**Evaluating the Efficacy of ESP Teacher Preparation: A Qualitative Analysis of Pre-Service and In-Service Training Programs at Saudi Arabia's Technical and Vocational Training Corporation**

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|  |  | **ABSTRACT** |
|  |  | This study examines the relationship between ESP instructors' perceptions of pre-service and in-service training at TVTC and their pedagogical practices. It aims to elucidate the importance of both training types in enhancing instructional efficacy and explore their correlation with ESP teachers' expertise. The research also investigates EFL educators' responses to ESP changes in technical training settings. Employing a qualitative methodology, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, providing insights into instructors' experiences and professional development needs. This approach revealed significant gaps potentially impeding effective ESP instruction. The study acknowledges limitations in data input volume and addresses challenges such as resource scarcity, lack of specialized content, and limited continuous professional development opportunities, examining their implications for ESP advancement. This research contributes to the existing literature on teacher training within TVET while proposing actionable strategies for enhancing TVTC training protocols. It underscores the importance of equipping ESP instructors with skills to navigate an evolving professional landscape, aligning with Saudi Vision 2030's objectives of fostering employment diversity and cultivating critical workforce capabilities. Ultimately, the study highlights the need for comprehensive ESP teacher preparation to meet the demands of a dynamic work environment, supporting Saudi Arabia's goals for economic diversification and workforce development. |
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| ***Keywords:***  ESP (English for Specific Purposes)  TVTC (Technical and Vocational Training Corporation)  Teacher Professional Development  Pre-service and In-service Training  Saudi Arabia | | |

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# Introduction

The Technical and Vocational Training Corporation's (TVTC) focus on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction aligns strategically with Saudi Arabia's national economic objectives(Al-Seghayer, 2023). This initiative responds to the global demand for specialized linguistic competence, recognizing the crucial role of expert teachers in effective ESPinstruction. TVTC's approach enhances individual employability and strengthens theKingdom's economic competitiveness by shaping a workforce that is both technicallyproficient and linguistically adept.Launched in 1980, TVTC's comprehensive plan addresses the diverse needs of trainees seeking technical qualifications and diplomas. It acknowledges the importance of assessing English for General Purposes (EGP) programs in meeting English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) requirements(Bortnyk, 2021). The resulting curricular modifications aim to maximize trainees' potential and optimize their career success(Buriro et al., 2024).In today's global job market, proficiency in generalized English is often insufficient.

The ability to navigate specific professional linguistic landscapes has become a critical differentiator. TVTC's targeted ESP programs enhance individual employability and bolster the Kingdom's economic competitiveness.This tailored ESP instruction is paramount to Saudi Arabia's economic diversification goals, as outlined in Vision 2030. As the Kingdom transitions to a knowledge-based economy, a linguistically proficient workforce becomes crucial. TVTC's ESP programs bridge the gap between human capital and the linguistic demands of a globalized, technologically advanced job market.

However, implementing specialized language instruction programs presents challenges. A primary obstacle is the scarcity of qualified ESP instructors(Petraki & Khat, 2022). Traditional English teaching programs often focus on general skills, leaving a gap in specialized knowledge. This necessitates a paradigm shift in teacher training, emphasizing both advanced language skills and in-depth knowledge of specific professional domains.TVTC addresses this through innovative approaches to teacher development, including partnerships with industry experts and ongoing professional development programs. These initiatives ensure that instruction aligns with real-world communication needs and keeps pace with industry trends.

Developing appropriate ESP teaching materials is another challenge(Sukying et al., 2023). Unlike general English textbooks, ESP materials require input from both language experts and industry professionals. TVTC addresses this by developing custom curricula, leveraging authentic industry materials, and incorporating real-world case studies.The integration of technology in ESP instruction offers opportunities but also requires constant evolution of instructors and curricula(Acfira, 2024). TVTC has invested in state-of-the-art language laboratories and digital learning platforms that simulate professional environments.

TVTC measures the success of its ESP programs not only by graduates' linguistic proficiency but also by their ability to integrate into chosen professional fields. The institution fosters ties with industry partners, facilitates internships, and organizes industry-specific language immersion programs.Looking ahead, TVTC's ESP programs are poised to play an even more critical role in Saudi Arabia's economic and educational landscape. As the Kingdom pursues its Vision 2030 goals, the demand for professionals who can effectively communicate in English within specialized fields is likely to grow(Al-Seghayer, 2023). TVTC's ongoing efforts to refine its ESP offerings, invest in teacher development, and forge stronger industry partnerships will be crucial in meeting this demand and realizing Saudi Arabia's vision of a diversified, knowledge-based economy capable of thriving in the global marketplace.

# Research Problem

This investigation addresses a critical lacuna in the comprehension of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teacher preparation and professional development within the context of Saudi Arabia's Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC). The study responds to the burgeoning necessity for enhanced preparatory measures and ongoing support for ESP instructors, a need driven by the ambitious economic objectives delineated in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the concomitant surge in demand for specialized English proficiency across diverse professional domains.The research problem is multifaceted, encompassing several interconnected issues of significant complexity. Foremost among these is the potential incongruence between extant training paradigms and the requisite ESP competencies demanded by contemporary professional landscapes. This misalignment necessitates a comprehensive reevaluation of current training methodologies. Concomitantly, there exists an exigency to identify and delineate key areas for curriculum augmentation and refinement, ensuring that educational content remains relevant and responsive to evolving industry needs.

A difficult challenge lies in conceptualizing and implementing flexible, adaptive training programs capable of responding to rapidly evolving linguistic and professional demands. This adaptability is crucial in an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and shifting economic paradigms. Furthermore, the imperative to bridge the persistent theory-practice dichotomy in ESP instruction cannot be overstated, as it is essential to ensure a seamless integration of pedagogical principles and practical application.Of paramount importance is the critical necessity of equipping instructors with a comprehensive skill set that enables them to foster global competitiveness in their students, preparing them for an increasingly interconnected and competitive international job market. This aspect of teacher preparation is integral to the broader goals of economic diversification and global integration outlined in Saudi Arabia's national development strategy.

Through a meticulous examination of ESP teachers' perspectives on their training experiences, this study endeavors to identify areas ripe for improvement and to propose evidence-based recommendations. The overarching objective is to achieve a strategic alignment between ESP instruction at TVTC and Saudi Arabia's long-term economic aspirations, thereby ensuring that graduates acquire the specialized linguistic competencies indispensable for professional success. This alignment is pivotal in contributing to the realization of Saudi Arabia's vision of transitioning to a knowledge-based economy, positioned at the forefront of global innovation and competitiveness.

# Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to critically examine and analyze the perspectives of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instructors regarding pre-service and in-service training programs at the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To achieve this overarching goal, the study pursues several specific objectives.

Foremost, it seeks to evaluate the perceived significance and efficacy of pre-service and in-service training programs in preparing ESP instructors at TVTC, within the context of Saudi Arabia's evolving economic and educational landscape. Additionally, the research aims to analyze the correlation between the quality and content of these training programs and the self-reported instructional effectiveness of ESP teachers at TVTC.

A crucial aspect of this study involves an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of ESP instructors at TVTC regarding the adequacy and relevance of their pre-service and in-service training in meeting the demands of ESP instruction in technical and vocational fields. Furthermore, the research endeavors to identify and categorize the primary challenges faced by ESP instructors at TVTC in their teaching practice, with a particular focus on gaps in their training and professional development.

The study also aims to assess ESP teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding the future development of ESP programs at TVTC, in light of the objectives outlined in Saudi Vision 2030 and the changing needs of the global job market. Finally, it seeks to formulate evidence-based recommendations for enhancing pre-service and in-service training programs for ESP instructors at TVTC, aimed at improving their capacity to meet the specialized linguistic needs of students in various technical and vocational fields.These refined objectives provide a more comprehensive and academically robust framework for the study, aligning closely with the broader context of ESP instruction in Saudi Arabia and the specific challenges faced by TVTC in preparing linguistically competent graduates for a diverse range of professional fields.

# Research questions:

The research will address the following questions:

1. How do ESP instructors at TVTC perceive the effectiveness and relevance of pre-service and in-service training programs in preparing them for the specific challenges of ESP instruction in technical and vocational fields?
2. What are the primary challenges faced by ESP instructors at TVTC in their teaching practice, and how do these challenges relate to potential gaps in their pre-service and in-service training?
3. How do ESP instructors at TVTC envision the future development of ESP programs, considering the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and the evolving needs of the global job market?

# Significance of the Study

This research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction at Saudi Arabia's Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) holds significant importance beyond its immediate context. It aims to evaluate the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service training programs for ESP instructors in the evolving landscape of vocational and technical education.The study's innovative approach centralizes instructors' perspectives, offering unique insights into ESP instruction challenges and opportunities in Saudi Arabia. It addresses the critical need to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, especially considering rapid technological advancements and evolving industry requirements.

By addressing the paucity of empirical research on teacher-centered training for ESP curricula in Saudi Arabia, this study aims to serve as a cornerstone for future research and inform evidence-based policy decisions. The anticipated findings are expected to yield actionable recommendations for enhancing vocational education instructors' preparation in technical English, with emphasis on effective code-switching and multilingual instruction.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader goals of Saudi Vision 2030 by fostering a linguistically adept workforce capable of driving economic diversification and international competitiveness. Its significance extends to educational policy, workforce development, and the Kingdom's economic transformation agenda.

# Ethical Considerations

This research adheres to rigorous ethical standards for qualitative studies involving human subjects. Key ethical procedures include:

Institutional review and informed consent, ensuring alignment with ethical guidelines and providing participants with comprehensive information about the study.

# Confidentiality, anonymity, and data protection measures, including data de-identification and secure storage.

# Transparency in reporting findings and debriefing participants.

# Cultural sensitivity and mitigation of power dynamics to create a non-coercive environment.

# Continuous ethical reflection throughout the research process.

These procedures comply with international ethical research standards, respecting participants' dignity, rights, and well-being. This ethical foundation enhances the credibility and integrity of the research findings, contributing to the study's value in ESP instruction and teacher training.

# Literature Review

The literature on pre-service and in-service teacher training provides a comprehensive backdrop for understanding the multifaceted nature of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development. This review synthesizes key findings from seminal works and recent studies, offering insights into the challenges, benefits, and evolving perspectives on teacher education.

## Pre-service Training in Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

The domain of pre-service training within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has been subject to extensive scrutiny from various angles, aimed at elucidating the perceptions and experiences of prospective teachers regarding their coursework and the knowledge imparted for their future roles(Calderhead & Shorrock, 2003; Flores, 2001, 2020; Schellings et al., 2023). This body of research underscores the critical importance of pre-service training in shaping the foundational skills and attitudes of emerging educators.

A significant contribution to this field comes from Al-Hassan et al. (2012)study on pre-service teachers in Jordan. Their research illuminated several key challenges faced by trainee teachers, including difficulties in managing children's behavior, navigating complex interactions with parents and fellow educators, and grappling with issues related to assessment and feedback. Moreover, the study highlighted the persistent theory-practice gap, a recurring theme in teacher education literature, which underscores the disconnect between theoretical knowledge acquired during training and its practical application in classroom settings.

The quality of supervision and feedback in pre-service training programs has been a subject of particular concern. Aldabbus (2020) research accentuated significant deficiencies in these areas, revealing a troubling lack of understanding of teaching practices among pre-service teachers. This finding aligns with earlier work byKuivila et al. (2020), who delved into the quality and quantity of responses provided to student teachers, emphasizing the crucial role of constructive feedback in teacher development.

Further insights into the limitations of practical experiences in pre-service training were provided by Al-Barakat et al. (2022). This study found that student teachers often perceived their practical training as inadequate, attributing this shortcoming to insufficient guidance from both head teachers and cooperating teachers. This revelation underscores the importance of robust mentorship and support systems in ITE programs.

The balance between theoretical and practical components in ITE has been a subject of ongoing debate. Stepney and Thompson (2021)study involving pre-service teachers in the United Kingdom made a significant contribution to this discourse. Their research emphasized the importance of both theoretical and practical elements in teacher preparation. Participants in their study found the theoretical aspects of their training to be highly beneficial, complementing the invaluable experiential learning gained through observations, teamwork, independent teaching, and understanding student reactions. This finding suggests that a well-rounded ITE program should strive for a synergistic integration of theory and practice.

The diversity of placement experiences in initial teacher training has also been recognized as a crucial factor in teacher preparation. Sangster and Green (2012) research in England explored this aspect, revealing that varied placement experiences provided substantial opportunities for both personal and professional growth. These experiences were found to foster reflective practitioners, a quality increasingly valued in contemporary education. The study identified several key benefits of diverse placements, including learning from expert practitioners, gaining confidence in teaching, developing skills in managing colleagues and students in informal settings, exposure to different cultural contexts, personalizing learning approaches, and gaining firsthand teaching experience.

The significance of pre-service teacher education extends beyond immediate skill acquisition, playing a crucial role in the ongoing professional development of educators. Insufficient preparation during this phase can have far-reaching consequences, potentially impacting future training efficacy, professional confidence, and the ability to effectively utilize subsequent formal training opportunities. This underscores the need for comprehensive and high-quality pre-service programs that lay a solid foundation for lifelong professional growth.

Within the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT), the importance of methodology courses for pre-service teachers cannot be overstated. These courses serve as a gateway, introducing prospective teachers to a wide array of pedagogical concepts that will inform their future teaching practices. The acquisition of a comprehensive understanding of language education principles during this formative stage is paramount for developing effective educators.

Recent research by Barber et al. (2022) has shed light on the pivotal role of assessment in the development of language education teachers. Their work emphasizes how engagement with assessment practices challenges educators to reflect critically on their teaching and apply insights from student learning to achieve educational objectives. This finding reinforces the central role of teacher education in fostering effective teaching practices and highlights the need for a strong focus on assessment literacy in pre-service training programs.

In-service Training: Continuous Professional Development

While pre-service training lays the foundation, in-service training plays a crucial role in the continuous professional development of practicing teachers. Hanushek (1971) defines in-service training as encompassing a range of courses and activities designed to enhance the professional skills, competence, and knowledge of practicing educators. This ongoing development is essential in a field where pedagogical approaches, educational technologies, and subject matter are constantly evolving.

Billings (1977) seminal work conceptualizes in-service training as a continuous process that addresses individual teachers' needs, job satisfaction, career expectations, and institutional goals. This holistic approach recognizes that effective teaching is not merely about subject knowledge but also involves personal growth and alignment with broader educational objectives.

The impact of teachers' thought patterns and self-perceptions on their professional efficacy has been well-documented. Pearman et al. (2021) emphasise that teachers' perceptions of their own characteristics and strengths, which influence their self-efficacy, are crucial for successful teaching and the enhancement of teaching quality. This insight underscores the importance of in-service training programs that not only focus on skill development but also on building teachers' confidence and professional identity.

Empirical evidence supports the positive impact of in-service training on teacher performance. Harris and Sass (2006) found a positive association between teacher training and productivity, particularly in middle and high school mathematics instruction. Similarly, Samupwa (2008) study revealed substantial modifications in teacher behavior both in the classroom and in administrative work as a result of in-service training. These findings highlight the transformative potential of well-designed professional development programs.

The role of in-service training in achieving institutional goals cannot be overstated. As educational institutions strive to meet evolving societal needs and policy mandates, the continuous development of their teaching staff becomes paramount. In this context, criteria defining effective teaching serve as implicit measures for evaluating the impact of in-service training programs, providing a framework for assessing the return on investment in professional development initiatives.Pintrich and Schunk (2002) argue that in-service training is essential for enhancing teachers' skills, knowledge, and capacity, enabling them to set meaningful objectives and organize effective teaching plans. This perspective views in-service training not just as a means of skill acquisition but as a tool for empowering teachers to become active agents in their professional growth and classroom effectiveness.

The catalytic role of in-service training in transforming teachers' professional identities and practices is further emphasized by Zeidner et al. (2000) and Kazmi et al. (2011). Their research suggests that effective in-service training can lead to significant changes in a teacher's role, expanding their vision and improving overall teaching quality. This transformation is particularly crucial in the context of rapidly changing educational landscapes, where teachers are expected to adapt to new pedagogical approaches, technologies, and diverse learner needs(Ahmed & Opoku, 2022).

In summary, the literature on pre-service and in-service teacher training paints a picture of a complex and dynamic field that is central to the quality of education. Pre-service training provides the foundation upon which teachers build their careers, while in-service training ensures continuous growth and adaptation to changing educational paradigms. The challenges identified in both areas, from the theory-practice gap in pre-service training to the need for targeted, relevant professional development in in-service training, highlight the ongoing need for research and innovation in teacher education. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, so must our approaches to preparing and supporting teachers throughout their careers.

# Research Methodology

# Introduction

The research methodology serves as a critical blueprint and navigational tool, guiding the researcher towards the attainment of the study's objectives. This chapter delineates the comprehensive methodological approach employed in this investigation, encompassing the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and analytical procedures. Furthermore, it addresses the reliability and validity of the primary data collection instrument—the semi-structured interview—and elucidates the process of data analysis. The chapter concludes with a detailed description of the research variables, providing a holistic overview of the methodological framework underpinning this study.

# Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research design, aligning with its primary aim of investigating the perspectives of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at Technical Colleges regarding pre-service and in-service training in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching. The selection of a qualitative approach is grounded in its capacity to uncover emerging themes from participants' responses to interview questions, as posited by Creswell (2021). Moreover, Poth (2023) emphasize that qualitative research facilitates an in-depth exploration of how individuals encode experiences, interpret their surroundings, and reflect upon their lived realities.

The qualitative paradigm offers distinct advantages in this context, allowing for the identification and exploration of multiple contributing factors to the phenomenon under study. It cautions against predetermined assumptions, encouraging the discovery of a fluid, non-predetermined reality. Once salient factors are identified, qualitative techniques enable the establishment of patterns and regularities, facilitating the analysis of causal and correlational relationships. Consequently, qualitative methodologies remain indispensable tools in social sciences, offering a nuanced approach to understanding the complex and dynamic nature of contemporary global phenomena (McGowan et al., 2020).

In contrast to quantitative methodologies, the qualitative approach affords researchers the opportunity to delve deeper into participants' ideas, opinions, and experiential knowledge. By employing interviews as a primary data collection method, the researcher can construct a comprehensive view of the research topic, grounded in participants' experiences, feelings, and thoughts (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This methodological choice is deemed most appropriate for achieving the aims of this research, given its focus on individual perspectives and lived experiences within the specific context of ESP teaching at Technical Colleges.

# Population and Sampling

# Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises all English language trainers at the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Parahoo (2014) defines a population as "the total number of units from which data can potentially be collected" (p.258), while Cooper and Schindler (2014) characterize it as "the total collection of elements about which the researcher intended to make inferences." This study aims to draw conclusions about the broader population of ESP instructors at TVTC based on the data collected from a representative sample.

# Sampling Technique and Sample Size

This investigation employs a simple random sampling technique to select participants from the target population. Van Haute (2021) define random sampling as a method that provides each element of the study population with an equal probability of selection. This approach enhances the representativeness of the sample and mitigates potential selection biases.

The sample size comprises 11 participants, selected to represent the broader population of English teachers at TVTC in KSA. Cooper and Schindler (2014) emphasize that an appropriate sample size should consist of a group of respondents that adequately represents the target population. The current sample size was determined based on the principles of data saturation in qualitative research, where the collection of new data does not shed further light on the issue under investigation.

# Participants

The study's participant cohort consists of nine Saudi male and two Saudi female English language trainers at TVTC. All participants are non-native English speakers holding bachelor's degrees in English language from various Faculties of Education across Saudi Arabia. The geographical distribution of participants spans several regions of the Kingdom, including Makkah, Riyadh, Al-Wajh, Al-Jawf, Al-Madinah, and Al-Qassim, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives. The participants' ages range from 26 to 47 years, with professional experience varying from 2 to 25 years in the field.

# Data Collection Instrument

The primary data collection instrument employed in this study is the semi-structured interview. Burns (1999) highlights interviews as a "popular and widely used means of collecting qualitative data" (p. 118). Taylor (1984) define an interview as a purposeful interaction between two or more individuals, focused on eliciting specific information or exploring lived experiences and situations.

Semi-structured interviews offer a balanced approach, providing a framework for discussion while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes. This method facilitates the in-depth examination of participants' perspectives (Alshenqeeti, 2014) and enables the researcher to obtain firsthand information from knowledgeable informants. The interview questions were designed based on the research's four primary questions, as proposed by Bryman (2016), ensuring alignment with the study's objectives.

# Data Collection Process

Interviews were conducted via telephone due to geographical constraints, with each session lasting between 10 to 15 minutes. The use of telephone interviews, while potentially limiting non-verbal cues, allowed for broader geographical coverage and participant convenience. Responses were meticulously recorded in writing to ensure accurate data capture.

# Data Analysis

The data analysis process commenced following the completion of data collection. All interview data were transcribed and compiled in a word processing file. The initial stage of analysis involved a line-by-line review of the interviewees' responses (Birks & Mills, 2011), facilitating the identification of connections between data points and the emergence of common themes.Subsequently, the interview data were classified based on major themes and codes, establishing a foundation for comparative analysis, result identification, and significance determination. This process sometimes led to the discovery of new hypotheses (Patton, 2014). A focused coding approach was employed, centering on the most frequently occurring codes and themes related to the nine interview questions.

This methodological framework ensures a rigorous, systematic approach to data collection and analysis, aligned with the qualitative paradigm and the specific objectives of this research. By employing these methods, the study aims to provide robust, insightful findings on the perspectives of ESP teachers regarding pre-service and in-service training at TVTC in Saudi Arabia.

# Participant Selection and Ethical Considerations

The study sample comprised 11 English language teachers from TVTC, consisting of nine males and two females. This gender distribution reflects the current demographic composition of ESP instructors at TVTC. Prior to commencing the interviews, each participant was thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives and methodology. In adherence to ethical research practices, all participants were required to sign a consent form, which delineated the study's purpose, potential risks, and benefits associated with participation. This process ensured informed consent and established a foundation of trust between the researchers and participants.

# Transcription and Initial Review:

Each interview was meticulously transcribed verbatim. The researchers then conducted an initial review of the transcripts to familiarize themselves with the data and identify preliminary patterns.

# Open Coding:

Open coding served as the primary method for categorizing patterns of thought across participant transcripts (Schindler & Schäfer, 2021). This inductive approach allowed for the emergence of themes directly from the data, minimizing researcher bias.

# Development of Organizational Nodes:

Based on the participants' responses, organizational nodes were established. These nodes were derived directly from the participants' own words, ensuring that the coding structure authentically represented their perspectives.

# Thematic Analysis:

Substantive categories were identified through the recognition of repeated themes across the transcripts. These categories were then organized into a participant/substantive category matrix, providing a visual representation of the data's thematic structure.

# In Vivo Coding:

To maintain fidelity to the participants' voices, the researchers employed in vivo coding, using the participants' own language to label themes. This approach ensured that the codes emerged from the interview data rather than from the researchers' preconceived notions.

# Cross-referencing and Theme Identification:

After individual analysis of each transcript, the researchers engaged in cross-referencing participant responses to identify broad, overarching themes. This process allowed for the recognition of common patterns and divergent perspectives across the sample.

# Connecting Strategies:

Various connecting strategies were employed to support the data analysis, including the construction of learning/teaching vignettes (Maxwell, 2022). These strategies helped to contextualize the data and illuminate the relationships between different themes and categories.

# Iterative Analysis:

The researchers maintained an iterative approach to data analysis, continuously revisiting the data and refining the coding scheme throughout the analysis phase. This ongoing process ensured a thorough exploration of the data and allowed for the incorporation of new insights as they emerged. This comprehensive analytical approach facilitated a nuanced understanding of ESP teachers' perspectives on pre-service and in-service training at TVTC. By prioritizing the participants' voices and employing rigorous qualitative methods, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the experiences and needs of ESP instructors, potentially informing future policy and practice in ESP teacher training within the Saudi Arabian context.

**What are the challenges faced by ESP teachers at the (TVTC)?**

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| Cluster 1: Students related | Cluster 2: Teacher related | Cluster 3: Institution related |
| specific needs and goals of their students  the assessment of ESP students | the integration of authentic materials  keeping their knowledge and resources up to date  adapting teaching methods | the lack of modern use of technology |

# Discussion and Analysis of Findings

This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers at the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) in Saudi Arabia regarding pre-service and in-service training programs. The analysis of the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 participants revealed several key themes and insights, which are discussed below in relation to the four primary research questions.

# ESP Teachers' Perspectives on In-Service Training at TVTC

The analysis of participant responses revealed a striking unanimity regarding the lack of formal in-service training for ESP instruction at TVTC. Despite this absence, all participants strongly emphasized the importance and necessity of such training. This finding underscores a significant gap in professional development opportunities for ESP instructors at TVTC. Participants consistently expressed a desire for more practical training specifically tailored to ESP teaching. One interviewee's statement, "I had no pre-service training experience for ESP teaching, neither in college nor in my work experience as a language instructor at TVTC," exemplifies the widespread lack of specialized preparation for ESP instruction. A majority of participants noted that the few available in-service training programs are often short-term and inadequately prepare teachers for the specific demands of ESP instruction. Furthermore, they highlighted that existing programs are predominantly designed for general English teaching, failing to address the unique needs and challenges of ESP instruction. Seven out of eleven interviewees identified a substantial disparity between current in-service training offerings and the performance standards required in specialized academic and professional ESP contexts. This finding suggests a critical need for more targeted, comprehensive, and sustained in-service training programs that align closely with the specific demands of ESP instruction in technical and vocational fields. Despite these challenges, the overall attitude towards in-service training was overwhelmingly positive. Participants viewed such training as a potential catalyst for achieving their professional goals and enhancing their instructional efficacy.

# ESP Teachers' Perspectives on Pre-Service Training at TVTC

The analysis revealed diverse perspectives on pre-service training among participants, although a majority consensus emerged on certain key points. Most participants emphasized the crucial role of pre-service training in equipping language teachers with the necessary skills to leverage technology, information, and communication for professional development. However, when asked about their specific experiences with pre-service training at TVTC, responses varied significantly. A majority of participants reported never having received any form of pre-service training specifically for ESP instruction at TVTC. One participant's statement, "Honestly, I've never experienced teaching pre-service training for ESP courses," echoes a common sentiment among the interviewees. Interestingly, one participant diverged from this trend, describing the pre-service training at TVTC as "quite comprehensive," noting that it provided the necessary skills to address students' specific language needs in vocational and technical fields. This outlier perspective suggests potential inconsistencies in the delivery or availability of pre-service training across different TVTC institutions or departments. Several participants who had received some form of pre-service training criticized its relevance and adequacy. Comments such as "The pre-service training is inadequate and is not related to what we face in our teaching process in the ESP colleges" and "The pre-service training for ESP teaching at TVTC is often irrelevant and away from the reality of teaching" highlight a perceived disconnect between training content and practical teaching requirements.

# Challenges Faced by ESP Teachers at TVTC

The analysis revealed a multitude of challenges faced by ESP teachers at TVTC, clustered around several key themes:

* 1. Diverse Student Needs: Participants consistently highlighted the challenge of addressing the varied language requirements and professional backgrounds of their students. This diversity necessitates a high degree of customization in lesson planning and material development.
  2. Integration of Authentic Materials: Almost all interviewees identified the incorporation of authentic, field-specific materials into their lessons as a significant challenge. While recognized as crucial for effective ESP instruction, sourcing and adapting such materials was described as time-consuming and demanding.
  3. Assessment Strategies: Participants noted that traditional assessment methods often fall short in accurately evaluating students' language skills within their specific fields. This challenge necessitates the development of innovative, field-specific assessment approaches.
  4. Keeping Knowledge Current: The dynamic nature of ESP, with its constantly evolving terminology and trends, presents a continuous challenge for teachers to maintain up-to-date knowledge and resources.
  5. Technological Integration: Four interviewees specifically mentioned challenges related to the lack of modern technology use and its integration into ESP instruction.
  6. Student Motivation: A lack of learner motivation was identified as an additional challenge by some participants.
  7. Diverse Proficiency Levels: Adapting teaching methods to accommodate varying levels of English proficiency among students was noted as both a challenge and an opportunity for creative instruction.

# EFL Teachers' Beliefs Regarding ESP Development at TVTC

The analysis of participants' responses regarding ESP development at TVTC revealed several key beliefs and concerns:

* 1. Challenging Nature of ESP Instruction: An overwhelming majority (10 out of 11 participants) agreed that teaching ESP is highly challenging and requires specialized skills.
  2. Continuous Professional Development: Participants emphasized the importance of ongoing learning and development. One interviewee stated, "To keep up with the latest in ESP teaching, I read articles, attend workshops, and take online courses."
  3. Student Preparedness: Participants expressed concern about the current level of students in ESP classes, with one noting, "Students' levels are too low to take the courses they were assigned to." This highlights a perceived mismatch between student preparedness and course requirements.
  4. Course Duration and Content: Most interviewees argued that the typical duration of ESP courses is insufficient and needs extension. Additionally, they stressed the need for course content to be updated regularly to match evolving learner’s needs.
  5. Real-World Application: Participants noted difficulties in finding opportunities to use English in their daily lives and jobs, emphasizing the need for more practical, real-world oriented instruction.
  6. Technological Integration: Several participants suggested improving ESP instruction through greater integration of technological innovations to enhance learning and student engagement.
  7. Industry Partnerships: The establishment of partnerships with educational industries and stakeholders was proposed as a means to enhance the training environment for ESP teachers.
  8. Curriculum Relevance: Participants stressed the importance of maintaining curriculum relevance through regular updates and alignment with global standards.
  9. Individualized Instruction: Some teachers advocated for considering individual differences among trainees and adapting courses to suit diverse learner needs.

These findings collectively paint a complex picture of ESP instruction at TVTC, highlighting significant gaps in teacher training, diverse challenges in instructional practice, and a strong desire among teachers for more comprehensive, relevant, and practical professional development opportunities. The results underscore the need for a systematic review and enhancement of both pre-service and in-service training programs for ESP teachers at TVTC, with a focus on addressing the specific challenges and requirements of ESP instruction in technical and vocational contexts.

# Conclusion and Research Findings

This research commenced with a comprehensive review of relevant literature to develop and refine the research problem. Subsequently, research questions and hypotheses were formulated to address the identified issues. Data collection was conducted through carefully designed interviews, and the subsequent analysis of this data provided answers to the research questions, yielding several significant findings. The study's overall results underscore a critical need for specialized training for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers. A majority of the teachers interviewed reported a lack of professional development opportunities specifically tailored to ESP instruction, highlighting the necessity for continuous professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge. The findings reveal a significant gap between the training currently provided and the actual needs of learners, emphasizing the importance of specific training in areas such as academic discipline recognition, ESP methodology, context-specific language, and course design.

Notably, only three out of the eleven teachers interviewed had received specialized training in teaching English for specific purposes, pointing to a widespread lack of targeted preparation for ESP instruction. This deficiency in both pre-service and in-service training emerged as the primary factor contributing to the challenges faced by ESP teachers. The study found that 78.6% of the participants viewed pre-service training as equally important as in-service training, while the remaining participants assigned less importance to pre-service training. This finding suggests a need for a balanced approach to teacher preparation that addresses both initial and ongoing professional development needs.

Key challenges identified by ESP teachers included addressing learners' lack of language proficiency, implementing adequate assessment methods, designing appropriate curricula, and meeting students' specific language needs. These challenges were largely attributed to insufficient in-service and post-service training opportunities. Furthermore, the research highlighted a critical gap in existing training programs: the failure to account for individual differences among trainees. Participants emphasized the need for updated courses that align with modern topics and the development of specialized training packages, such as those for computer science, tailored to specific fields of study.

In conclusion, this study reveals a pressing need for comprehensive reform in the preparation and ongoing professional development of ESP teachers at the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) in Saudi Arabia. The findings call for a more targeted, flexible, and continuous approach to teacher training that addresses the unique challenges of ESP instruction in technical and vocational contexts. Implementing these changes could significantly enhance the quality of ESP instruction, ultimately better preparing students for the linguistic demands of their future professional environments.

**Recommendations**

# Based on this study's findings, key recommendations for enhancing ESP teacher preparation and development in technical and vocational institutions include:

# Implement long-term, specialized pre-service training programs tailored to teaching English in technical and vocational contexts.

# Encourage self-directed professional development through collaborative projects, peer learning, group teaching, and ICT utilization.

# Promote practical research among ESP practitioners to develop evidence-based teaching practices and foster continuous improvement.

# Establish a dedicated ESP practitioner community for sharing challenges, exchanging ideas, and collaborating on teaching strategies.

# Ensure equal emphasis on pre-service and in-service training, addressing the unique requirements of ESP instruction throughout teachers' careers.

# Encourage ongoing professional development through collaborative learning, peer training, and integration of modern technologies.

# Support ESP teachers in leveraging e-learning resources for their own professional development.

Implementing these recommendations can significantly enhance ESP instruction quality in technical and vocational institutions, better preparing students for the linguistic demands of their future professional environments. This approach aligns with the evolving needs of the digital educational landscape and the specialized requirements of ESP teaching.

# Suggestions for Future studies

Future research in the field of ESP teacher training should focus on several key areas to address emerging challenges and opportunities. Firstly, an in-depth investigation into the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing ESP teacher training at the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) is crucial. This research could explore innovative ways to integrate digital tools and platforms into training programs, potentially improving their effectiveness and reach. Secondly, the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the quality of teacher training warrants thorough examination. As AI technologies continue to evolve, understanding their potential to personalize and optimize training experiences for ESP teachers could lead to significant advancements in professional development practices. Lastly, a comprehensive study of the obstacles that prevent Vocational Training programs from fully meeting students' needs is essential. This research should aim to identify specific barriers in curriculum design, teaching methodologies, or institutional policies that may be hindering the effectiveness of ESP instruction in vocational contexts. By addressing these research areas, stakeholders can gain valuable insights to inform policy decisions and improve the overall quality of ESP teacher training and, consequently, ESP instruction in technical and vocational education settings.

# Implications

This research yields significant implications for diverse stakeholders in the educational domain, offering substantive insights for both academic researchers and policymakers. For scholars, it substantially augments the extant corpus of knowledge pertaining to pedagogical praxis in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction within technical and vocational education. The study elucidates the intricate nexus of factors influencing instructors' perceptions regarding pre-service and in-service training efficacy, while concurrently providing a nuanced explication of elements contributing to the observed attenuation in learners' linguistic proficiency.

For decision-makers, particularly those affiliated with the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), this research delineates critical insights into ESP instructors' specific training exigencies. By illuminating the disjunction between extant training provisions and actual instructor needs, it proffers an evidence-based framework for developing and implementing more targeted and efficacious professional development programs. This research underscores the imperative of aligning teacher training initiatives with the evolving demands of ESP instruction in specialized technical contexts, potentially catalyzing a reevaluation and restructuring of existing training paradigms. Consequently, it serves as an invaluable resource for policymakers seeking to optimize resource allocation towards more effective and relevant teacher training programs, thereby fostering a more robust and responsive educational ecosystem within TVTC and analogous institutions.

# Limitations

The present study offers valuable insights into the professional development beliefs of ESP instructors at TVTC, yet it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that may impact the interpretation and generalizability of its findings. Primarily, the reliance on interviews as the sole data collection method introduces the potential for self-reporting biases, which may influence the objectivity of the gathered information. Additionally, the voluntary nature of participation could have resulted in a sample skewed towards more invested or opinionated ELI associates, potentially misrepresenting the broader population of ESP teachers at TVTC.

The study's focus on the 2024-2025 academic year, while providing a snapshot of current perspectives, limits its ability to capture longitudinal patterns and shifts in instructor viewpoints. This temporal constraint restricts the theoretical capacity to draw broader conclusions about evolving trends in ESP instruction. Furthermore, the relatively small sample size of eleven participants, while allowing for in-depth exploration of individual experiences, precludes definitive generalization of the results to the larger population of ESP instructors.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study's findings offer promising directions for future research and potential enhancements in professional development programs for ESP instructors. By acknowledging these constraints, the research maintains its credibility while providing a foundation for further investigation into the complex landscape of ESP instruction at technical and vocational institutions.

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