



Teaching and Learning Development of English for Social Administration

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ABSTRACT

To redesign English for Social Administration, a branch of ESP aiming to prepare pre-service social work students for their future profession, the present study investigated the opinions of 248 Thai pre-service social work students who had experienced the course and a field internship. Data collected from the survey questionnaire and focus group discussions revealed what was needed, and the key necessity is the ability to use a specialized language register aligned with social work practice in Thailand. In terms of the students' wants, the findings revealed their learning preferences specifically for tasks that are in line with what professional social workers do in different areas or stages of social work practice in Thailand. Additionally, they highlighted a lack of knowledge of the language used in the target situation. The study suggested that the syllabus should be redesigned based on the stages of social work practice in Thailand and its subfields, such as medical or correctional social work, in order to provide more specific vocabulary or grammatical structures and engaging tasks that stimulate professional social workers' tasks. More importantly, it is suggested that other stakeholders, including in-service social workers, are encouraged to work collaboratively in

	designing the course and materials to ensure that the content is completely valid in the social work community and meets their professional needs. Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, English for Social Administration, pre-service social work students, needs analysis, English course development
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Introduction

English language competency has become an integral part of the social work profession in many countries, including Thailand. It is the skill that professional social workers need to provide their services to their clients with different backgrounds professionally and appropriately (Dominelli, 2010) based on the principles of social work practice determined by the International Federation of Social Workers (2014). Also, the Thailand Social Work Professions Council (2021) considers communication ability to be one of the core competencies for a social work degree in public universities in Thailand. As a result of its significance, the English for social work course in higher education has been provided to pre-service social work students to prepare them for their future social work profession. Despite the availability of the current English for social work course, many Thai pre-service social work students are still not confident in their English language ability and many cannot communicate with their foreign clients during their internship. Therefore, it is necessary to revise and redesign this specific course in this regard. Also, it is believed that all stakeholders should work collaboratively to maximize the outcomes of professional preparation.

English for Social Administration, also known as English for Social Workers in some countries, is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). According to many ESP scholars, the term “ESP” can be defined as teaching approaches, learning activities and materials that are designed to meet learners’ specific purposes (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991), or teaching with the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in the particular variety of English they may need (Hyland, 2022). In alignment with these ESP definitions, English for Social Administration means teaching approaches designed specifically for pre-service social work students where they engage in profession-based learning activities and specific materials supporting their language learning in the social work context. Despite the clear focus of both ESP and English for Social Administration, designing the courses and developing their specific materials are relatively complex as there are many significant features of the courses to be considered so as to meet the learners’ and practitioners’ needs for this specific context.

To design or redesign a well-established ESP course and materials, Anthony (2018) proposed four pillars of ESP which include needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation, while others scholars (e.g. Basturkmen, 2025) may consider two main elements: needs analysis and discourse analysis in this regard, or include ethnography in analysis as well, to explore the “what” and “how” of the course in the course design (Hyland, 2022). However, many ESP scholars and practitioners (e.g. Anthony, 2018; Basturkmen, 2025; Brown, 2016) believe that a needs analysis should be done at an early stage of course and then subsequently materials design carried out as it may broaden the researchers’ perspectives on what the learners must do to learn, together with both the learners’ starting point and their perspectives on their own needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Accordingly, to redesign English for Social Administration, the present study has returned to the needs analysis as the first and most important step through an investigation on the opinions of the pre-service social work students who experienced the current English for Social Administration course to collect the information and analyse its potential impact pedagogy and materials development as one of the key stakeholders in the professional community.

Literature Review

English for Specific Purposes

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emerged over several decades within English Language Teaching (ELT) and has become one of the most established teaching approaches in the field. It initially focused on technical or scientific English to prepare ESL students pursuing specific disciplines. ESP has since expanded its branches to other disciplines, including business, tourism, and art. From its early focus on specific content, ESP has shifted towards skills-based instruction and then to the development of linguistic knowledge, particularly of academic and disciplinary genres, vocabulary, and grammatical features (Basturkmen, 2025).

ESP can be defined in many ways. For example, Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) refer to ESP as teaching approaches, learning activities, and materials designed to meet learners’ specific purposes, which is similar to Basturkmen (2025) who defines ESP as an instruction which supports learners in developing the language they require to work or study in a second language. According to Anthony (2018), ESP is an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners, focusing on the necessary language, genre, and skills to address these needs, and assists learners in meeting these needs through the use of general and/or discipline-specific teaching materials and methods. Although ESP is defined differently by ESP

scholars and practitioners, its core focus lies in specific study-or-work-related purposes.

Many ESP scholars agree that a needs analysis is key to designing, redesigning, and evaluating ESP courses and instructional materials (Anthony, 2018; Brown, 2016; Long, 2018). According to Brown (2016), a needs analysis is considered a gap analysis and it can be viewed from four different aspects: a diagnostic view, a discrepancy view, a democratic view, and an analytic view of needs. Brown's diagnostic view is to find language, genre, and skills that are required and needed for successful use in the target setting, where all stakeholders, especially those who have direct knowledge and experience of the target setting, provide valuable insights to the analysis. The discrepancy view focuses on the gap between the learners' language ability, meaning that what learners can currently do in the language and what they will need to do in the target setting. Similar to the diagnostic view, all stakeholders need to be consulted, but those with direct knowledge and experience of the target learners and who can provide how learners progress their language learning will probably provide the most insightful information for this analysis. In terms of the democratic view, its focus is on the learners themselves and what type of activities they prefer to engage in the classroom while being relevant to their future goals in order to encourage learners' motivation and dedication to learning. Despite the focus on learner-centeredness, analysts should be aware of the limitation of learners who lack the knowledge and/or experience needed to accurately judge what, where, when, and how they will use English in the target academic or occupational setting. For this reason, other stakeholders, including ESP instructors or professionals should also be included. The last view of Brown's analysis lies in SLA theory and ELT research and practice. In this analytic view of needs, it is suggested that ESP course designers work collaboratively with SLA teachers and scholars. Anthony (2018) summarises these four perspectives of needs into three main aspects when conducting the needs, namely, needs, wants, and gaps for both learners, instructors and administrators. This is also in line with Hutchinson and Waters (1987) who break the term "needs" into three dimensions: necessities (or objective needs), lacks (or deficiencies), wants (or subjective needs) in order to compare them with long-term needs and learning needs (what the learners must do to learn).

Basturkmen (2025) focuses on the learners' needs analysis as one of ESP core concepts, and it can be divided into two main sub analyses: target situation analysis and present situation analysis. The former investigates language requirements in the study or work setting that the learners aim to advance in or to enter, which helps to define the type of language-based tasks in the target setting (Long, 2018) as well as the text type the learners are likely to encounter and perform. Another type of analysis is present situation analysis focusing on the learners' current levels of language ability compared to the expected or required levels. This is to find the gap between what learners currently know and

what they need to be able to do in the target setting (Brown, 2016). It is suggested that questionnaires or interviews can be used in this analysis. Also, language testing or analysis of learners' language task samples can be used as part of the analysis as well. According to Basturkmen (2025), these two types of analysis do not need to be done at the same time. Alternatively, only one kind can be utilised. Apart from the learners' needs analysis, her focus is also on the requirements of specialised English for practical outcomes.

According to Hyland (2022), a needs analysis is one of the main key elements in ESP, and he includes another four key aspects of ESP, consisting of genre analysis, communicative teaching methods, ethnography, and social constructivism. Although there are many important features of ESP course design and materials development, a needs analysis is the starting point and the present study is to redesign the current ESP course, so the study focuses on this analysis as an early stage of the course and materials development.

Although the needs analysis is considered an important step in investigating the basic foundations of the course and materials development among scholars, some methodological issues in practice should not be ignored. Particularly, bias of data analysts may appear when linguistic-based knowledge and experience is tied to the collected data. Also, analysts should not rely solely on the data collected from one type of data collection or one group of stakeholders. In other words, although the purpose of the needs analysis is to analyse a group of learners' needs, it may not provide the expected quality of data if the group of learners does not have any experience in their real practice. Moreover, despite its prioritisation on learners', Cheng (2006) raised a concern that ESP research is limited on what people learn, while how they learn is also an important factor to be studied. Moreover, in terms of communicative teaching approaches, ESP classroom practices are still limited and seem to gain less interest from ESP researchers in the field.

Apart from the needs analysis, specific teaching methods should be considered in use (Stevens 1977, cited in Hyland, 2022) due to their importance on the use of language for a specific purpose and for a specific group of learners. However, because of the specific purpose and context, it is believed that teaching ESP courses should be adaptive, and ESP practitioners take the most useful, successful, and valid ideas from other theories and practices, combining them into a consistent whole (Anthony, 2018). To implement appropriate teaching and learning methods, including the development of specific materials, it is important for ESP practitioners to consider all stakeholders in designing and redesigning such a specific course accordingly.

English for Social Administration

English for Social Administration is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). English for Social Administration is an English course designed

specifically for pre-service social students, focusing on the language used within the social work community and the enhancement of social work services when serving clients appropriately and effectively based on the concept of social work theory and practice in Thailand. Unlike other ESP courses (e.g. English for Nursing or English for Engineering), the English for Social Administration course aims to prepare pre-service social work students in all fields of social work practice provided in the country in line with the social work degree requirements in Thailand. Its main purpose is to prepare pre-service social workers who will work in various settings, such as general or mental hospitals, in the correctional field, or child and family welfare agencies. With professional role and practice in these specific contexts, this specific English course is required to help professionals provide their services to their clients appropriately and professionally. Although there are many ESP courses available, those courses are not suitable for their future professional preparation. In other words, some courses, such as English for Specific Purposes, may be too general for them as they require appropriate language registers used in their community, while other professional English courses (e.g. English for Nursing) may be too intensive for them in terms of the inclusion of overly specific vocabulary items, such as medical terms, or language that is used in the field.

Despite the focus of English for Social Administration, or English for Social Work in other countries, on the preparation and support of pre-service social work students and professionals to work with their clients effectively, the use of the English language in practice remains a challenge in many countries, and the problem has yet to be resolved. For example, English for Social Work in Spain did not meet the students' needs, especially in terms of complex skills. At the same time, a lack of motivation among students with a low level of the English language is an additional issue as well. Consequently, this has led to poor learning outcomes, and it has become a challenge for English teachers and professionals. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of having a high English language ability among pre-service social work students and professionals, and to develop the social-work-based English course in order to meet students' needs and to prepare them to be ready for their future professions and to support their language use effectively.

As English for Social Administration aims to serve this specific group of learners, it is necessary to consider what the course should include and how it should be designed. In alignment with well-established features of ESP, many scholars and experts within the field suggest that a needs analysis has a key role in course design and materials development for this type of ESP course (Basturkmen, 2025), and there are many different views to be analysed as part of this initial step. According to Basturkmen (2025), a needs analysis can be done in terms of the target and the present situational analysis, focusing on linguistic inquiries, while Hyland's (2006) analysis incorporates learners' goals,

backgrounds, language proficiencies, reasons for taking the course, teaching and learning preferences, and the contexts they will need to communicate in.

To revise and redesign the current English for Social Administration course, the present study focuses on the opinions of the pre-service social work students who have experienced in the course and in their field internship in order to collect relevant and useful information from those who have experienced both the learning environment and who have engaged in work in the real world in order to access the most insightful information to avoid potential methodological issues, such as using data from learners who do not have enough field experience in social work practice. This investigation covers three aspects: what the learners need, want, and lack as suggested by many ESP scholars (Anthony, 2018; Brown, 2016). Also, to avoid analyst bias and to ensure the reliability and validity of data, the present study involves both a language teacher who has been teaching the course and a subject specialist working in the academic field of social work. As this study sets out to redesign this social work-based course, the researchers anticipate that the results from the study may also lead to the identification of other significant aspects (e.g. learning and teaching methods, materials development, or evaluation) for further research in the target context.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 248 undergraduate students from a cohort of 678 students from the Faculty of Social Administration at a public university in Thailand, of which approximately 60% were from the central campus, and about 40% were from the northern campus. While 54% of the participants were studying in their 3rd year, the remainder were in the 4th and final year. The sample size was calculated based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommendation, to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. Also, they all had studied in English for Social Administration in previous semesters and experienced social work field internships in public or private organizations. This selection criteria was followed to avoid improper or unqualified data from any learners who did not have sufficient experience in using the English language during their internship and therefore lacked a clear understanding on the purpose of the course and the use of language within the social work community. The participants were recruited using a referral method to ensure voluntary participation and minimize response bias.

Procedure

This research is a mixed-methods study which begins with documentary research based on English language acquisition, English language learning and teaching, as well as ESP, with a focus on English for Social Work and English for Social Administration. The research tools, consisted of a survey questionnaire, which excluded questions related to personal information, was designed and developed for quantitative research data collection, and a focus group discussion which used guided questions to be used as a qualitative research tool. After the survey questionnaire was distributed to the participants and the data was collected, five voluntary respondents were asked to participate in a focus group discussion to provide in-depth information. Then the data from both the qualitative and quantitative research tools were summarized and analyzed. Finally, they were described and presented to the public.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data was gathered from the survey questionnaire and the focus group discussion, which were conducted during the semester break to avoid any potential conflict of interest between teachers and students when providing the information. Both research tools were reviewed by three experts for content validity, reliability, and linguistic appropriateness. To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire, the tool was piloted with 30 students who were not part of the main sample group, and reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The resulting coefficient was 0.86, indicating acceptable reliability. The data from the survey questionnaire focused on three main areas of investigation, that is, the learners' necessities, wants, and lacks, while the information from focus group discussion provided detailed additional details to support to these three aspects for the future course and materials design. In terms of data analysis, the quantitative data was calculated and analyzed for the average and standard deviation, and the information from the qualitative data was interpreted and transcribed based on content analysis. Also, intercoder validity has been carried out in relation to this.

Results

Based on the collected data, the research findings in this section include statistics describing the collated results from the survey questionnaire and a descriptive summary from both the additional comment section of the questionnaire and the focus group discussion. In relation to the survey questionnaire, although it aims to analyze three aspects of the needs analysis (necessities, wants, and lacks), it can be clearly seen that the researchers have weighted what the learners want more than what they need and lack in the survey

form as one controversial issue in the needs analysis for the ESP course is that novice learners in an EAP environment might have a poor understanding of what their current needs are and they certainly cannot be expected to know what their future language needs will be (Anthony, 2018). However, it is believed that this information should not be omitted to ensure the participants' different personal experiences are captured, and this is further supported by the ability of respondents to elaborate on this aspect in the additional comment part of the survey questionnaire and the group discussion. Therefore, the learners' necessities or what they need for this course is only asked in survey question no. 7 which focuses on the content they consider for their future profession as experienced in their internship. Survey questions no. 1 – 6 are focused on learning preferences in the classroom, in respect to what they want in the course. Survey questions no. 8 – 10 show what is lacking in their classroom, based on their internship experience. Moreover, to avoid the bias of the data analysts, both sets of data are analysed carefully by both language and subject specialists in this study.

Students' Opinion towards Teaching and Learning English for Social Administration

The pre-service social work students participating in this study have shared their opinions on their learning experience in the current English for Social Administration course using two main ways. The results of survey questionnaire are reported in Table 1, while further details have been gathered from the additional comment section of the survey questionnaire and from the focus group discussion.

Table 1

Students' Opinion towards Teaching and Learning English for Social Administration

No.	Questions	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level of Opinion
1	Students are free to study on their own and be responsible for their tasks and practices in the English for Social Administration course.	3.83	0.86	High
2	Students are allowed to engage in classroom activities and content relevant to social work practice.	3.87	0.87	High
3	The course focuses on group work activities or tasks where they can exchange knowledge and discuss with their peers, or in a group.	3.77	0.86	High
4	The course focuses on individual activities or tasks to learn or acquire knowledge.	3.57	0.94	Moderate
5	Teachers create a competitive environment to activate students' learning and enhance their learning motivation.	3.58	1.00	Moderate

6	During class hours, students can ask or be supported by their teachers or peers when having questions.	3.91	1.00	High
7	The course content is relevant to social work practice, which can be applied in the future.	3.75	1.03	High
8	The current course focuses on reading and writing skills.	3.76	0.93	High
9	The current course focuses on listening and speaking skills.	3.72	0.98	High
10	The current course instruction focuses on learning by doing.	3.58	1.05	Moderate
Total		3.73	0.95	High

As outlined in Table 1, the pre-service social work students in the study have had their opinions categorised across three levels: high, moderate, and low. The categorisation of the three levels of opinion are indicated in $\bar{x}$, with the low level ranging from 1.00 - 2.34, while the moderate level and high level range from 2.35 - 3.69, and 3.70 - 5.00 respectively.

In relation to what the learners' want from the English for Social Administration course, they prioritised a classroom with peer interaction, group work, or teachers support the most as indicated by the answers to questions no. 1-6, with a high level of opinion (or $\bar{x}$ at 3.91). Also, they revealed their high level of preference for classroom engagement and lesson content based on social work practice, or $\bar{x}$ at 3.87, which is close to their preference for learning content based on the social work studies, or appeared in what they required in question no. 7. Meanwhile, they also reported their preference for freedom and independence to learn, as well as the ability to study and take responsibility for their own learning. ($\bar{x}$ at 3.83). In terms of what they lacked, it can be clearly seen that they gave priority to all four skills of communication with $\bar{x}$ at 3.7. All in all, the main aspects of preferable ESP from the pre-service students' perspectives include hands-on activities where they are allowed to engage with their peers as well as support by their teachers, and social work content integrated into English lessons and practices.

In addition to this, the additional comments from the survey questionnaire also provided additional insights in a number of ways. In particular, the skills the respondents expressed the most preference to study and practice in English for Social Administration are listening and speaking with the suggestion to do so through a role-play simulation. They want to practice their role as a social worker providing social work services to a client, or meeting with a multidisciplinary team to plan social work services for their clients. Moreover, many of them revealed their learning preference for group or pair work so that they can exchange their opinions with others. In addition to this, they revealed that they were interested in current social issues happening at both the national and international levels, and were therefore eager to discuss these issues in class. This included the preference for discussion-based case studies where students

could talk about and analyze different cases based on social work practice. Another comment from the respondents involves the specific content of lessons in the field. They have seen the importance of both social work theory and practice being merged into the English lessons. This includes specific vocabulary as well as specialized language register in the field of social work as well. Along with this profession-based content, they have seen the possibility of academic English in their future profession and would like to engage in academic writing, such as writing an academic article, writing a grant proposal for fundraising, or writing an email contacting both public and private international organizations as well.

Similar to the research findings from the questionnaire, the data from focus group discussion has highlighted many remarkable aspects of the course they have experienced and would like to see in the future course. One striking feature of this ESP course is that students should have more opportunities in engaging in classroom activities. To do so, role-play simulation was suggested by many participants during the discussion.

I wish my English teacher could take me to a field trip to see how we could use the language in real practice, but I understand that it won't be easy to do so. Therefore, I believe role-play simulation may work for our classroom. I want to be able to apply what I have learned in the real world practice. I may work with my peers to act as a different role and practice the language.

(The focus group participant no. 3, 2026)

I totally agree with you (the participant no.3). We all know that Thai students are not confident or shy to speak English. I think if we want to practice our listening and speaking skills, role-play activities may work better.

(The focus group participant no. 4, 2026)

Not only can role-play simulation encourage students to practise their listening and speaking skills, but this type of activity also helps them manage their practice time during class hours and support the students with low proficiency to be able to follow the lesson content and their classmates. With this role-play practice, they believe that they can maintain their interest in language practice both inside and outside the classroom.

In terms of other suggested learning activities based on the learners' internship experiences, they revealed that case studies should be another key practice in the language classroom that they wanted to participate in due to fact that case-based services, and discussions on case studies allows them to analyse and engage in classroom activities more when being grouped.

Furthermore, one of the focus group participants who has experienced volunteering in an international organisation emphasised the high significance of specific vocabulary in the field of social work as well as specialised language register when providing professional services to clients, while another confirmed

that using such specific language is important when he was an intern in the correctional field.

When I was an intern, I had a chance to communicate with my client who got involved in drug crimes. At that time, I did not enrolled in the course yet. However, I could see the importance of specific vocabulary that could be used while providing the services. Then, I agreed why we should have such a knowledge to communicate with our clients.

(The focus group participant no. 5, 2026)

Despite the learners' preferences for group work or peer interaction, the findings from the focus group discussion suggested that this preference should depend on the individuals' preferences and should be optional for students to choose.

I think working in a group, with peers, or individually should be a personal preference and allow students to have our own choice. For example, if I have many group works with my friends at that time, I wish not to do another group work. Individual assignment or homework will make me happier.

(The focus group participant no. 3, 2026)

I think this option is pretty personal. I can see some of my friends who really like group work, while others prefer individual tasks. I think it is more important for teachers to allow us to choose or maybe have more various options for us for one task or assignment.

(The focus group participant no. 5, 2026)

Although many different opinions towards these forms of tasks or activities were seen, some may have considered group work activities as a means of providing support to classmates with low proficiency. If this is the case, this form of activity should be prioritized.

For me, I agree with the right to choose working individually or in group, but I truly understand some classmates who are really in need in studying English. Therefore, working in a group may work better for them and they may choose to do what make them more comfortable and collaborate with their peers.

(The focus group participant no. 4, 2026)

In terms of the content matter, the participants suggested that lesson content should be relevant and more specific to each different field of social work practice, namely, medical or correctional social work. In other words, they revealed their preference for focusing on how to provide professional services or deal with foreign clients in a more specific or in-depth way.

It is good to learn about types of social workers; however, this doesn't seem to align with the types of social work in Thailand context. I understand that some (language) teachers may not have the background in social work, or have experienced in the field as some senior pre-service students. I wish I could study more social-work-based content in this language class. Therefore, it is suggested that deeper knowledge of social work lessons should be blended with or adapted into this specific English. I hope to see how English could possibly be used in my real practice.

(The focus group participant no. 5, 2026)

I think the field of social work in Thailand is divided into many subfields and what we have learned in the course is pretty general. From my point of view, if we can study in each subfield more, it will be great because when we learn about medical social work practice, we know that it is different from that in social work within the justice system, child, youth and family protection, elderly care, labor issues, and community development. It would be great if the students can choose to follow their specific interest in the course as well.

(The focus group participant no. 4, 2026)

Furthermore, while priority is given to listening and speaking skills development, reading and writing skills are seen as significant for academic and multidisciplinary purposes.

I believe that writing an email or doing role-play as a social worker will help me confident in my language use when I am in my real professional practice.

(The focus group participant no. 1, 2026)

I want to study about how to ask proper questions to foreign clients and how to handle some specific cases...

(The focus group participant no. 2, 2026)

In conclusion, the research findings highlighted the main requirements of the future English for Social Administration in terms of the need for engaging task-based learning classroom activities that could be done individually, in pairs, or in groups with the content being based on real social work practice, with in-depth social work content knowledge integrated into English language lessons on each subfield of social work practice, all whilst specific language and vocabulary used in the social work context as well as in the academic setting is also included.

Discussion and Interpretation

The key findings in the present study can be discussed in three main aspects of a needs analysis based on many ESP scholars and experts (Brown, 2016; Anthony, 2018): necessities, wants, and lacks as follows:

What is needed, or the necessities, is language, genre, and skills that the learners need for success in the target setting (Brown, 2016) and this is considered the priority to sequence classroom materials and create syllabuses and curricula (Nation & Macalister, 2010). According to the research findings, the data from the pre-service social work students who had experience in real professional practice during their internship showed the necessity on the ability to provide their social work services to their clients, in line with the professional social work practices they had learned and the use of specialised language and communication skills at different levels or stages of services. Some recommended examples include small talk during the first meeting between a social worker and a client for fact-finding or deeper conversation carried out during the more complex stages of social work practice to assess case conditions. Thus, it is important for pre-service social workers to choose an appropriate language register aligned with their services. Also, they require the specialised language and vocabulary which they would need to be able to use in each different subfield of social work. This means that social workers in the medical field may use certain specialised language and the vocabulary for different topics more than those who work in educational settings, like schools, or vice versa. Accordingly, it is important to focus on their academic identity and discourse in the course which is in line with the ESP objectives defined by Hyland (2022) in that it is suitable for non-native language learners and the course should be aimed at professional skills for their future work.

In alignment with this learning objective, the syllabus of the English for Social Administration course should be designed based on these needs and can be implemented in many ways. According to Brown (1995) and Richards (1990), two possible ways to design the course syllabus in accordance with these reported needs can be based on topics or situations. In terms of topical design, it is suggested that the syllabus be divided into subfields or settings of social work practice in Thailand, following social work degree curricula in Thai universities, including Thammasat University's social work and welfare degree curriculum which is the first curriculum design specifically for professional social workers in the context of Thai society. The university's degree curriculum was initiated in 1954 and it comprises six subfields or areas of study: forensic or correctional social work, medical social work, social work with children, youth, and families, geriatric social work, community social work, and social work in labor administration (Aroonjit, 2022). Regarding situation-based syllabus design, the potential syllabus may follow the five steps of social work practice in Thailand: engagement and fact finding, social assessment, planning and contracting, intervention and monitoring, and evaluation and termination (Aroonjit, 2022). Following these principles or settings of social work practice can lead pre-service students to not only have a better understanding on what language lessons they are learning in their professional contexts, but also help them scaffold their role in the social work community which can enhance their motivation to learn in the

way that they see the obvious relevance of what they are studying according to Basturkmen (2006).

What the learners want is another important aspect of designing ESP courses and materials. It involves types of tasks and materials, supporting teaching and learning environments. In terms of task types, what pre-service social work students want is exactly what professional social workers do in their professional settings. Some revealed the need for situation-based activities or role-play simulation where they are encouraged to practice listening and speaking skills at the same time, such as making small talk with their clients. They also want to know what topics are appropriate for a social worker meeting with a client for the first meeting as well as practicing English language skills when acting as a social worker meeting and working with other multidisciplinary team members where different language registers may be applied. Their preference of these profession-led tasks mean that they want to learn specific vocabulary and language structures that tend to be used in these professional contexts and simulate their roles as a social worker in real world situations. Also, they emphasized their learning preference for more engaging activities in terms of group work or pair activities, where they practice responding to their peers and ask their teachers questions when needed. In other words, being supported by their friends and teachers could potentially provide a supportive and friendly environment for them to be nurtured thereby allowing the development of language. Moreover, learning tasks based on the four skills of communication was shown to be another preference as would take place in their professional roles in practice. What the learners' wants reported in the present study does not only show the need to foster their language learning, but also prepare them to become a part of their future social work community as English for Social Administration can be considered the social work community based on structuration theory where members in a community establish mutual knowledge and learn through recurring practices (Basturkmen, 2006).

Although ESP practitioners are usually not committed to a single learning theory or teaching methodology (Anthony, 2018), Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) seems to be one of the most suitable for this ESP course and this group of learners. A "task" can be defined in a number of ways according to many scholars. For example, Nunan (1989) refers to it as a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. Willis (1996) describes a task as a goal-oriented activity that leads to task completion and allows learners to use the language. Also, Breen's (1987) definition of a pedagogical task is any structured language learning endeavor which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of

workplans which have the overall purposes of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making.

According to Willis (1996), teachers are the ones who prepare content lessons and tasks for learners, for example, providing reading materials or listening audios so that students can understand what will happen before the task cycle step, also called the pre-task. Then, they will do and complete the assigned tasks in pairs or groups in the task cycle stage. In this cycle, tasks, plans, and reports are involved. Task in this cycle is task assignment during which teachers become facilitators or supporters while students are allowed to complete tasks individually, or in pairs. Task planning is when students plan and complete their tasks under teachers' supervision, especially in terms of language register (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). During task reporting, students present their work to their classmates and receive feedback from their peers. After tasks are completed, teachers will review the tasks and summarize them again, providing further explanation to students in order to enable them to attain a better understanding of the tasks as well as supplement them with additional exercises for language improvement. In other words, language focus appears at the end of the process.

Following Willis' task cycle, the present study would like to propose an example of task-based lessons based on the field of medical social work in Thailand. The objective, which derives from the learners' needs, is that the students will be able to communicate with their clients professionally and appropriately when providing their social work services. According to this core objective, the learning outcomes are to be able to listen to and speak with their clients in each different step of social work practice in Thailand. Taking the first step of social work practice, engagement and fact-finding, as an example, it would start with a pre-task where a teacher will talk about the objective and learning outcomes of the task. As this step is to understand what happened to a client, a social worker needs to talk to the client with appropriate topics along with building trust during the interaction. Therefore, it is important for professional social workers to understand what topics are appropriate for this first meeting. The teacher may present a sample of the administration requirements during the intake process which might be a fill-in-the-blank form for the social worker to complete after the interview and highlight the kind of information that is needed and enquired about. Based on this intake form, general questions are asked at the beginning and more sensitive questions could be asked if the social worker sees the possibility based on the perceived willingness of the client to open up to discuss them. As the sample of materials in this ESP course is limited, samples from other professions, such as conversational audios between a nurse and a patient, may be introduced to pre-service social work students. However, it is important for students to acknowledge the appropriateness of the materials in these cases due to the different role requirements as a social worker. Alternatively,

new sample materials may be designed in collaboration with in-service social workers to make sure that the materials follow social work protocols before its use. Then students will work in pairs brainstorming what topics are appropriate for their case simulation. Moving on to the task cycle, students will have the chance to practice using the language in this assigned situation in pairs, where one student will act as a social worker and another as a client to simulate the first meeting for fact-finding which will lead to the assessing and planning steps of social work practice. Then they will take turns in the roles. The teacher will become a facilitator after assigning the task. Then, in the planning stage of the task cycle, students will plan and complete their tasks under their teacher's supervision. After the role-play simulation, students will receive feedback from their peers in the reporting stage which is the end of the task cycle. As this task is based on social work practice, feedback from their classmates can also be related to social work knowledge and skills. It is also suggested that the teacher may encourage them to discuss the task output based on what they have previously done in terms of social work practice, such as the appropriateness of the topics they include in their conversation with their client based on social work theory and practice. If they were not given this opportunity, they would not be able to improve on their conversation skills or improve on selecting which topics could work better for such a meeting. After task completion, the teacher will review the tasks and summarize them again, providing further explanation to students in order to enable them to attain a better understanding of the tasks as well as supplement them with additional exercises for language improvement. It is suggested that further handouts on specialized language register or vocabulary can be provided at this step.

Case studies can be used during task-based activities as well. Beginning with the pre-task, the teacher can provide samples of case studies which include the various steps of social work practice. Also, different case reports from different disciplines may be presented to students in order to analyze what kind of reports are more suitable for the social work case report. Authentic materials use is important for learning on this specific ESP course; however, the confidentiality requirements of these cases cannot be ignored. It is suggested that these kinds of materials can be generated by AI-assistance tools to avoid this issue; however, the AI-generated materials should be validated by professional social workers who have experienced writing case reports firsthand for proper use. In this pre-task stage, students may work in pairs brainstorming what should be included in their reports regarding the different steps of social work practice. For example, general information may be included in a fact-finding case report, while a plan of consecutive social work practice may be mentioned in the report in the next step of social work practice, such as during the planning or monitoring steps. After the pre-task, students will proceed to the task cycle where they are allowed to work individually, in pairs or in groups to write their own case report from the information provided or from their internship experience in which case

names are removed to ensure the clients remain anonymous. Alternatively, the teacher can provide case information which is created in collaboration with professional social workers to highlight specific details that professional social workers should pay more attention to and be aware of when providing their services. Students will then need to plan and complete their tasks under teacher's supervision, especially in terms of language register in this planning cycle. Subsequently, students' tasks will be reported digitally in online classroom platforms, such as Google classroom or MS Teams to their classmates and they will receive feedback from their peers. After the tasks are completed, the teacher will review them and point out the main language register being used in the specific task and highlight specific vocabulary that appeared in each case categorising it into different fields of social work practice. Additional exercises for language improvement should then be provided.

The sample tasks suggested need to be based on the participants' shared opinions in the present study. However, it might be the case that the lesson plans do not provide sufficient details in some ways, including a specialized language focus. This is because some additional parts might need further analysis for their development. In particular, the detailed contents may need to be validated by other stakeholders in the field. Therefore, continuous studies are suggested for further development in any future study.

The positive outcomes of TBLT have been confirmed on many previous ESP studies, such as Lei and Medwell (2022) who reported that not only did TBLT encourage students in ESP in China, but also developed professional specialization for them because providing tasks suited both the course objectives and students' needs. This is also in line with Dorathy and Mahalakshmi (2016) who investigated role-play tasks in various situations, which allowed students to feel comfortable and confident in learning and practicing the language. In addition, the students in the 2016 study developed other skills, such as team-working skills or managing skills. Moreover, El Arbaoui (2024) confirmed that TBLT alleviated students' anxiety during the task cycle and while communication took place between friends and teachers, leading to increased learning confidence and language development. Therefore, the TBLT examples for the English for Social Administration course proposed here have the potential to develop pre-service social work students' language skills effectively, especially in terms of specific tasks where students are required to learn and practice specifically for social-work-based practice for their future profession.

In terms of what is lacking in this needs analysis, there are two main aspects discussed in this section. One lack is appropriate language register or specific vocabulary in the target situation, which is also found in the previous section on necessities. As some students revealed in the findings, the lessons and materials used in their previous experiences in the classroom did not support them well enough for the requirements and challenges they faced during their internships. This could have been the result of a number of issues as some raised

concerns in relation to the degree the ESP instructor had discipline-specific knowledge of the target setting (Anthony, 2018). As a result of this gap, more collaborative work between language teachers and professional social workers could potentially lead to a better course and materials development. To put it simply, the present study suggests another needs analysis that involves other stakeholders, such as in-service social workers and the faculty members to share their necessities, wants, and lacks in order to help-establish better syllabus and materials for the future English for Social Administration course.

Another lack appears in the appropriateness of the materials used in the classroom. Having said that, this present study is not attempting to blame the quality of the current materials. It is clear that some students lacked the ability to understand social-work-related materials despite their field of study due to the limitations of their language proficiency. Considering this limitation, it would not be possible for them to reach the required level of language proficiency in their target situation. Consequently, apart from collaborative work between ESP practitioners and social work professionals, future materials development could possibly include the testing of the learners' language proficiency or vocabulary knowledge at that point in order to develop the most suitable materials for those specific group of learners, and to provide a supportive environment to improve their language proficiency as suggested by many ESP scholars that acknowledge the learners' current levels of language ability can be bridged once it is clear what they currently know and what they need to be able to do in the target setting (Brown, 2016), or what is called the present situation analysis according to Basturkmen (2025). This could conceivably bring about other knowledge-based learning and teaching tools, such as knowledge-based textbooks or word lists, which can be useful for that specific group of learners to learn and for ESP practitioners to develop their materials in alignment with their students' language proficiency.

Limitations of the Study

Needs analysis is what ESP scholars (Anthony, 2018; Brown, 2016; Long, 2018) consider the main key in designing and assessing ESP courses and materials development. Also, all stakeholders should be included in this analysis (Anthony, 2018). However, the present study solely involves the pre-service social work students. Despite their experience in field internships, this may limit their shared insights in terms of broad needs as it is only attained from a short period of real social work practice. Therefore, other stakeholders, such as professional social workers and course and materials developers, should be included in any future needs analysis. In addition to this issue, this analysis is limited to non-linguistic aspects, so it is suggested that testing on vocabulary knowledge or language proficiency can be done in order to elaborate detailed teaching and learning methods as well as samples of materials.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are three main suggestions in regard to further research. First, future studies could be conducted into gathering other stakeholders so that ESP practitioners and course developers can develop a clearer picture on what and how the English for Social Administration should be taught when designing the course syllabus and developing its materials. Not only should further research gather needs from all stakeholders, but also the data from future studies should be analyzed by both linguistic-based and profession-based analysts. Second, investigation of the learners' current language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge is important for materials developers who need to understand what is lacking in any group of learners and what can be done to encourage them to reach their target situation. Finally, once the complete proposed teaching and learning methods are developed from additional needs analysis, research studies on the effectiveness in ESP classroom are suggested.

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