A Triangulated Study of Professional English Needs of University Graduates in Business and Economics in Today's Iranian Business Sectors

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Abstract: EAP courses for various disciplines are designed as a conduit between academic research and practical applications (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 175). On the other hand, one of the main missions of ESP practitioners is to prepare learners for realities of English on the job (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 185). This study aimed to provide a profile of target professional English needs of Iranian BA students of Business and Economics and to explore what real requirements are expected from them at work in future. To this end, perceptions of two groups of stakeholders, namely, human resource managers (N = 30) and employed graduated students (hereafter called "staff", N = 600) chosen through stratified sampling from various established business sectors were asked through triangulation of instruments using questionnaire, interview, and self and peer-assessment. The results suggested that while all four main English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) have been considered important in profession, the employers favored 'productive' English skills noticeably more. Moreover, the present professional English level of the staff, as evaluated by their managers, was turned out to have a long distance from the voiced expectations by themselves and the managers. The findings suggested the need for serious reconsideration of EAP courses in Business and Economics regarding the teaching methodology, content and practices in light of future occupational demands of the students and tying different dimensions of such courses to the requirements of corresponding workplaces. Implications of the study for improving the aforementioned EAP courses are also presented.

Keywords: English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), English for Business and Economics (EBE), Needs Analysis, Iran.

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Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is traditionally divided into EAP; the academic dimension and EOP; the occupational dimension (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). While both EAP and EOP are carried out at the university, their goals are different in orientation in that the former is purely academic while the latter has an occupational dimension (Harwood & Petric, 2011). But there are some cases in which EAP flashes forward occupational concerns. For example, sometimes schools search for better ways to "improve the English skills" of their students with having their future profession in mind (Ruiz-Garrido, Palmer-Silveira, & Fortanet-Gomez, 2010).

The rate of unemployment in Iran has significantly increased in the recent years (official report of Statistics Center of Iran, 2016) and one of the main reasons has been officially stated as "lack of required expertise from the part of the university graduate applicants" (Official Reports of Iran Technical and Vocational Training Organization (2017), document VII, p. 25). The necessity of being proficient in English as stressed by Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) concerning all business graduates would be more critical for Iranian undergraduates in Business and Economics with the extensive waiting business opportunities as a result of globalization. Consequently, through needs analysis from various business job sectors, our study emphasizes the necessity of empowerment of university undergraduates in Business and Economics and preparing them for the 'real' English needs of the labor market.

ESP courses aimed at enabling learners to function efficiently in a target situation. Hence, the ESP course design process should proceed "by first identifying the target situation and then careful analysis of the linguistic features of that situation, which is performing Target Situation Analysis or TSA" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 12). Certainly, this would be the same for EAP courses and far more critical for those seriously bearing professional demands in mind. West (1994) also stressed the importance of his *target situation analysis* in which the future needs of the learners "are expressed in terms of particular types of communication in which the learner will need to engage" (p. 3).

This study follows the same rationale. Falling within the borders of EAP and job market (i.e., EOP), the present study more specifically aims to address Professional EAP needs of students, that is to say, their target professional language needs within EAP. In other words, it aims to analyze the later professional needs of Iranian university students studying in the academic domain generally called 'Business and Economics' (including Accounting,

Economics, and Management), have a look at the concordance between academic 'supplies' and professional 'demands', and propose recommendations for the betterment.

Although not extensively followed by the traditional studies and scholars who believed in rigid separation of EAP and EOP, valuing 'the future job' in the academia has an established tradition within EAP. Carter's (1983) English for Academic and Occupational Purposes (EAOP) can be regarded as one of the pioneering attempts in this regard serving academic concerns together with professional and occupational goals such as English for the medical technicians, engineers or business executives. Additionally, Belcher (2004, p. 170) uses terms like "Academic English for Occupational Purposes" or "Academic for Occupational Purposes English" and postulates that "In Academic English for Occupational Purposes, the input should be set for a pedagogy seeking to foster facility with genres in occupational settings as practitioner/researchers discover the advantages of new technologies". Based on her, this practice facilitates the generation of teaching materials from those actual occupational situations.

ESP is not a monolithic universal stream but developed at "different speeds in different countries" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 9). This is also true for EAP. There have been several attempts to prepare convenient EAP materials in Iran since the 1980s (after the Islamic revolution) to foster students' English abilities (mainly reading) but it seems that empowerment of university students for their future careers by appreciation of their *professional* needs has been totally missing from the EAP higher order decisions there (Amerian, 2017).

The incongruence between what students study in their EAP courses at university and the English skills they need at workplace has been felt internationally. Chan (2017) asserts that business English learners should be exposed to authentic workplace discourse and McLaughlin and Parkinson (2018) followed a similar concern in their study of technical vocabulary acquisition through a vocational training course. It is on this basis that Flowerdew (2010) highlighted mismatches between current EAP courses and EOP demands. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001, p. 12) also suggest that EAP should be subdivided into "EAP designed to help students with their studies and EAP directed towards professional preparation".

According to Flowerdew (2005), it is commonly assumed that most courses taking place in English for Academic Purposes setting at universities are, in the main, concerned with various EAP issues, such as listening to lectures and writing academic reports (lab reports, final-year undergraduate project reports, dissertations, etc.). Yet, she describes a

course while taking place in an academic setting, is designed to equip undergraduates with general skills training in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) practices to meet students' future professional needs after graduation. As put forward by Dominguez and Edwards Rokowski (2002), English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational Purposes share overlapping goals in which the former, undertaken at university, lays the groundwork for the latter in the practical application of acquired language skills.

Background

EAP and EOP

According to Paltridge and Starfield (2013), "an increasingly globalized workforce and the overwhelming use of English as a de facto working language have created significant demand for workplace-specific courses" (p. 175). With the same target in mind, a number of studies were conducted in the workplace. In these researches, task-based needs analyses carried out through ethnographic on-site observations often supplemented with more quantitative data. Among the major examples are needs analysis of German bankers (Edwards, 2000), needs assessment and curriculum preparation for immigrants working in health care sector (Bosher & Smalkoski, 2002), exploration of the communicative tasks of workers in a factory (Garcia, 2002), investigation of the daily tasks of Honolulu's Waikiki hotel maids through job shadowing (Jasso-Aguilar, 2005), exploring interpersonal functions of language in English as a Business lingua franca; BELF (Millot, 2017) and using transcripts of authentic workplace talk in teaching spoken business English (Chan, 2017).

However, especially in recent years, some studies spotted the intersection of 'university' and 'workplace'. The list will majorly include Bhatia and Candlin's (2001) business communication needs analysis in Hong Kong, Dominguez and Edwards Rokowski's (2002) study on students' and future workers' linguistic and communicative needs, Crosling and Ward's (2002) survey of oral communication needs in English for business programs (EBP) in the academic and workplace situations of Australia, and Belcher's (2006) article on EOP needs for implementation in EAP courses. Also, Kim's (2008) comprehensive exploration of EOP practice in an EFL context, Pattanapichet's (2009) research of discrepancies between university English curriculum and English requirements at workplace and Taillefer's (2007) assessment of professional language needs of economics graduates in a French context targeted the similar trends. In addition, Flowerdew's (2010) needs analysis on proposal writing for the workplace and Kucherenko's (2013) integrated and balanced syllabus

design mediating between EAP and EOP add themselves to the list. These studies all tried to merge EAP and EOP by touching what English skills students are expected to fulfill in their future workplace, defining and characterizing EOP in the academia or what Dovey (2006) discussed under the issue of "new vocationalism": transferability from academic to professional contexts or a mismatch between the intended target *needs* and student *wants* (Flowerdew, 2010).

EAP in Iran

In the Iranian context, teaching English to university students has gained serious attention in the last 20 years. The set of books published by SAMT [1], the organization chiefly designed and dedicated to prepare university textbooks in humanities in Iran, can be considered as the emblem of the movement. According to Atai and Shoja (2011), SAMT has so far published about 200 EAP books for different disciplines with the aim of matching EFL instruction nearer to the students' English wants in their own discipline (the books are mainly published for undergraduate students based on a strictly assigned format and basic focus on reading comprehension).

However, in total contradiction with principles of ESP pedagogy (e.g. Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 1987; Jordan, 1980 & 1990; Spack, 1985, Widdowson, 1983 or Williams, 1985), some EAP coursebooks published by SAMT have been written by EFL practitioners with no content knowledge of the area and even not by cooperation of EFL and subject matter experts (Atai & Nazari, 2011). These courses are majorly taught by either ELT or content instructors "with little or no cooperation and even agreement among them over various aspects of the course" (Atai & Nejadghanbar, 2017, P. 44). Moreover, many of EAP courses lack integrated approach and lesson plan (Tajeddin, 2005). Put them aside, above all, one of the main relevant concerns has been serious inconsistency between what skills and practices (if any) university students are pushed to cover by their official EAP textbooks and syllabi, and their real needs in the labor market.

Due to occupational reasons, this would be more critical for students in Business and Economics. Mahdavi Zafarghandi, Khalili Sabet and Shahroudi's (2014) extensive study on EAP courses for students of Business Administration indicated that the courses offered did

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not sufficiently prepare the students to practically utilize their language capabilities to succeed in their academic or occupational environments, for they do not effectively take into account students' learning needs, wants and interests. Hayati (2008) mentions that the tri-partite problem of EAP programs in Iranian universities most often concerns the inexpert teacher and his/her inefficient methodology, the inadequate time, and the purely linguistic and uncommunicative textbooks.

The students graduating from Iranian universities in Business and Economics are often dissatisfied with the English they received during their university period owing to the fact that it has little, if any, relation with their professional requirements on the job (major examples are the ability to produce and comprehend English speech in business negotiations and meetings or writing and reading English business letters and reports as observed by the researchers). Hence, many of them are forced to enroll in short-term in-service *Business English* courses outside the university which not only will considerably decrease their time (that should by then be spent on the job) but will also be weak and unproductive (staff from various business sectors, personal communication, June, 2017)[1].

Targeting EOP needs for implementation in EAP courses hopefully shapes a growing stream of needs analysis research practice (e.g. Bhatia & Candlin, 2001; Crosling & Ward, 2002; Dovey, 2006; Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; or Flowerdew, 2010) but as reviewing the literature shows, this theme has been still absent from the Iranian research archive on EAP. Thus, following 'common core' agendas for EOP and Deutch's (2003) 'global' target needs, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of graduated students and workplace managers regarding target EOP needs of Iranian undergraduate university students of Business and Economics?

2. What are the perceptions of Iranian graduates in Business and Economics majors (staff at workplace) and their managers about the staff's present professional English abilities?

3. Having target professional English needs of Iranian undergraduate university students in Business and Economics majors at focus, what are the problematic

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[1] Being in constant contact with the students and hearing their problems, the second researcher has, also, had the experience of teaching EAP courses in the university since 2013. On the other hand, he has extensively been involved in teaching Business English courses at different workplaces in the recent years.

areas in their EAP courses as perceived by the corresponding graduates (staff) on the job?

4. Is there any statistically significant difference between managers and staff regarding their perceptions of the required target professional English level for Iranian undergraduate university students in Business and Economics majors' success on the job?

5. Is there any statistically significant difference between managers and staff regarding their perceptions of the present professional English abilities of the staff?

Method

The study implemented "exploratory sequential mixed methods" design beginning first with qualitative data which are then analyzed and used for the quantitative phase (Creswell, 2014).

Participants

To enjoy reliable data, after consultation with 20 university professors in Business and Economic disciplines, five standard professional workplaces (i.e., business 'sectors') for graduates in Business and Economics officially announced in the most recent update of International Standard Classification of Occupations in 2012 (ISCO-08) were considered as the yardstick. The classification is issued by International Labor Office (ILO) and includes (1) Bank, (2) Stock Exchange, (3) Insurance, (4) Industry and (5) Commerce. Also, after consultation with the aforementioned professors and ELT experts, a separate position for Tourism Agency, as the typical future workplace for graduates in Tourism Management was added to the workplace sectors, too, forming six sectors altogether. The participants were, then, selected through stratified sampling procedure.

We set a criterion for selecting specific workplaces within the opted professional domains as those places are defined in form of 'corporation' in business. Accordingly, the 'Business and Commerce' division of the latest version of Iran's standard ranking of corporations (*Top 100 Iranian Companies (IMI-100), 2017*) that is conducted by the country's Industrial Management Organization (IMO) and is officially announced on annual basis was referred to. Based on the rank, five topmost corporations from each sector (in total, 30 corporations) were chosen as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *The Profile of Business Sectors*

Professional Sector	Bank	Insurance	Stock Exchange	Industry	Commerce	Tourism (Travel Agencies)
Corporation	1. Bank Melli Iran 2. Bank Mellat 3. Bank Sepah 4. Bank Tejarat 5. Bank Maskan	1. Asia Insurance 2. Alborz Insurance 3. Novin Insurance 4. Parsian Insurance 5. Dey Insurance	1. Mofid Securities 2. Hafez Securities 3. Agah Securities 4. Aban Securities 5. Khwarazmi Securities	1. Iran-Khordo Co. (IKCO; Automobile Industry) 2. Iranian National Oil Company (NIOC; Oil & Gas Industry) 3. National Iranian Steel Co. (NISCO; Steel Industry) 4. National Iranian Copper Industry Co. (NICICO; Steel Industry) 5. Electronic Industries of Iran Co. (Telecommunications Industry)	1. Paksan Co. (Detergents) 2. Refah Chain Stores (Retailing) 3. Golrang Co. (Retailing) 4. Irancell (Telecommunications) 5. Daroo-Pakhsh (Medication)	1. Ghogh-noos 2. Deltaban 3. Alibaba 4. Sahel-Gasht 5. Diba

Managers

Concerning managers, five human resource (HR) managers from each of the six work domains were kindly requested to participate, comprising 30 altogether. The reason we mainly zoomed at HR managers, putting their corresponding university degrees aside, was that due to the nature of their positions, they are aware of different knowledge, skill and competency requirements of their staff (including their English proficiency required/present levels); hence, practically the best 'informants'. Table 2 summarizes their demography.

Table 2. *The Demographic Profile of Managers*

		Frequency
Gender	**Male**	24
	Female	6
Age		35 (27-57)
Work Experience (year)		15 (2-26)
Degree	**B.A.**	1
	M.A.	11
	PhD	18
Major	**Management**	24
	Economics	6
Professional Sector	**Bank**	5
	Insurance	5
	Stock Exchange	5
	Industry	5
	Commerce	5
	Tourism	5
Total Number		30

Graduate Students in Business and Economics ('Staff')

Graduate students from the addressed majors now working in different business sectors comprised another group of participants in this study. From each professional sector, 100 personnel were asked to take part so that the researchers could learn more about their different English needs at work and delve more into their impressions of EAP courses they had experienced before, at university (all had at least B.A.) and their resultant corresponding suggestions for making EAP classes more efficient and profession-tailored. Together, they included 600 individuals. Their demography is detailed below (Table 3).

Table 3. *The Demographic Profile of Staff*

		Frequency
	Male	358
Gender	Female	232
	Not Indicated	10
Age	Mean	32 (21-42)
Work Experience (year)	Mean	6 (5-7)
	B.A.	338
Degree	M.A.	240
	PhD	22
	Management	542
Major	Economics	18
	Accounting	40
	Bank	100
	Insurance	100
Professional Sector	Stock Exchange	100
	Industry	100
	Commerce	100
	Tourism	100
Total Number		600

As it was aimed to ask the participant staff about their current English requirements on the job and their perceptions of university English courses they had just experienced before entering the workplace, only the recent graduates whose work experience was less than 7 years were selected. Concerning managers, this changed to at least 15 years to make sure about the richness of their expertise and familiarity with their staff.

Instrumentation

The study is a mixed-method research and opted triangulation of instruments. Henceforth, following Long's (2005) suggestion for mixing of "inductive" and "deductive" procedures (p. 31) to fit the context, both quantitative instruments (i.e., questionnaire, self-assessment

and General English Proficiency (GEP) test) and qualitative measures (i.e., interview) were utilized as their "carefully sequenced use" would produce "better quality information" (p. 33). Apart from enrichment of the final data interpretation, the main rationale behind implementing self-assessment and peer-assessment is mainly rooted in the nature of Human Resources Assessment (HRA) in which 360-degree assessment of the staff (being assessed by all the stake-holders including themselves) is applied for developmental purposes to enjoy a wide variety of viewpoints on the individuals' performance (including survival of their English-related tasks on the job).

Questionnaire

In order to determine the perceptions of the two groups of participants on the job (managers and staff) about the professional target language needs of university students in Business and Economics, a questionnaire was designed and validated on the basis of theoretical and empirical literature on needs analysis and preliminary exploratory interviews with ESP and subject-matter experts and the graduates. The needs were carefully asked for, transcribed, coded and classified with a skill-based lens and in shape of professional tasks. Following a handful of similar studies (e.g. Taillefer; 2007), the required and the actually present English proficiency levels of the staff at work based on Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) were also added to the questions using CEFR's standard assessment grid. Moreover, as recommended by the aforementioned ESP experts, a separate section was added to check the suitability of current EAP classes for future profession of students, and suggestions for incorporating professional considerations into EAP classes. All the items were designed based on a five-point Likert scale and two open-ended questions were attached to the end of the questionnaires in order to assess the 'problematic areas' of incorporating professional English tasks into EAP classes and 'solutions to them'. The questionnaire for the staff didn't have the first eleven questions (which needed expert opinion of the managers). The questionnaires were administered to the participants in Persian to avoid any sort of ambiguity or misunderstanding. To make sure not to have any lost idea during translating the questionnaire from Persian to English, back-translation was conducted with the help of an EAP expert. Then, the inter-translator reliability coefficient among 10 English translators was calculated ($r = 0.83$) (to see the full English version of the questionnaire, see Appendix A).

The questionnaires for the graduate students (staff) and managers included independent sections with items as follow (Table 4):

Table 4. *Sections of Staff and Managers' Questionnaires and their Reliability Measures*

Section	Item Description	Number of Items	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
1	Abilities of staff in English on the job	4	0.77
2	Problems of staff in English on the job	4	0.79
3	Importance of English skills at work	4	0.81
4	Importance of a variety of pre-defined English-based professional tasks	20	0.93
5	Present level of staff in a variety of pre-defined English-based professional tasks	20	0.95
6	The required/actual English proficiency level by staff at work (according to CEFR LEVELS in form of 4 binary options)	8	0.87
7	Suitability of current EAP classes for future profession of students, and suggestions for incorporating professional considerations into EAP classes	8 (for managers) 9* (for staff)	0.72
8	Open-ended questions on "problems" and "solutions" regarding professional EAP classes	2	

*An extra question for the staff was concerned about their "experienced" EAP classes at university in section seven.

Regarding the psychometrics of the questionnaire, the content validity was estimated through a panel discussion of EAP experts. The questionnaire was piloted with 70 participants similar to the target groups. After computing the preliminary psychometric properties, the final version of the exam was performed over 630 individuals (30 managers and 600 staff) and the results were implemented to estimate the reliability of different parts of questionnaires via Cronbach's alpha reliability measure. The reliability of the first section (abilities of staff) came out as 0.77 and indices for later sections proved to be 0.79 (for problems in English), 0.81 (for importance of English at work), 0.93 (professional English tasks), 0.95 (abilities in professional English tasks), 0.87 (needed/present level for future job according to CEFR which together shaped eight binary items), and 0.72 (suitability of current EAP classes), respectively. To assess the construct validity of the questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was run and the results were used for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). At this part, 17 factors were extracted as below (Table 5):

Table 5. *Results of EFA for the Questionnaire*

Part (number of items)	Factor	Item no. (Loading)
1 **(11 items)**	present sufficiency of EAP classes for students	Items 2 (0.85), 3 (0.86) and 4 (0.76)
	general importance of English at work	Items 5 (0.89), 6 (0.94), 7 (0.77), 8 (0.88) and 9 (0.65)
	importance of English skills at work	Items 1 (0.59), 10 (0.65) and 11 (0.82)
2 **(12 items)**	abilities/problems in English	Items 12 (0.82), 13 (0.73), 14 (0.85), 15 (0.81), 16 (0.78), 17 (0.75), 18 (0.80) and 19 (0.78)
	importance of English at workplace	Items 20 (0.90), 21 (0.63), 22 (0.90) and 23 (0.87)
3 **(20 items)**	importance of speaking on the job (according to CEFR)	Items 24 (0.77), 25 (0.78), 26 (0.83), 27 (0.88) and 28 (0.88)
	importance of listening on the job (according to CEFR)	Items 29 (0.84), 30 (0.85), 31 (0.88), 32 (0.74) and 33 (0.79)
	importance of reading on the job (according to CEFR)	Items 34 (0.82), 35 (0.81), 36 (0.90), 37 (0.82) and 38 (0.78)
	importance of writing on the job (according to CEFR)	Items 39 (0.83), 40 (0.87), 41 (0.44), 42 (0.81) and 43 (0.89)
	present abilities in job-related speaking activities (according to CEFR)	Items 44 (0.86), 45 (0.93), 46 (0.90), 47 (0.94) and 48 (0.90)
	present abilities in job-related listening activities (according to CEFR)	Items 49 (0.87), 50 (0.88), 51 (0.86), 52 (0.74) and 53 (0.79)
	present abilities in job-related reading activities (according to CEFR)	Items 54 (0.87), 55 (0.91), 56 (0.91), 57 (0.92) and 58 (0.79)
	present abilities in job-related writing activities (according to CEFR)	Items 59 (0.87), 60 (0.89), 61 (0.87), 62 (0.87) and 63 (0.83)
4	needed level in four English skills for future job according to CEFR	Items 64 (0.72), 66 (0.87), 68 (0.91) and 70 (0.90)
	present level in four English skills for future job according to CEFR	Items 65 (0.89), 67 (0.91), 69 (0.89) and 71 (0.90)
5	suitability of current EAP classes for future profession of students	Item 72 (0.87)
	'suggestions for incorporating profession-oriented considerations into EAP classes	Items 73 (0.73), 74 (0.81), 75 (0.78), 76 (0.74) and 77 (0.53)

The study also enjoyed manager assessment and peer-assessment. Managers and graduate students (staff) were asked to rate their colleagues' professional English skills and the level of English proficiency required from them to fulfill their job requirements. To do so, as reported, the six-point CEFR scale including six different levels of A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 corresponding to 'beginner/elementary user', 'elementary/basic user', 'lower

intermediate/dependent user', 'intermediate/independent user', 'advanced/proficient user' and 'mastery/proficient user' was used. Items with factor loadings of less than 0.3 were removed as not indicating any factors (Brown, 2014, p. 27).

The GEP Test

In order to assess the graduate staff's present level of English abilities, an already-used and standardized TOEFL test (ETS, 2018) was selected. To make sure of consistency and stability of the test for the target population in the current study, it was piloted with 70 similar respondents (staff in the addressed business sectors) and the reliability index of 0.73 was achieved. The test was administered by pre-arrangement with the corresponding offices. The reading section's questions were presented to the participants in-person. Responses to tasks under productive skills' (speaking and writing) were also elicited and recorded with care and were then rated by three ELT experts. Due to practicality reasons, though, the listening section was not included.

Interview

An interview protocol was developed for the managers enjoying ideas from the most recent relevant resources (e.g. Atai & Hejazi, forthcoming; Atai & Shoja, 2011; Lehtonen & Karjlainen, 2008; and Spence & Liu, 2013). The semi-structured interviews were arranged and conducted by the second researcher at different offices. The questions focused on priorities of managers among different English skills/sub-skills concerning job requirements, relationship between general English (GE) and EAP, importance of different English skills to fulfill various occupational requirements, managers' rough evaluation of EAP courses in fulfilling professional requirements, and suggestion for tailoring EAP classes to occupational needs. To make sure of the clarity of questions, avoiding from any possible misunderstanding and eliciting credible and relevant answers, the interviews were conducted in Persian (applying the same back-translation procedure and inter-translator reliability calculations as done for the questionnaire; $r = 0.87$) and on average, each interview lasted for 25 minutes (the full version of interview questions is available in Appendix B). Finally, the GEP test, piloted with similar participants, was distributed among the staff in pre-arranged office meetings during their break time.

Procedure and Data Analysis

Data collection for the study was completed during the one-year time span, June 2017- June 2018. The questionnaire was administered to the addressed respondents during office meetings to maximize the return rates.

All the data were run via the Statistical Package for social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The results gathered from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed descriptively (i.e., tabulation, frequencies and percentages). Cronbach's Alpha and Factor Analysis were run to estimate the reliability and validity of the questionnaires, accordingly. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the questionnaire was, also, run using Lisrel 8.53. Furthermore, non-parametric inferential test of Mann Whitney *U* was applied. The results of the GEP test were, also, classified and dealt with descriptively.

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using data codification and reduction. Also, by content analysis of the answers given to the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, major problematic areas of EAP classes in relation to future profession of students in Business and Economics were investigated and checked.

Results

Target EOP Needs

The ability of staff to "read" was indicated as the most important skill they should satisfy as was chosen by 28 of 30 managers (93.3%). Next, 27 managers (a noticeable majority equal to 90% of the participants) suggested that "listening" and "speaking" are either "much" or "very much" important in the job the staff are doing and "writing" comes last with being favored by 80% of the participants as an important skill on the job. In a nutshell, all English skills were judged by at least 80% of the managers as highly important for their staff. The ability of staff to "read" was indicated as the most important skill they should satisfy as chosen by 28 of 30 managers (93.3%). Next, 27 managers (90%) suggested that listening and speaking are "very important" in the job the staff are doing and writing comes last being favored by 80% of the participants. In brief, all English skills were judged by at least 80% of the managers as highly important for their staff. At least, half of the participant staff agreed that English skills are "much" or "very much" important in successful completion of their career tasks. Reading pioneers the list by attracting the attention of 65.3%. With a short distance with each other, speaking, listening and writing follow reading by frequencies of 50%, 49.7% and 48.4%, respectively.

In speaking, "talking with foreigners" and "negotiations" ranked as the most important professional English-oriented tasks being rated "much/very much" by 90% and 86.7% of the participants, accordingly. In listening, understanding "technical speech" (93.3%) and "general conversation" (90%) lead the list and comprehending "media" (86.6%) and "telephone on the job" (80%) followed them. Reading immediately comes after listening by the total mean of 85.32% and with pioneering position of "reading technical materials on the net" (90%) followed by the ability to read "academic articles in the job area" (86.7%) and "technical books" (86.6%). However, dealing with "contracts" and "general" texts, though seemingly too much formal/specialized, were by no means ignored by the managers with winning 83.3% and 80% of their attention for "much" and "very much", respectively. In writing, the ability to prepare "resume and applications" shows the highest frequency (76.7%) and "business correspondence" (70%) was placed next.

Based on the results gathered from the staff, among the items considered for speaking, "talking with foreigners" was indicated as the most important English-based professional task by 57% and immediately then comes "giving speech" with 56.6%. Being involved with "negotiations" also attracted the attention of 52.3% of the staff. Considering listening, four out of five items were welcomed by at least half of the participants. Here, understanding professional audio-visual materials overtook with 55% and "understanding technical speech" (52.3%), "understanding general conversation" (52%) and "understanding media" (50%) lined next.

Regarding the ability to read, three items became the most appealing for more than 60% of the participant staff. Reading on-line technical materials (63%) rated as the most attractive followed by reading technical books (62%) and academic-professional articles (61%). Then, overall, half of the staff (50%) agreed that the ability to write resume together with mastery over job applications and cover letters are "much" or "very much" important tasks for graduates in Business and Economics. "Business correspondence" (44%) and "Job reports" (43%) happened to be the next essential tasks from the eyes of the staff.

Present Professional English Abilities

As anticipated, in their general evaluation of staff's abilities, the managers indicated that graduates from university (i.e., their staff) are not so proficient in English and particularly, that they are weak in the oral skills. In detail, 20 managers out of 30 rated their staff's listening proficiency as weak and nearly the same number (19 managers, 63.3%) believed the

same concerning speaking. Besides, the rate of managers who assessed staff's proficiency as "very little" in speaking (46.7%) has been more than those who did that regarding listening (30%). In reading, only 11 managers (36.6%) verified that their staff's ability is "much". Finally, 16 managers believed in weakness of the staff in writing (53.3%). In sum, managers showed that they are not satisfied with their staff's oral proficiency, at all, and that staff's writing skill needs much improvement while also holding that even the personnel's reading has to progress significantly.

The participant staff admitted their weakness in language skills and this is noticeably bolder for the oral ones. Beginning with listening, over 65% of the participants (nearly 400 individuals) indicated that their ability is "little" or stands on the average and the rate rises to 67% (402 persons) concerning speaking. With respect to written skills, the staff believed that they can perform much better by showing the majority of 76.3% ability for either "average" (218 persons) or "much" (240 ones) in reading and 66% (396 individuals) for writing.

In order to obtain a more telling picture of graduate students' present needs, manager assessment and peer assessment were carried out. The managers were asked to assess their staff's present English ability levels on the CEFR scale. Also, they were asked to assess the required level of English for success at work for graduate students who want to be employed, through the same scale. Similar questions were asked from the staff about their own English abilities.

Setting a skill-based view, managers indicated that reading and speaking are the most needed English skills for their staff on the job with 'advanced' level as in each of these skills, 83.3% of managers selected either C1 or C2. This tendency weakens for listening and writing with 73.4% and 63.4%, in turn, though still counted noticeable.

The first and most striking facet regarding the data obtained from the managers on staff's "present abilities" is that to them, none of their staff stands in C2 in any of the skills and that based on almost all, they are not C1, as well (2 cases in exception). Together, it simply suggests that the staff were evaluated by their managers as being in, at most, "B" levels. Another important suggestion of the results is that the staff were assessed to be at either A2 (elementary basic user) or B1 (intermediate independent user) in receptive skills (reading and listening) by the majority of managers (63.3%) which is, even, replaced by "A" levels (A1 and A2) for productive skills (63.3% and 53.4% for writing and speaking, accordingly).

The focal frequency levels of responses gathered from the staff are B2, C1 and C2 with cumulative rate of 77.6% (466 staff) for reading, 69.7% (418 staff) for writing, 69.3% (416 staff) for speaking and 65.6% (394 staff) for listening. In a rough estimation, approximately 400 out of 600 participants favored those three levels. The other interesting outcome is that "C" levels turned out as the two levels with the highest frequencies in speaking but regarding the other three skills, these are B2 and C1.

Differences between Managers' and Staffs' Perceptions

To test the hypothesis that there are differences among perceptions of staff and managers concerning the target professional English needs of undergraduate students in Business and Economics, a Mann Whitney U test was run. The results of the test for three out of the four skills (reading, listening and speaking) displayed in Table 6 showed that there are differences between the two groups' perceptions which are statistically significant at $p < .01$ while the results regarding writing didn't prove statistically significant differences between the two groups ($p < .01$).

Table 6. *Results of the Mann Whitney Test for Differences between Managers' and Staff's Perceptions of Target Professional English Needs*

	Skill	Position	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Syg.
TSA	Reading	M	396.83	11905.00	6380	.006
		S	308.24	183095.00		
	Listening	M	404.90	12147.00	6138	.003
		S	307.83	182853.00		
	Writing	M	353.07	10592.00	7693	.195
		S	310.45	184408.00		
	Speaking	M	415.50	12465.00	5820	.001
		S	307.30	182535.00		

M: Managers
S: Staff
* Grouping variable: position (30 Managers & 600 staff)

To explore the difference between perceptions of managers and their staff as for the staff's present professional English abilities, Mann Whitney U test was run whose results showed significant difference between perceptions of the two groups at $p < .01$ on listening, writing and speaking but didn't display any statistical significance concerning reading ($p < .01$) as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. *Results of the Mann Whitney Test for Differences between Managers' and Staff's Perceptions of Staff's Present English Abilities*

	Skill	Position	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Syg.
PSA	Reading	M	247.60	7428.00	6963.000	.039
		S	315.78	187572.00		
	Listening	M	226.37	6791.00	6326.000	.006
		S	316.85	188209.00		
	Writing	M	214.63	6439.00	5974.000	.002
		S	317.44	188561.00		
	Speaking	M	224.07	6722.00	6257.000	.005
		S	316.97	188278.00		

M: Managers
S: Staff
* Grouping variable: position (30 Managers & 600 staff)

The results of managers' and staff's assessment of present professional English abilities of their colleagues were also compared with the results of the GEP test administered to them (see Table 8). The outcomes of the test with a mean of 44.47 (and a total score of 90) and standard deviation of 15.39 confirmed the results of assessment and indicated the overall low GEP level of the staff. Matching the results of this test with CEFR scale indicated that the majority of staff are at A2 (basic user- elementary level; 284 persons, 47.3%) and B1 (independent user- lower intermediate level, 270 individuals, 45%) together comprising over 92% of them. Regarding the required English level to succeed at workplace, 70% of the participant managers opted for the advanced levels of (C1 & C2) as the necessary level for the staff to successfully fulfill their English-based career tasks out of which 20% opted for C2 (the highest level). When compared to staff's present English level, these results indicate a big gap between the targeted level assumed for the staff and the required level from them to meet their professional demands with flying colors.

Table 8. *Staff's English Abilities and Assessment Results*

Assessment Results		GEP Test Results	
Required Level (%) - Managers	Present Level (%) – Managers	Percentage of staff at each level	Competence levels from weakest to strongest (according to CEFR)
0	13.3	1	A1 (basic user – beginner)
0	40	47.33	A2 (basic user – elementary)
0	33.3	45	B1 (independent user – intermediate)
30	13.3	6.66	B2 (independent user – upper intermediate)
50	0	0	C1 (proficient user – advanced)
20	0	0	C2 (proficient user – mastery)

The results of semi-structured interviews, also, confirmed the staff's low GEP. As for the data collected through the interviews, we found that the general verbal trends of the conversations were difficult for them to track, that they partly depended on mediators and interpreters to be clarified on the issues being discussed, that no motivation or confidence could be sensed from them when speaking, and that even at times, they had problems over most-frequent vocabularies or general basic structures making them stressed and thus, much less efficient.

'Professional English' Problems

Based on the managers, the chief problematic skills for their staff in fulfilling their job demands are listening (76.7%; 23 managers) and speaking (20 managers; 66.7%). Writing followed the oral skills by being opted by 16 managers (53.4%) and reading was portrayed as the least challenging skill for the staff by 10 managers (26.3%).

When required to give feedback on their 'problems' in different language skills, the majority of the staff indicated that they feel their problems lie at 'little' or 'average' in 3 out of 4 skills namely reading (64.7%), listening (62%) and writing (61.7%) with 388, 372 and 370 individuals, respectively. Regarding speaking, the trend changed to 'average' and 'much' with 62% (372 ones) of the total selections approving the managers' judgment.

The last part of both managers' and staff's questionnaires asked them two open-ended questions about the 'problematic areas in EAP courses' concerning students' future profession and their 'suggestions to solve them'. Using qualitative data reduction methods, the expressed responses of 30 managers and 600 staff members to this part were content analyzed (thematic analysis) and summarized in the form of 10 most frequent (above 15 times of occurrence) statement *themes* extracted from 'telling' words and expressions. These are listed in Table 9.

Table 9. *Emerged Themes in Response to Open-ended Questions of the Questionnaire*

	Problems
1	Lack of knowledgeable, proficient and motivated teachers
2	Low general English proficiency (GEP) of students when entering university
3	Few EAP class hours (credits)
4	Not taking EAP courses seriously by all stakeholders
5	Ignoring English in other courses
6	Lack of motivated students
7	Lack of attention to professional English needs (the delivered content is mostly "general")
8	No connection between workplace (needs) and university courses
9	Irrelevance of university degree and future working position
10	Diversity of students' future professions and hence; their needs

As for the 'solutions', using knowledgeable and professional teachers with high motivation, conducting placement tests and leveling EAP classes, increasing EAP class time, making high performance in EAP courses compulsory for promotions/graduation, running all university courses in English, motivating students via considering bonuses, using informed teachers who connect university instruction with professional needs on the job, practicality of EAP classes (inclusion of professionally efficient topics and contents), optimizing the job market and valuing graduates and their corresponding jobs, and designing 'umbrella' vision of EAP courses to suit extension of needs- tasting stream of 'general' occupational demands in EAP classes were the top and most frequent themes extracted.

Managers' Interviews

To yield an in-depth coverage of the present and target needs and exploration of the participants' dynamic notions (Long, 2005), the 30 participant managers in this study were also asked for an interview.

The contents of all the interviews (totally comprising more than 12 hours of recording) were transcribed and then carefully analyzed, codified and categorized by three EAP experts based on the themes supposed in the interview protocol. Concerning the managers' priorities among English (sub) skills, vocabulary and reading (N = 24) and oral skills (N = 21) got bolded. The results (N = 20) also generally suggest that oral skills are the most important to fulfill various occupational requirements, anyway.

Regarding the relationship between general English and EAP, all the participant managers (N = 30) indicated that the higher their staff's general command of English is, the more advanced their technical English, and hence; their job performance and success, would be. When asked to evaluate the usefulness of their staff's EAP courses in satisfying English-related duties, an absolute portion (N = 27) of the managers rejected that.

Task-based EAP courses in shape of practical and participatory classes and workshops (N = 18), contextual syllabi (N = 17) and continuous EAP courses to immerse students (N = 10) were among the most-frequent suggestions the managers made to enhance the efficiency of EAP courses in Business and Economics.

In their interview, a couple of managers pointed to the serious weakness of their staff in English in general. For instance, a manager told that "the present English conditions of staff at workplace are totally unsatisfactory" (Bank Manager, no. 5). "Academia's products (our staff here) are even weak in their native language (Farsi), let alone English as a foreign

language!" he added. In the same line, an insurance manager (no. 4) indicated that the majority of their staff (about 90%) are not proficient in general English, "let alone their own professional English requirements!" A manager in the stock exchange also regarded the reading proficiency level of his staff as 'satisfactory' but immediately added that "they're weak in the other three main language skills". (Stock Exchange Manager, no. 3). Another stock exchange manager (no. 5) pointed that "in completely equal situations, the salary of the staff with strong English will be doubled and s/he can grow much faster here. This shows the importance of English for us!". A manager from the industrial sector (no. 4) also responded "before considering English as a *course*, it should be looked at as *necessity* as it IS on the job!".

The managers also indicated the necessity of their staff being proficient in English by addressing practical advantages of that in their own sector. For example, a stock exchange manager (no. 4) explained "we have a concept in economy called *efficiency development* which is empowering human resources and decreasing the costs". "Learning English is one of the most important contributors to efficiency development", she added. A manager working in the insurance sector (no. 1) also stated "in our profession [insurance], due to international standards and regulations which should be meticulously followed and also because the resources are all originated from UK, English possesses a prominent position". She added "more than that, English is the official language of insurance all over the world".

Another manager from the oil industry postulated that "the origin of the oil industry in Iran has been historically intermingled with English and we are still in serious contact with English agents who come here to train and help in construction and maintenance procedures." (Industry Manager, no. 1). A commerce manager (no. 1) also told "in our sector [business administration and marketing], operationalizing/not operationalizing detailed English on the job (practical usage of language) is so important. It will lead to personal and professional growth or death!". Finally, a tourism agency manager pointed "because of its nature, tourism industry highly needs mastery in listening and speaking on part of tour leaders and guides. Actually, this is the minimum necessary condition here as they are in 7*24 contact with foreigners". (no. 1)

In response to the sixth section of the questionnaire, 90% of the managers (27 persons) agreed with concentration of EAP classes' topics and resources on professional needs students will encounter in their future vocation, and almost all of them (96.66.%; 29 participants and with no opposition) believed so in relation to materials and activities in EAP

classes. Then, practicing simulated professional tasks in EAP classes and the idea that English helps learning other content courses was again embraced by almost all of the participants (29 managers). A great majority (83.3%), as well, verified that due to serious shortages in EAP classes in attending real job-related demands, graduates who are by then on the job ('staff') need to take part in extra and in-service English classes. Moreover, all the thirty participant managers specified that teaching so named 'professional English' should be a priority with respecting all four language skills (with still more emphasis on 'speaking' and 'vocabulary') and finally, 29 individuals (96.66%) stated that such a 'professional' EAP course should be thought of with more than 4 credits (hours per week).

Overall, the results from the interview section were in-line with those gathered from the questionnaires. All four main English skills were, again, judged by the managers to be important in surviving in job-related tasks while the supremacy of oral skills in personnel's occupational success gained prominence. The big gap between the 'targeted' and 'actual' proficiency levels was, also, approved once more in the interviews.

Discussion

This study was conducted to provide a profile of general professional English needs of Iranian undergraduate university students in business and economics majors to track the English inefficiencies their 'to-be' versions (i.e. graduate staff) are faced with at work. Also, it aimed at the evaluation of the importance of English in different business sectors and abilities and problems of the aforementioned population on the job.

Although, like a strand of the same studies (e.g. Taillefer, 2007), all four English skills were rated as important by the majority of the participant stakeholders, there was broadly a strong tendency towards the so called 'oral skills' (listening and speaking) after the cliché-typed (and possibly wrongly-induced) orientation towards reading. But the tendency by no means implies 'ability' as the majority of participants emphasized on their serious demands of oral proficiency at work. The gap expected by the study was approved by the participants. Furthermore, the necessity of paying more attention to oral skills to promote effective communication of the target audience is in line with strong suggestions by some of the similar studies (e.g. Crosling & Ward, 2002; Edwards, 2000; Pattanapichet, 2009) and this means ignorance of the 'real' needs of the work domain in the academia.

Both groups (managers and staff) judged more complex items in productive skills (e.g. having oral business negotiations or writing contracts) as the most difficult areas for the

staff to fulfill while they rated more demanding oral tasks such as talking with foreigners, negotiations and understanding conversations as their most urgent needs. This suggests that the interrelations and meetings with foreign counterparts are the most obvious necessities in the business domain whose staff should be equipped with.

Using authentic materials in EAP classes and possessing high-level subject matter knowledge on part of the EAP teacher have been emphasized much in the most recent EAP studies (e.g. Banegas, 2018) and this is absolutely true for courses which target future workplace, as well. Respondents' total agreement with the modification of various dimensions of EAP courses in light of future professional requirements of graduates, also, showed that both participant groups were well aware of the role of university English education in professional success. The emphasis of many studies (e.g. Dominguez & Edwards Rokowski, 2002) on justifying and reinforcing the important role played by English within the labor market recaptures the same concern.

According to the participants, graduates in Business and Economics majors need to be "highly independent" or "proficient" user of English in order to function well on the job; a well-informed advice very near to suggestions made by other scholars, as well (e.g. Taillefer, 2007). A serious mismatch between the university education and workplace requirements is that graduate students who are technically ready for work, are not so prepared to 'apply' their knowledge of English to the labor context (Crosling & Ward, 2002) and this signifies, as Pattanapichet (2009, p. 187) points to, "a huge gap between expectations and the real-world situation" which can drastically minimize the practicality of courses. Edwards (2000) believes that needs analysis is essentially considered a first step in the course design process and a cornerstone of that would be delving into the real needs of what Jasso-Aguilar (2005) named "insiders" or those who are at the heart of the targeted context. Following Belcher's (2006, p. 133) strong suggestion to zoom on the "perceived needs" and "imagined futures" to help bridge the gap between academia and profession, this study tried to turn to the same silenced needs which have been kept quite unnoticed in the Iranian EAP context.

Conclusion and Implications

As Belcher (2006) puts, ESP assumes that there are problems or lacks that are unique to specific audiences in specific contexts and that they should be instruction-tailored. Job sector is not an exception. Merging EAP and EOP and characterizing workplace in the academia, except for a few studies (e.g. Dominguez & Edwards Rokowski, 2002; or Kucherenko,

2013), has been quite an absent theme from the EAP research practice. This study was mainly after connecting academia and workplace via seeking a symbiotic profile of what some (such as Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) may title 'English for General Occupational Purposes (EGOP) needs' within the realm of Iranian EAP for Business and Economics. "Little attention has been paid to the role and impact of subject matter learning through ESP courses" (Banegas, 2018, p. 1) and this is also true for the EAP classes delivered at academia; especially as they are preparing their audience for the subject-specific practical domains.

We were chiefly concerned with general shared profession-based English needs of those who are in the occupational positions from one side and optimizing the according EAP courses from the other to provide a job-tailored "common core" of English skills to be practically portrayed in targeted Iranian students' syllabi. The researchers used a wide range of instruments and were present in the job sectors and offices for months to delve into the needs at workplace as much and as accurate as possible. The results derived from the questionnaire and interview underlined areas such as optimizing teachers and classes (placement, hours, method, resources, facilities), empowering students' pre-university general English proficiency, taking EAP much more serious in higher-order procedures, motivating class members, tying academia and workplace (needs analysis, workshops, simulated tasks, inviting practitioners) and increasing the business interaction of Iran with the world.

Despite all time and budget spent on proliferating the content of Iranian EAP courses extensively, the suggestions made by this study, as informed by the "real" role playing stakeholders outside, may imply the urgent necessity of framing changes to make EAP domain to act efficiently, in response to its innate missions, concerning post-academic life of the graduates on the job.

As verified by the verbalized gaps in research and approved by the practitioners' practical concerns, the findings seem to provide vital implications for renewing EAP programs in the realm of Business and Economics and enhancing accountability of EAP instruction in the very field, likewise. The implications cover individual, pedagogic and organizational levels. At the individual level, the necessity for EAP teachers in Business and Economics in Iran to develop more 'practical' knowledge by familiarizing themselves with the real English demands of the job market through various ways can be expressed. Pedagogically, the results of this study may inform Iranian EAP practitioners, too, of the exigency of reconsidering EAP courses' methodology, curriculum and practices in light of the

very applied concerns addressed by the study. The outcomes can also be at the service of universities in the country to extend their connection with business sectors and make operational policies to enjoy the professional experience of the staff in different business sectors by inviting them to hold relevant classes and workshops for EAP students.

The results of this study recommend policy-makers of EAP courses in business and Economics to make the courses more goal-oriented towards the future professional tasks to be experienced by the students. They also warn EAP practitioners to screen students according to their initial proficiency and correspondingly level EAP classes so that the courses can be really fine-tuned and convenient. The findings encourage using knowledgeable and professional teachers with high interest in the relevant subject matter they teach (business) and extending the weekly class hours to expand the chances students have to practice real-work business English conditions. EAP course designers can, also, use the findings to tailor university instruction with professional English needs on the job using update, practical and effective teaching methodologies and coherent career-related syllabi lending themselves as much as possible to authentic vocational environments incorporating productive skills (as the need was clearly voiced by our participants) much more than before.

As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) put, the data derived from needs analysis should optimally set the ground for curriculum development, syllabus design, materials preparation, and even methodology and evaluation. Accordingly, we wish that the findings of the present study are first encouraging for ELT policy makers to invest more on 'professional' perspectives of EAP and guiding for propositions and revisions with respect to EAP materials and classroom practices. We seriously think and hope that the findings are both rewarding and practical for the current pedagogy and research on ESP/EAP in the international domain, as well, since the worrying unemployment rate of degree-holders all over the world as a result of English proficiency deficit has been repeatedly alarmed by the global stats especially in the recent decade. Certainly, much more research is required to probe various professional English needs at miscellaneous workplaces and at varying levels and, as Flowerdew (2013) recommends, certainly seeking help from more qualitative, ethnographic and critical-oriented methods and tools can more comprehensively suit the crucial need.

Acknowledgements

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Appendices

Appendix A

English Translation of Staff Questionnaire (managers' version underwent necessary modifications)

Degree: **Major:**   **Minor:**   **Position:**   **Age:**
Gender: **Workplace:**   **Work Experience:**

1. How much are you <u>proficient</u> in the English skills below? (How do you evaluate yourself?)

	***************	**Very Low**	**Low**	**Intermediate**	**Much**	**Very Much**
Receptive Skills	**Listening**					
	Reading					
Productive Skills	**Speaking**					
	Writing					

2. How much do you rank your <u>problems</u> in the English skills below?

	***************	**Very Low**	**Low**	**Intermediate**	**Much**	**Very Much**
Receptive Skills	**Listening**					
	Reading					
Productive Skills	**Speaking**					
	Writing					

3. How <u>important</u> do you think the English skills below are <u>in your job</u>?

	***************	**Very Low**	**Low**	**Intermediate**	**Much**	**Very Much**
Receptive Skills	**Listening**					
	Reading					
Productive Skills	**Speaking**					
	Writing					

4. How much do you need English proficiency in the English-based professional tasks below? How do you evaluate yourself in performing them? Options in each section are divided into five scales ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very much).

***	**Importance**					**My Ability**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
S1. Performing job interview										
S2. Having English telephone conversation at work										
S3. Lecturing in English meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences										
S4. Speaking with international guests, specialists and experts										
S5. International professional negotiations (oral)										
L1. Understanding general English conversations										
L2. Understanding telephone conversations at work										
L3. Understanding technical speech in meetings and seminars										

**	Importance					My Ability				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
L4. Understanding news and programs in international TV/radio channels										
L5. Understanding training professional audio-visual programs										
R1. Reading public English newspapers and magazines										
R2. Reading specialized materials (educational, …) on the internet										
R3. Studying technical English books about the job										
R4. Studying technical papers in international scientific journals.										
R5. Reading legal texts and correspondence and international contracts										
W1. Writing English resume and application										
W2. Writing job reports										
W3. Preparing professional English brochures										
W4. Writing business letters										
W5. Writing English contracts										

5. Which skill levels below do you think you need in your job (required level) and what are your present levels? (my level). The choices are arranged from elementary (1) to advanced (6).

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Listening levels	**Required level**	**My level**
1. I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent		
2. I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.		
3. I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	No.: ----	No.: ---
4. I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.		
5. I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.		
6. I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.		
Speaking levels	**Required level**	**My level**
1. I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	No.: -----	No.: ---

2. I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.

3. I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.

4. I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

5. I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

6. I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.

Reading levels	**Required level**	**My level**
1. I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.		
2. I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.		
3. I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.		
4. I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	No.: -----	No.: ---
5. I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.		
6. I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.		

Writing levels	**Required level**	**My level**
1. I can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.		
2. I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".		
3. I can write straightforward connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest.		
4. I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.		
5. I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	No.: -----	No.: ---
6. I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles, which present a case with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.		

6. According to your answers to previous questions, what do you think about <u>EAP teaching and learning at university</u>?

*********************************	Totally Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1. Your university EAP classes were relevant to/useful for your professional needs.					
2. EAP classes for Business and Economics students should focus on their professional demands.					
3. Subjects in EAP materials for Business and Economics students should be based on their professional demands.					
4. Professional English-based activities and duties of Business and Economics students should be practiced in their EAP classes					
5. English should play a role in other courses, as well (e.g. analyzing international documents in English)					
6. Due to aforementioned lacks, Business and Economics graduates often participate in in-device English courses to meet their professional needs.					

7. On <u>which skills</u> do you think the focus of EAP classes should be (please choose four options)?

Reading ☐   Listening ☐   Writing ☐   Speaking ☐   Vocabulary ☐   Grammar ☐ Pronunciation ☐

8. Should learning English with focus on professional needs of students in Business and Economics be priority for universities in future?   Yes ☐   No ☐

9. If your answer to "8" was positive, <u>how many credits</u> would you suggest for such courses?

1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐   more than 4 ☐

10. Which <u>problems</u> do you think exist in making EAP courses tailored to future profession of students? (mention three)

11. What <u>suggestions</u> do you make to avoid those problems (mention three)

MANY THNAKS FOR YOUR KIND PARTICIPATION

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Questions (managers)

1. Which skills and/or sub-skills would be your priorities regarding profession-tailored EAP classes?

2. Do you think there is a relationship between GE and EAP proficiency?

3. How do you elaborate on the importance of different English skills and/or sub-skills in fulfilling professional requirements of graduates in Business and Economics as employees?

4. How do you evaluate EAP courses in Business and Economics in satisfying demands of the job market?

5. What suggestions do you have for tailoring EAP courses in Business and Economics to occupational demands of the graduates?