnaire copies were directly distributed to 252 second-year and 268 final-year pharmacy students after their classes and the interviewers returned three times to collect them, its aim was that the students had sufficient time for reading carefully and completing the questionnaire. As a result, 221 questionnaires of the second-year students and 187 ones of the final-year students were returned (the rates of returns were 87.7% and 69.8%, respectively).

At the same time, online questionnaire was created with its links sent to 243 pharmacists via their personal email addresses. After one week – time for pharmacists to read and complete them, 106 filled-in questionnaires were returned (43.6% return rate).

### 2.4. Data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using STATA 13. The descriptive statistics were used for the frequencies, percentages of gender, specialization and occupation; the frequencies, percentage, means and standard deviation of ESP teaching and learning activities, ESP content and assessment, students' difficulties, frequency of using English and English competence.

English use frequency and English competence were two dependent variables created by logarithmic method. Specifically, English use frequency for eight purposes (items 3 to 10) was recorded as "frequently" or "very frequently" = 1; "never", "rarely" or "sometimes" = 0. Only participants responding "frequently" or "very frequently" at least one item were selected. Total score of English use frequency was constructed by summing up the score of frequency of using English for individual purpose (items 1 to 8). The next step was to take the logarithm (based of constant e) of total score with its aim was to get a standard normal variable ranging from 0 to 2.08.

Similarly, English competence in eight language skills (items 11 to 18) was recorded as "good" or "very good" = 1; "very poor", "poor" or "average" = 0. Only participants responding "good" or "very good" at least one item was selected. English competence variable was constructed by the same steps as frequency of using English. T-test, ANOVA and simple linear regression (a significance level of 0.05) were applied to confirm the relationships between the final-year students' frequency of using English, English competence and their specialization; the relationships between the pharmacists' frequency of using English, English competence and their occupation. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained before this research.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Results:

#### Sophomore students' feedbacks about ESP courses

The first twenty items of this questionnaire mentioning the learning and teaching activities in ESP courses were ranked on a five-point Likert scale follow as; 1=completely disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=completely agree. The results of analysis demonstrated that the teachers paid attention to disseminating the goals, the main contents of courses and the assessment of learning outcomes, providing manuals, reference materials and instructing students in use of them before beginning ESP courses (items 1 to 5). All of them received high mean scores ranging from 3.48 to 4.00.

The overall results of active learning and teaching activities in ESP courses were presented in Table 1. From the figures in this table, it is apparent that the active learning activities organized in ESP class such as giving questions and situations relating to the pharmacy students' future specializations, presentations, pairs or group discussions received quite a lot of agreements from students (36.6-58.4% students responded "agree" or "completely agree") and the presentation was the most effectual activity with the highest mean score (3.56). On the contrary, the percentage of students responding "disagree" or "undecided" for active learning activities was not small (41.6-63.4%), even this percentage of the role-play activity was very large (82.8%). Moreover, only 33.5% students supposed that teaching method attracted them and 27.5% students could acquire knowledge quickly. So, the active learning activities have not yet been organized effectively.

Additionally, several noteworthy results were only 34.4% students having preparation for the next lesson, 25.8% students expressing actively individual opinions and 31.7% students spending a lot of time for self-education after class (according to the students responding "agree" or "completely agree"). This evidenced that a large number of students was passive and not interested in their English learning. On the other hand, using teaching materials and explaining problems obviously were quite effectual that received the high mean scores of 3.40 and 3.45, respectively.

**Table 1.** Sophomore pharmacy students' feedbacks about teaching and learning activities in ESP courses, on a five-point scale ranged from 1= "completely disagree" to 5= "completely agree". (N=221)

	Percentage of students responded (%)				Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4 – 5		
Student had preparations for the next lesson	7.2	19.9	38.5	34.4	3.05	0.99
Teacher asked questions and poses situations to stimulate student's critical and creative thinking	7.7	21.7	33.5	37.1	3.09	1.07
The given situations were often related to students' future specializations	8.1	26.7	23.1	42.1	3.09	1.14
Student expressed actively their individual opinions	12.2	26.2	35.8	25.8	2.79	1.04
Teacher gave the topics, let students prepare and present in front of the whole class	2.7	13.1	25.8	58.4	<b>3.56</b>	1.00
Student participated in role-play activity and learned how to solve the problems	24.4	32.6	25.8	17.2	<b>2.37</b>	1.06
The students were divided into pairs or small groups and discuss the given topics	11.8	18.6	33.0	36.6	3.01	1.10
Teacher used the teaching materials; such as sound clips, videos or pictures to support students' learning	5.0	14.5	32.6	47.9	<b>3.40</b>	1.08
Teacher explained the problems obviously and explained it again when the learners did not understand	4.5	18.1	21.7	55.7	<b>3.45</b>	1.10
Teaching method attracted students' attention	14.9	20.4	31.2	33.5	2.90	1.15
Student acquired knowledge quickly	10.0	24.0	38.5	27.5	2.88	1.01
Teacher often assigned homework to strengthen students' English skills	11.7	21.3	33.5	33.5	2.95	1.11
Student spent a lot of time for self-education after class-time	12.2	20.8	35.3	31.7	2.94	1.12

The next thirteen items of this questionnaire investigated sophomore students' opinions about the ESP course content and learning outcome assessment. This section results were shown in Table 2. It can be seen from this table that the necessary specialized vocabularies and specialized knowledge provided by ESP courses received agreements from quite a lot of students (mean scores were 3.43 and 3.25, respectively). Besides, the exam requirements according with contents of ESP courses and assessing properly student's competence also obtained the quite high mean scores of 3.40 and 3.22, respectively.

Regarding to language skills, the low mean scores would seem to suggest that ESP courses have not yet met the students' needs of communication skill (2.67), presentation skill (2.71), problem-solving skill (2.71) and teamwork skill (2.82). Furthermore, from students' opinions, ESP courses should improve four basic language skills including listening, reading, speaking, and writing; all of them received high mean scores ranging from 3.62 to 3.78. This finding is also consistent with the results of the final section of this questionnaire mentioning frequencies

of students' difficulties on four basic skills (shown in Table 3) that quite a lot of students frequently or very frequently faced difficulties in listening skill (49.8%), speaking skill (45.3%), writing skill (41.2%) and reading skill (39%).

#### **Final-year students' English use frequency, English competence and the relationship with their specialization**

In this study, 187 final-year pharmacy students returning the questionnaires included 65 males (34.8%) and 122 females (65.2%). All of them had to select 1 of 5 specializations before starting the final academic year, mainly pharmacy administration (44.9%), followed as pharmacognosy (17.7%), pharmaceutical manufacturing and development (13.9%), clinical pharmacology (11.8%) and quality control of pharmaceutical (11.8%).

Table 4 shows English frequency that the final-year pharmacy students used for their academic purposes. Most final-year pharmacy students did not frequently use English for their academic activities, 6 of 8 items got low mean scores ranged from 1.59 to 2.48. Finding and reading specialized literatures received high mean scores of 3.49 and 3.28, respectively.

**Table 2.** Sophomore students' opinions about the contents of ESP courses and assessment of learning outcomes, on a five-point scale ranged from 1="completely disagree" to 5="completely agree" (N=221)

	Percentage of students responded (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
ESP courses provided the necessary specialized vocabularies for students	5.0	15.8	20.8	48.0	10.4	<b>3.43</b>	1.04
ESP courses met students' needs of specialized knowledge	5.9	19.9	26.7	38.0	9.5	<b>3.25</b>	1.07
ESP courses met students' needs of communication skill	16.3	30.3	27.6	21.3	4.5	2.67	1.12
ESP courses met students' needs of presentation skill	14.9	29.4	29.0	22.6	4.1	2.71	1.10
ESP courses met students' needs of problem-solving skill	14.5	31.2	30.3	17.2	6.8	2.71	1.12
ESP courses met students' needs of teamwork skill	9.5	32.6	31.2	19.4	7.3	2.82	1.09
ESP courses should improve students' listening skill	3.6	14.5	18.5	35.3	28.1	<b>3.70</b>	1.13
ESP courses should improve students' speaking skill	3.6	11.3	18.1	37.1	29.9	<b>3.78</b>	1.10
ESP courses should improve students' reading skill	1.8	10.0	26.2	37.6	24.4	<b>3.73</b>	1.00
ESP courses should improve students' writing skill	5.0	11.3	24.9	33.9	24.9	<b>3.62</b>	1.12
Exam requirements matched ESP course content	4.1	9.5	39.8	35.7	10.9	<b>3.40</b>	0.95
Examination properly assessed students' competence	5.4	11.3	47.1	28.1	8.1	<b>3.22</b>	0.94

**Table 3.** Frequency of students' difficulties on four basic language skills in their ESP courses, on a five-point scale ranged from 1= "never" to 5= "very frequently" (N=221)

	Percentage of students responded (%)				Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4 - 5		
Listening skill	4.5	14.9	30.8	<b>49.8</b>	3.47	1.12
Speaking skill	6.8	12.2	35.7	<b>45.3</b>	3.33	1.07
Reading skill	6.3	17.6	37.1	<b>39.0</b>	3.19	1.05
Writing skill	5.9	14.5	38.4	<b>41.2</b>	3.27	1.04

Statistical analysis results presented in Table 5 indicated the relationship between final-year pharmacy students' English use frequency and their specialization ( $p < 0.05$ ). Students majoring in clinical pharmacology had the highest frequency of using English (mean score of 1.17), followed as pharmaceutical manufacturing and development, pharmacy administration, pharmacognosy in a descending order.

The next eight items of this questionnaire mentioning English competence of final-year pharmacy students were ranked on a five - point Likert scale follow as; 1=very poor, 2=poor, 3=moderate, 4=good and 5=very good. From Table 6, the highest percentage of final-year pharmacy students had moderate competence in most English dimensions (41.7-50.3%), except finding information on the Internet (only 33.2%). Finding information on the Internet, reading specialized literatures and general vocabulary had the highest mean scores (3.51, 3.42 and 3.41, respectively).

Table 7 with statistical analysis results indicated the relationship between the final-year pharmacy students' English competence and their specializations ( $p < 0.05$ ), except quality control of pharmaceuticals. Students in clinical pharmacology had the highest competence (mean score of 1.39), followed as pharmacy administration, pharmaceutical

manufacturing and development, pharmacognosy in the descending order.

#### **Pharmacists' English use frequency, English competence and the relationship with their occupation**

In this study, 106 pharmacists completing their questionnaires included 46 males (43.4%), 60 females (56.6%). They worked on many different fields including medical representative (34%), industrial pharmacist (22.6%), lecturer (14.2%), master program participant (12.3%), clinical pharmacist (9.4%) and others (7.6%).

Table 8 showed English frequency used for their pharmaceutical occupational purposes. As can be seen from these results, the pharmacists did not frequently use English for their occupational purposes, 6 of 8 purposes had the low mean scores ranging from 1.71 to 2.60. Only reading specialized literatures received high mean score of 3.66, followed as communication (3.08).

Table 9 demonstrated the relationship between the pharmacists' English use frequency and their specialization ( $p < 0.05$ ). Particularly, master participants had the highest English use frequency.

**Table 4.** Final-year pharmacy students' English use frequency, on a five-point scale ranged from 1= "never" to 5= "very frequently" (N= 187)

	Percentage of students responded (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
	Reading specialized literatures	4.3	18.2	35.3	29.4		
Finding specialized literatures	2.7	10.7	34.8	39.0	12.8	<b>3.49</b>	0.94
Participating in academic clubs	33.2	41.7	20.9	3.7	0.5	1.97	0.86
Participating in student exchange programs	63.6	19.3	12.3	3.7	1.1	1.59	0.92
Participating in science researches	28.9	26.2	19.2	20.3	5.4	2.47	1.25
Participating in international conferences	61.0	20.8	9.1	5.9	3.2	1.70	1.07
Participating in health discussion forums	24.6	28.9	25.1	17.1	4.3	2.48	1.16
Applying for scholarships studying abroad	51.9	18.7	12.8	11.8	4.8	1.99	1.25

**Table 5.** The relationship between final-year pharmacy students' English use frequency and their specialization (N=126)

Specialization	Frequency of using English Mean $\pm$ SD	P	Difference (Confident 95%)
Clinical pharmacology	1.17 $\pm$ 0.52		
Pharmacognosy	0.61 $\pm$ 0.65	<b>0.002</b>	-0.56[(-0.91)- (-0.20)]
Quality control of pharmaceuticals	0.93 $\pm$ 0.65	0.193	-0.24[(-0.60)-0.12]
Pharmacy administration	0.62 $\pm$ 0.58	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-0.55[(-0.84)- (-0.26)]
Pharmaceutical manufacturing and development	0.77 $\pm$ 0.41	<b>0.024</b>	-0.4[(-0.74)- (-0.05)]

**Table 6.** Self-appraisal English competence of final-year pharmacy students on a five-point scale ranging from 1= "very poor" to 5= "very good" (N= 187)

	Percentage of students responded (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Pronunciation	5.4	19.8	<b>49.7</b>	19.8	5.4	3.00	0.91
Grammar	2.7	12.3	<b>50.3</b>	31.0	3.7	3.21	0.81
General vocabulary	2.7	8.0	<b>41.7</b>	40.6	7.0	<b>3.41</b>	0.84
Specialized vocabulary	7.0	27.3	<b>49.2</b>	13.9	2.7	2.78	0.87
Communication	7.0	23.5	<b>43.9</b>	23.0	2.7	2.91	0.92
Writing the report or email	10.2	31.6	<b>43.3</b>	11.2	3.7	2.67	0.94
Reading specialized literature	2.8	8.1	<b>42.1</b>	38.2	8.8	<b>3.42</b>	0.92
Finding information on the Internet	2.7	9.6	33.2	<b>43.3</b>	11.2	<b>3.51</b>	0.91

**Table 7.** The relationship between final-year pharmacy students' English competence and their specializations (N=135)

Specialization	English competence Mean $\pm$ SD	P	Difference (Confident 95%)
Clinical pharmacology	1.39 $\pm$ 0.71		
Pharmacognosy	0.85 $\pm$ 0.56	<b>0.014</b>	-0.54[(-0.97)- (-0.11)]
Quality control of pharmaceuticals	1.06 $\pm$ 0.54	0.123	-0.34[(-0.76)-0.09]
Pharmacy administration	1.04 $\pm$ 0.70	<b>0.046</b>	-0.35[(-0.70)- (-0.01)]
Pharmaceutical manufacturing-development	0.9 $\pm$ 0.72	<b>0.032</b>	-0.49[(-0.94)- (-0.04)]

**Table 8.** Pharmacist's English use frequency on a five-point scale ranged from 1="never" to 5="very frequently" (N= 106)

	Percentage of pharmacists responded (%)					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Reading specialized literatures	2.8	13.2	26.4	30.2	27.4	<b>3.66</b>	1.10
Publishing research results	36.8	26.4	18.0	9.4	9.4	2.28	1.3
Communication	12.3	18.9	30.1	26.4	12.3	<b>3.08</b>	1.20
Lecturing	56.6	21.7	17.0	3.8	0.9	1.71	0.95
Participating in science researches	41.5	14.2	21.7	13.2	9.4	2.35	1.38
Participating in international conferences	30.2	20.8	26.4	13.2	9.4	2.51	1.30
Participating in health discussion forums	22.6	22.6	31.2	18.9	4.7	2.60	1.17
Applying for scholarships studying abroad	37.7	17.0	21.7	9.4	14.2	2.45	1.44

**Table 9.** The relationship between pharmacists' English use frequency and their occupation (N=83)

Occupation	Frequency of using English Mean $\pm$ SD	P	Difference (Confident 95%)
Lecturer	0.41 $\pm$ 0.65		
Medical representative	0.81 $\pm$ 0.62	0.099	0.39[(-0.08)- (0.86)]
Clinical pharmacist	0.55 $\pm$ 0.65	0.661	0.14[(-0.49)-0.76]
Industrial pharmacist	0.59 $\pm$ 0.65	0.470	0.17[(-0.3)- (0.65)]
Master program participants	1.39 $\pm$ 0.63	<b>0.001</b>	0.97[(0.42)- (1.52)]
Others	0.97 $\pm$ 0.80	0.096	0.55[(-0.10)- (1.21)]

**Table 10.** Self-appraisal English competence of final-year pharmacy students and pharmacists

	Final-year students (N=187)		Pharmacists (N=106)	
	Responded "good" or "very good" (%)	Mean	Responded "good" or "very good" (%)	Mean
Pronunciation	25.2	3.00	30.2	3.14
Grammar	34.7	3.21	33.1	3.20
General vocabulary	<b>47.6</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>3.51</b>
Specialized vocabulary	16.6	2.78	24.5	2.99
Communication	25.7	2.91	35.8	3.22
Writing the report or email	14.9	2.67	34.0	3.06
Reading specialized literature	<b>47.0</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>3.42</b>
Finding information on the Internet	<b>54.5</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>3.58</b>

Comparison results between English competence of final-year pharmacy students and pharmacists were presented in Table 10. English competence was at moderate level means the scores of eight language dimensions ranging from 2.67 to 3.58. Pharmacists' most language dimensions were better than the other, except grammar. General vocabulary, reading specialized literatures and finding information on Internet were three language dimensions with the highest mean scores of both final-year pharmacy students (3.41, 3.42 and 3.51, respectively) and pharmacists (3.51, 3.42 and 3.58, respectively).

Finally, the results for the rest of both two questionnaires for final-year students and pharmacists revealed that most students (81.8%) and pharmacists (88.7%) recognized the

importance of English for their academic or occupational success. However, the ESP courses for pharmacy students in UMP have not yet met their language needs (65.9% students and 59.4% pharmacists) and contents and teaching methods should be improved (77.4% students and 93.5% pharmacists).

### 3.2 Discussion

Although English lecturers made efforts to apply active learning in ESP courses, it did not seem very effective. After completing three ESP courses, a large number of sophomore students still expected that their language skills would be improved, they neither were attracted by teaching method nor acquired knowledge quickly. This finding is consistent with

contention of Boniadi et al. (2013) [2] that approximately 80% medical students complained about boring classes. Additionally, lots of students did not have self-preparation before class-time as well as self-motivated their learning spirit in ESP courses. Furthermore, a high number of students emphasized their lack of learning motivation, like: they even could not visualize how ESP would be applied in their future. This finding reinforces the assertions of Harati (2012) [10], Paltridge & Starfield (2012) [16], Davoudi et al. (2014) [5] that there was a lack of motivation in ESP class and stimulating students' motivation was an important function towards ESP teachers. For these reasons, most sophomore students met no less difficulty in four basic language skills. It is inconsistent with the results of Chowdhury & Haider (2012) [4], approximately 30% pharmacy students (UAP) supposed that they faced difficulties in writing and speaking skills, less than 10% students had difficulties in listening skill. It is apparent that pharmacy students in UMP had no less limitation of language skills, especially in comparison with pharmacy students in University of Asia Pacific, Bangladesh in which English is used as a second language among the middle and upper classes, widely in higher education. On the other hand, unlike Vietnam, English is not used widely in most universities (including UMP), so the lack of working environment to practice language skills learned from English courses is a great disadvantage.

These results indicated that final-year pharmacy students and pharmacists had a low English use frequency: mainly in reading specialized literature. From self-appraisal English competence, general vocabulary, finding materials on the Internet and reading specialized information were three language dimensions that a lot of final-year pharmacy students and pharmacists used proficiently. Therefore, English competence could be improved by using English more frequently. Our study also found the relationship between final-year students' English use frequency and their specialization as well as the relationship between final-year students' English competence and their specialization. Particularly, students majoring in clinical pharmacology used English more frequently and proficiently than students majoring in other specializations. It can be explained that students majoring in clinical pharmacology were actually required to search and read lots of specialized materials; such as therapeutic guidelines, clinical case reports, newly updated medicines or therapies; even the periodic oral examinations including contents from reading further English information while other specializations only focused on providing specialized knowledge and the requirements of English use for academic activities were limited. Therefore, contacting specialized English materials in frequency level improved significantly students' English competence with majoring in clinical pharmacology. Besides, the relationship between pharmacists' English use frequency and their occupation was found, specifically Master program participants, to use English more frequently than those in other occupations. This is due to the fact that Master program students frequently take part in researches during their academic process. As a result, finding and reading specialized materials written in English language must be their essential skills.

Although most final-year pharmacy students and pharmacists had a low English use frequency, ESP courses have not yet met the language needs for academic or occupational purposes. Furthermore, according to the answers, English played such a crucial role in their academic or occupational success that ESP courses should be improved in the contents and teaching method. This finding is unanimous with contentions of Alhaby (2005) [1], Polo & Valera (2009) [17], Chowdhury & Haider (2012) [4] that most learners perceived clearly the importance of English curriculum in high education, particularly English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The findings in our study reveals that ESP courses for pharmacy students at UMP are not very effective, particularly teaching method did not attract many students' attentions. English competence of final-year students and pharmacists were at moderate level, most of which have the needs to improve four basic language skills. Additionally, ESP courses neither met the language needs of final-year students and pharmacists for academic and occupational purposes even though they had a low English use frequency, mainly for researching and reading specialized materials. Nevertheless, many students' passivity significantly affected ESP course success. Consequently, teaching method improvement and students' motivation stimulation become two important tasks ahead to be performed in order to enhance ESP teaching effectiveness. Ultimately, the finding of the relationship between final-year pharmacy students' English use frequency, their English competence and their specialized orientation suggests that it is necessary to practice and enhance English language skills learned from ESP courses with specialized orientations.

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