

Students' and Teachers' Beliefs About Effective Teaching of English for Occupational Purposes

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Abstract

Effective teaching of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) is considered to enhance workers' performance, efficacy, and professional development. Thus, what students and teachers believe to lead to effective EOP teaching is worth exploring. This study set out to compare students' and teachers' beliefs about effective EOP teaching. It employed a sequential mixed-methods design with a questionnaire initially administered to 306 voluntary participants, including 108 teachers and 198 sophomore and junior students who participated in teaching and learning EOP. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews with 30 voluntary participants selected from the first stage sample were conducted. The findings showed that students and teachers generally indicated their high agreement with communicative language teaching strategies in EOP. However, discrepancies were found in most observed factors of EOP teaching, including language skills, communicative language teaching, content and language integrated learning, and assessment, except technology integration. From the findings, it is suggested that both EOP students and teachers should be informed of what constitutes effective EOP teaching.

Keywords

English for Occupational Purposes, EOP curriculum, higher education, student beliefs, teacher beliefs, teacher cognition

Introduction

Recent literature in language education shows a growing body of studies on students' and teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning (e.g., Brown, 2009; Nguyen & Hung, 2021). Beliefs are “propositions individuals consider to be true..., which are tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change” (Borg, 2015, p. 370). Borg (2015) proposed a teacher cognition model which introduces the intercepts between education, experience, practice, context, and beliefs of teachers. It considers that education, experience, and context influence teachers' beliefs and in return, teachers' beliefs influence their practice. Johnson (2018) equated teacher cognition with the unobservable or hidden side of language teaching but of great necessity because it indicates “the complexities of who language teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers” (Johnson, 2018, p. 259). In general, exploring teachers' and students' beliefs about language teaching and learning play a crucial role in implementing a successful language program.

As globalization expands, the need to learn English that serves the global market in various industries is increasing. This reality has boosted learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and EOP to meet global and local needs (Anthony, 2019; Hyon, 2018). As a branch of ESP, EOP has a theoretical framework for teaching generally stemming from language education, including second language acquisition and pedagogy (Brown, 2009), and takes into account learners' needs (Basturkmen, 2020; Mostafavi et al., 2021). Similarly, Lertchalermtipakoon et al. (2021) pointed out that for ESP programs to be successful, both learners and teachers need to understand how the language courses are designed so that their expectations can be met. However,

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“there has not been robust discussion of ideas and theories concerning teaching and learning” in ESP (Basturkmen, 2020, p. 9) in which EOP is included. Besides, the whole area of language education remained unexplored from a teacher cognition perspective (Borg, 2015). Thus, studies that can shed light on students’ and teachers’ wants, necessities, and expectations may contribute to language curriculum development (Macalister & Nation, 2020).

Given the arising needs for research into students’ and teachers’ beliefs in education in general and in EOP in particular, the current study set out to explore both groups’ beliefs about effective EOP teaching and compare their perceptions to draw out implications for better EOP classroom practices.

Literature Review

Teachers’ and Students’ Beliefs About Language Teaching

Beliefs are the driving force that shapes teachers’ decision-making and classroom behavior because their decisions and pedagogical practices reflect what they think and how they feel (Ichebah, 2020). In language education, in general, the theoretical framework of cognition has recently been inspiring enormous research to explore teachers’ and students’ beliefs in order to understand what contributes to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and outcomes (Borg, 2015). Moreover, there is an interrelation between teachers’ and students’ beliefs since teaching and learning are co-constructed processes (Ichebah, 2020). It is also essential to identify differences in teachers’ and students’ beliefs (Brown, 2009) and to bridge potential gaps in their beliefs because discrepancies can result in students’ negative classroom attitudes (Bell, 2016), dissatisfaction, and low academic achievements (Levine, 2003). EOP in specific is a component of language teaching and learning in general; thus, dwelling into teachers’ and students’ beliefs about this specific branch would shed light on a more concrete field of language teaching and learning.

Development of EOP

English for specific purposes is divided into two main branches: EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP. EAP aims to prepare students to be academically proficient, while EOP is to prepare students’ English proficiency and skills to function in their various fields of specialization in the occupational world (Rautenbach et al., 2018). In this sense, EOP is regarded as a component that makes up ESP (Sifakis, 2003). Since EOP is designed to develop students’ both language and occupation-related competencies, it is usually taught in a

professional curriculum, such as English for secretaries, technicians, pilots, or nurses (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991; Kim, 2008). In other words, EOP is supposed to offer courses for professional and pre-work purposes.

In EOP programs, needs analysis is crucial to find out what language components to teach and how to teach them. The very first criterion of an ESP program in general, according to Kim (2008) and Mumby (1978), targets at communication needs in discussing everyday tasks, purposive domains, subject contents, and level of English ability. Besides, it should be taken into account EOP learners’ needs and the skills which students consider to be relevant. Students’ wants must be given a high priority in the available and limited time as well as the hidden discrepancies between the student’s present competence and the desired competence (Allwright, 2005). In other words, EOP is “a learner-centered approach whose main features are special attention to learners’ needs, inclusion of content-related material and activities, and the use of innovative teaching methodology” (Cocca, et al., 2015, p. 2529).

Relevant Research on EOP

Previous studies on EOP have focused on “examining the needs of the learners, more specifically, English language proficiency and competency needs for the workplace, followed by efforts that have been done to design, develop, and/or validate ESP courses based on identified needs” (Kamil & Muhammad, 2021, p. 267). In an attempt to review 133 articles related to EOP, Kamil and Muhammad (2021) pointed out that the specific contexts for EOP which were identified in these articles touched on English for nurses, medical assistants, engineers, pilots, and others across industries. However, there were no investigations into students’ and teachers’ beliefs about effective EOP teaching, leaving a gap to be filled.

In EOP, learners’ English proficiency is considered a prerequisite for learning and teaching (Arias-Contreas & Moore, 2022; Pogner, 2003; Rautenbach et al., 2018). The study by Kithulgoda and Mendis (2020) found that EOP students generally need to be competent to use language to communicate in at the workplace. Also, speaking and listening skills are most needed for EOP students (Cocca et al., 2015; Delgado, 2020).

Other studies have delved into the language skills needed for EOP. For example, speaking and listening skills were considered the most challenging for students in sports science in Mexico, as revealed in the study by Cocca et al. (2015). In this study, the target group was surveyed through a questionnaire and interviews and the findings indicated that EOP classes for sports science were not sufficient to achieve general English proficiency, and thus they needed more training in

speaking and listening as essential skills for their future occupations.

EOP materials and curriculum design bear features that are somewhat different from general English programs on the ground that they aim to train students for specific jobs. Swales and Feak (2011) suggested integrating language and contents in EOP teaching to maximize learners' language use in a simulated life-like discourse. Therefore, authentic materials should aim to develop learners' knowledge and skills relevant to their future occupations while also providing appropriate language, such as syntactic and lexical resources for use (McLaughlin & Parkinson, 2018).

Besides needs, language skills, and curriculum design, in the globalized era, EOP is expected to take into account cultural contents to meet the need to work with clients from different cultural backgrounds. For instance, Ertmer et al. (2012) investigated teachers' beliefs about the integration of technology and found that it had the greatest influence on their achievement. These researchers recommended facilitating changes in teachers' beliefs as they prevent teachers from using technology and shape their practices. In the same vein, Sagar (2014) pointed out that cross-cultural concepts in EOP programs meet the cultural and linguistic demands, especially in English for nursing programs to prepare nurses to work with diverse clients in healthcare.

Since EOP serves the needs of the workplace, it should take into account the perspectives of stakeholders involved in the training program including sponsors, subject specialists, language course designers, and teachers (Kim, 2008). Rautenbach et al. (2018) interviewed EOP instructors in English for tourism and stakeholders in the tourism industry to explore EOP wants and needs of both academics and industry practitioners. The study found that academic and industry stakeholders regarded EOP as essential for training tourism graduates to be highly employable. Both parties revealed specific EOP wants and needs specific to tourism, which provides implications to enhance the employability of students in the industry.

Students and teachers are seen to adopt rather different roles in EOP compared to those in general English programs (Kim, 2008). EOP teachers are considered more like a language consultants, accepting equal or even lesser status with learners who have their expertise in the subject matter. Students play the role not only as learners but also as providers of information and knowledge expertise in the subjects they are learning (Kim, 2008). Thus, it is expected that for EOP programs to work, the teacher's role should be changed from expert authority to a collaborator with subject-specialist colleagues and with learners. Besides, to serve career orientation, teachers can create different simulated career

scenarios according to students' different majors in the teaching process so that students can experience professional knowledge in their own situations (Kim, 2008).

Language programs need assessment practised in those programs; however, EOP has limited literature regarding assessment. This scarcity could be explained by the fact that the EOP assessment has been linked to the assessment of ESP in general, or it should be made a case taking the specific feature of English for the working world and measuring specific components of English for a certain career. The classroom assessment tools or rubrics for ESP involve students' use of the English language skills (Sabieh, 2018) and measure how well the students can do in ESP contexts and tasks in real life (Author, 2022; Hutchinson & Waters, 2010).

In general, the literature review indicates that the previous studies on EOP mainly focused on needs analysis, language skills, learners and teachers, curriculum development, culture, assessment, and program evaluation in EOP. While teachers' cognition can reveal who they are, what they know and believe, and how they learn to teach in a particular teaching field such as EOP, there is a scarcity in studies to explore students' and teachers' beliefs about effective EOP teaching. Such a study may shed light on practical factors that should be considered in designing and developing courses in EOP to improve teaching and learning outcomes. With these aims, the current study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are university students' beliefs about effective EOP teaching?

RQ2: What are university teachers' beliefs about effective EOP teaching compared to students' beliefs?

Research Methods

Research Approach and Design

This study adopted a sequential mixed-methods design. First, the researchers developed and administered a questionnaire to university students and teachers at nine selected higher education institutions to collect quantitative data. Then, one of the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with a group of the participants randomly selected from the sample in the first phase. The interviews were conducted after the collection of the questionnaire to obtain in-depth information of the selected participants' beliefs about effective EOP teaching and their concepts other than the items included in the questionnaire.

Participants and Research Settings

This study applied the convenience sampling strategy to select 306 voluntary participants (108 teachers and 198

Table 1. Item Distribution in the Questionnaire.

	Category	Item number
1	Communicative language teaching strategies (CLTS)	1, 7, 16, 21, 28, 32, 33, and 36
2	Language use (LU)	3, 9, 15, 20, 27, and 30
3	Corrective feedback and assessment (CFA)	5, 6, 10, and 25
4	Content and language-integrated learning (CLIL)	13, 17, 22, 35, and 37
5	Grammar teaching (GT)	18, 24, and 34
6	Culture	12, 23, and 38
7	Technology (T)	8, 14, and 29
8	Occupation-related skills (ORS)	2, 4, 11, 19, 26, and 31

students) at nine higher education institutions located in southern Vietnam from which the researchers could get consents and ethics approval. The invited teacher participants were teaching EOP to the student participants at the research sites when this study was conducted. Of the 198 undergraduate sophomore and junior students, 86 were male, 109 were female, and 3 did not report their gender. Their age range was from 19 to 23 years old. They all had experience with learning EOP in the past year. All the selected teachers, within the age range of 32 to 50, had taught EOP at the time this study was carried out. All the participants were informed of their rights and ethical issues prior to answering the survey and interview and were treated with respect and dignity. Those involved in the pilot testing were not selected for the main study.

At the selected institutions, all sophomore and junior students were required to take two courses in EOP which aimed to develop students' English and skills necessary for their future occupations. Prior to these two EOP courses, the students took two general English courses and reached B1 proficiency level in CEFR (Common European Framework Reference).

Instruments

This study employed two instruments (a questionnaire and an interview protocol) to collect data. The original bilingual (Vietnamese and English) questionnaire had two main parts. Part one asked about contact information for later invitations for interviews. Part two asks about students' and teachers' beliefs about effective EOP teaching, with 39 items divided into eight factors. Two experienced lecturers of EOP who were fluent in both English and Vietnamese were invited to review the validity of the question items. Data collected from the pilot study with 30 participants showed that the scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of factor 4 was smaller than .7,

and there were students' comments on the clarity of some items. The pilot results suggested removing one item in factor 4 to improve its reliability and rewording some other items. The 38 remaining items were randomized and re-numbered in a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (Hussain, et al., 2020).

The interviews were semi-structured and comprised the same constructs as the questionnaire. Each construct aimed to collect in-depth information about the selected participants' beliefs about effective EOP teaching by asking "why" and "how" to explore their beliefs. The interviewer asked an item "other" in each construct to let interviewees reveal their concepts other than the items included in the questionnaire. Table 1 below presents the item distribution in the questionnaire.

Data Collection

Data were collected in 2019 and 2020 through two main stages. After the Ethics Committee's approval, 4 days before the survey administration, the participants received the questionnaire for prior reading via email. To prevent a mutual agreement between the participants in their responses to the questionnaire, one researcher invited them to meetings in groups of 5 to 10 based on their time availability. At the meetings, the researcher informed the participants of the importance of their responses to research project and the participants signed the consent attached to the questionnaire before completing the survey.

After the questionnaire administration, one of the researchers sent an email invitation to 100 participants from the contact information provided in the questionnaire by using the random sampling strategy. Thirty-two participants responded, but only 30 participants (9 teachers and 21 students) came for the interviews. One of the researchers, as the interviewer, started the interviews with an introduction and led the participants to the interview questions. The researcher employed the prompt interview strategy to give hints to explore what the participants perceived about EOP teaching practices. During the interviews, the interviewer clarified and confirmed the participants' responses and requested their explanations for in-depth information. Each interview, conducted in Vietnamese, lasted from 25 to 30 minutes and was audio-recorded for analysis. Regarding the ethical considerations, the teacher participants were anonymized as T1 to T9, and the student participants were similarly given a name code as S1 to S21 in this article.

Data Analyses

One of the researchers subjected the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires to SPSS 25.0 and Amos 24.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY). First, the

researcher cleansed the data set to detect incomplete, incorrect, and duplicated responses. No response was excluded. To test the factor structure, the researchers used the total sample size for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA, $n = 306$) with coefficients, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity, principal axis factoring, scree plot, Kaiser's eigenvalues-greater-than-one criterion, Promax rotation, and suppression of small coefficients lower than .5. Items 2 (ORS1), 13 (CILT1), and 26 (ORS1) were removed due to their low loadings and correlations with the scales. Then, the scale reliability of each factor was examined with the whole sample size ($n = 306$). The Cronbach's alpha values of all scales were greater than .7 (Byrne, 2016).

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the students' beliefs to address the first research question. To address the second research question, Independent-Samples *t*-test (95% confidence interval of the difference) was used to see if discrepancies in students' and teachers' perceptions were significant (Brown, 2009).

The qualitative data were analyzed by using the content-based approach. The researchers recognized and refined categories and themes emerging from the participants' responses using a cyclical inductive procedure. The transcription and coding processes were based on the steps recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Results

Initial Data Analysis

The results from CFA and scale reliability analysis confirmed the eight factors included in the EOP teaching questionnaire after the removal of items 2, 13, and 26. The factor analysis shows satisfying statistics: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) = 0.769, significance level ($p < .001$, total variance explained = 59.340. The satisfying model fit was found with Chi-square χ^2 (CMIN/DF) = 1.233 ($p < .001$), goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.878, adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) = 0.856, CFI = 0.959, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.951, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.03, PCLOSE = 1, and WRMR = 0.779. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha's (α) coefficients for the eight factors (see Table 2) were greater than .7. The factor analysis and scale reliability analysis provided satisfying results to continue with descriptive statistics to answer the research questions (Byrne, 2016).

RQ1: What Are University Students' Beliefs About Effective EOP Teaching?

Descriptive statistics from the questionnaire revealed students' perceptions of effective EOP teaching (see Appendix A). In general, the students agreed with all the

variables presented in the survey. The categories which the students most strongly agreed with were using communicative language teaching strategies (CLTS) and incorporating culture (C), with $M = 4.6951$ and 4.3131 respectively, followed by corrective feedback and assessment (CFA) and incorporation of occupation-related language skills (ORS), with a mean score of slightly over 4.20 each. The categories of language use (LU), content- and language-integrated learning (CLIL), and grammar teaching (GT) were considered less important by the respondents. The mean score of each variable was close to the mean score of the whole component. The standard deviations ($>.8$) demonstrated low levels of dispersion in student perceptions of the surveyed factors and variables.

The analysis of the interview data generally confirmed the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire. More specifically, all the student participants highly appreciated the use of communicative language teaching strategies, corrective feedback and assessment, culture, technology, and occupation-related skills because they believed that such applications were more beneficial for their EOP learning. Besides, the students highly evaluated the use of group work because "it gave peers opportunities to learn from each other" (Student 3). Some students were concerned about their well-being in group work. For instance, Student 7 revealed that he "felt more comfortable when talking to peers than to the teacher." The participants also appreciated the use of skill integration as it "could reduce boredom in the classroom" (Student 10) and "gave opportunities to learn and use in one lesson" (Student 14). Also, most of the students believed the teachers' corrective feedback on language should be delayed and indirect, but it should be direct on contents. They explained, "language problems could be made by mistake" (Student 16), but "incorrect content showed misunderstanding or no knowledge of the field" (Student 20). This result showed that self-efficacy affected their preferred type of feedback. Teachers' technology integration was believed to reduce the use of the native language in instruction and make the class more lively or interesting. Two students with working experience expressed:

It is common in my experience that we must debate to have our proposals accepted. To debate effectively, we need critical thinking and elicit our perspectives persuasively by presenting, explaining, and elaborating our approach to the manager and colleagues clearly. These skills are essential for work. (Student 2)

Occupation-related skills should be encouraged in EOP teaching. We often need to present and explain our opinions and debate with colleagues at work. Great speakers can win the game sometimes. Relevant tasks give students opportunities not only to use language but also to practice skills necessary for work. (Student 19).

Table 2. Results From CFA and Scale Reliability Analysis.

Q	Observed variable	Item correlation	α if item deleted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Reliability
7	CLTS2	.585	.796	.678								.823
16	CLTS3	.541	.803	.625								
36	CLTS8	.506	.808	.623								
33	CLTS7	.577	.798	.602								
28	CLTS5	.534	.806	.600								
21	CLTS4	.536	.802	.599								
1	CLTS1	.538	.804	.574								
32	CLTS6	.535	.801	.522								
3	LU1	.592	.732		.685							.781
15	LU3	.536	.746		.631							
9	LU2	.522	.750		.625							
20	LU4	.553	.742		.614							
27	LU5	.486	.758		.561							
30	LU6	.481	.760		.552							
10	CFA3	.666	.745			.781						.811
5	CFA1	.629	.763			.718						
25	CFA4	.608	.773			.708						
6	CFA2	.613	.771			.670						
37	CLIL5	.623	.720				.753					.787
35	CLIL4	.634	.715				.746					
17	CLIL2	.565	.749				.666					
22	CLIL3	.557	.754				.607					
24	GT2	.713	.762					.860				.838
18	GT1	.716	.759					.787				
34	GT3	.672	.802					.742				
12	C1	.694	.724						.837			.817
38	C3	.670	.747						.772			
23	C2	.646	.774						.713			
29	T3	.684	.638							.832		.782
8	T1	.601	.730							.701		
14	T2	.581	.746							.686		
11	ORS3	.539	.643								.698	.720
19	ORS4	.499	.664								.646	
31	ORS6	.518	.658								.579	
4	ORS2	.489	.670								.576	

Note. Q = question number; Item corre = corrected item-total correlation; α = Cronbach's Alpha

Although all the students generally appreciated language use, content and language integrated learning, and grammar teaching, they added some other beliefs related to effective EOP. Regarding language use, some students suggested that EOP teachers “should not focus on language accuracy, but mainly provided them with practice opportunities” (Student 8). They believed that EOP teachers should not give any rules about language use in class as “it could make the class tense” (Student 11). Also, they commented that EOP teaching should focus more on content than language (Student 17). However, some students expressed different perceptions of grammar teaching. For example, Student 1 and Student 12, who were at different proficiency levels, expressed different needs for grammar learning. The lower proficiency level student believed that grammar was essential, but higher proficiency level ones thought that collocations and idiomatic expressions were more important to learn. For example, Student 1 stated,

I think grammar is important. The students in my class did not have a comparable level of English proficiency. Some are bad at grammar, but others speak and write fluently with good grammar control. I believe that grammar teaching should aim to assist language use, and the grammar points taught should be related to the lesson or task to be delivered.

RQ2: What Are University Teachers' Beliefs About Effective EOP Teaching Compared to Students' Beliefs?

The *t*-tests provided comparisons of students' and teachers' perceptions of effective EOP teaching. The equal variances assumed were employed in case the significance level (*p* value) was greater than .05, and equal variances not assumed were used in case the significance level was smaller than .05 in the Levene's test. In this report, only the relevant statistics are presented. Although the mean difference between the teachers' and students' beliefs

varied greatly among the factors, the discrepancies were generally significant (two-tailed) for the whole factor ($p < .05$), except for the factor of technology.

First, the results from t-Test showed some key findings (Appendix B) related to students' and teachers' beliefs about effective EOP teaching. As can be seen from Appendix B, there was a large discrepancy between the teachers' and students' perceptions of grammar teaching. The mean score of the whole factor ($M = 0.65$, $p < .01$) indicated the teachers believed that grammar teaching was far more important to EOP than the students did. Second, the only factor without any significant difference in students' and teachers' beliefs was about technology integration into EOP teaching, with $M = 0.01$, $p > .05$ for the whole factor. The two groups' beliefs about the three included issues did not vary significantly ($p > .05$). Also, although the two groups agreed the most with communicative language teaching strategies in EOP teaching, the mean difference in their beliefs for the whole factor was significant ($M = -0.23$, $p < .01$). The discrepancies between the students' and teachers' beliefs varied, depending on the observed variables. For instance, the mean difference for the whole factor was significant in other factors, but there were some insignificant differences in the students' and teachers' beliefs about some variables. In terms of language use, corrective feedback and assessment, content-integrated language teaching, and occupation-related skills in EOP teaching, the mean difference was $M = 0.20$, $p < .01$.

The effect sizes provided insights into the incongruences between students' and teachers' beliefs (see Appendix B). The effective size (Cohen's d), together with the significance level (p value), indicated if the statistical differences in beliefs between the students and teachers were really significant. Accordingly, the teachers believed that GT was more significantly important than the students did ($f^2 = 1.11$), which was the largest effect size in all the surveyed categories. The effect sizes indicating discrepancies between the teachers' and students' beliefs about CLTS, LU, and ORS were medium, with 0.55, 0.49, and 0.42 respectively. Regarding the differences between the teachers' and students' beliefs about CFA, CLIL, and C, the effect sizes were quite small, with 0.37, 0.33, and 0.25 accordingly. The students' and teachers' beliefs about the application of technology were quite congruent, with $p > .05$ and $f^2 = 0.02$.

The analysis of the interview data provided further information about the two groups' beliefs about effective EOP teaching. They generally confirmed, clarified, and interpreted the ratings obtained from the questionnaires, which gave further insights into their beliefs and explained the differences in the mean scores about the two groups' beliefs as shown from the questionnaire data. First, while the teachers believed it was important to set out requirements for language use, the students

commented that such requirements evoked pressure. The students further explained that grammar mistakes did not always indicate their unawareness of the grammar points. Instead, the students preferred a relaxing and motivating learning atmosphere.

EOP teachers should introduce their expectations at the beginning of the course. For example, students need to pay attention to both grammar and content in their answers. From my experience, most EOP students focused more on content and lexical items than grammatical items in their presentations and discussions. (Teacher 3)

EOP teaching should be a knowledge-sharing platform. There should not be many requirements like pronunciation and grammar accuracy. Such requirements can make the class tense and less productive. I sometimes make grammar mistakes in speaking although I have learned such grammar points. (Student 4)

Second, although all the students appreciated EOP teachers' use of English predominantly in the classroom, they did not expect EOP teachers to always require them to use English. As they learned the subject matters in their native language, they sometimes found it "hard to express ideas that require integrating concepts and reasoning" (Student 6). However, in response to such requirements, the teachers reported "the importance of anxiety in learning quality" (Teacher 7). Accordingly, students' awareness of the requirement contributed to the high quality of their learning and answers.

The teacher should use English predominantly in class because students need to know how to use target language features in context. However, the teacher should not require students to mainly use English in class. When we speak, we must include many things, such as language, concepts, and arguments. To reach a high standard, we need time to prepare; speaking spontaneously in English is hard for students. (Student 15)

We teachers all know the relationship between high requirements and learning outcomes. Positive anxiety could drive students to work hard to achieve the expected goals. I agree that the classroom should be a relaxing atmosphere, but I am afraid that students may not work best when they are too relaxed. (Teacher 1)

Finally, implied in the students' and teachers' responses were some divergences in their beliefs about integrating occupation-related skills into EOP programs. While most students preferred EOP classrooms to be more content based, all teachers viewed EOP teaching to be more inclined to language teaching. The teachers' responses revealed that they were aware of their students' expectations, but they did not receive "sufficient training to make the classroom to be content-based" (Teacher 8).

This finding confirmed their ratings for items 11 and 31 in the questionnaire. For example, the participants reported their preferences:

The EOP classroom should be a place for students to exchange their knowledge. The tasks included should aim to provide students with opportunities to express their meanings. That is why debates and questions requiring critical thinking are crucial. Language is important, but I think the content should be the focus. (Student 9)

Most Vietnamese EOP teachers are now language teachers. Like my colleagues, I am not well-trained to intervene in the content of students' debates. I believe that the skills related to occupations with which EOP teachers can help students were quite common, such as presenting to a group and explaining answers. Corrective feedback should focus more on language than content. (Teacher 2)

Overall, the students and teachers responded positively to the items included in the questionnaire and interviews. However, there was a significant discrepancy in their answers related to grammar teaching. While the teachers believed that grammar teaching was very important to EOP and grammatical accuracy was essential, the students tended to consider making mistakes in grammar was acceptable in EOP learning. Besides, all the students expected EOP teachers to use of English predominantly in the classes but not to make students always use English. Another mismatch in both groups' beliefs about effective EOP teaching is that while most of the students preferred EOP classes to be more content-based, all the teachers' interview answers suggested EOP teaching to be more inclined to mere language teaching.

Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate and compare students' and teachers' beliefs about effective EOP teaching. As an interdisciplinary area, the EOP teaching framework included eight main aspects of teaching practices in the classroom, including communicative language teaching strategies (CLTS), grammar teaching (GT), culture (C), corrective feedback and assessment (CFA), technology (T), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), language use (LU), and occupation-related skills (ORS).

In general, the results confirmed the framework of cognition that teachers' and students' beliefs were influenced by personality, education, background, gender, and age (Getie, 2020). In this study, the students at different proficiency levels held different beliefs about teaching grammar and lexical resources. Also, self-efficacy affected their preference for feedback types whether it was direct or indirect. Some of their responses reflected the reality that the classroom was the only place where students used language and were exposed to

language use. Besides, the main difference in both groups' beliefs about grammar teaching and language use derived from their awareness of the lack of exposure to language use outside the classroom.

The study showed interesting results about students' beliefs about EOP components. First, CLTS, C, CFA, and ORS were most strongly agreed upon by the students. In addition, the students were aware of the communicative function of EOP at work and agreed that EOP should be taught in a manner that enhances their competence to communicate their job-related content. This finding echoes the finding related to English proficiency as a pre-requisite for the learning and teaching of EOP (Arias-Contreas & Moore, 2022) and the need for students to be competent to use language in the workplace (Kithulgoda & Mendis, 2020). This finding also somehow reflects the nature of EOP which aims to prepare learners to meet job-related demand and at the same time takes into account global and local needs (Anthony, 2019).

This result can be a reference for the lingua franca literature where workers use English as a communication medium. Second, although the students agreed with most items about language use in the classroom, they further explained that rules about language use might decrease students' willingness to communicate. They also expected the classroom to be a relaxing environment for communication. One possible explanation is that teachers should "build up a friendly and humorous classroom atmosphere to encourage students to communicate" Vongsila and Reinders (2016, p. 336). This belief about fluency-oriented rather than accuracy-oriented teaching demonstrates students' willingness to be exposed to input, indirectly resulting in L2 development (Lockley, 2013) and self-efficacy (Reinders & Wattana, 2015). Also, although CLTS, under which fluency-oriented teaching is a core concept, has been integrated into curricula in Asian countries (Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Rozimela, 2005), language accuracy should not be ignored in language teaching and learning (Gao & Huang, 2010). Teachers should explicitly express the expected learning outcomes to the students (Brown, 2009). Regarding students' needs, low-level students were in more need of semantic and syntactic input, but high-level students were in more need of idiomatic expressions and collocations. This finding confirms the research by Aizawa et al. (2020) that students with different language competencies encounter different linguistic challenges. This result is essential for curriculum development and suggests that in a mixed-level classroom, EOP teachers should apply different scaffolding strategies to support students at different levels (Van de Pol et al., 2019).

The findings also showed discrepancies between students' and teachers' beliefs about many aspects of EOP teaching. First, there was a significant discrepancy in

both groups' beliefs about grammar teaching. While the teachers highlighted the importance of grammar in language command and they sometimes identified students' language mistakes, the students revealed that such mistakes only indicated their low grammar control in language use and that the grammar-based approach sometimes made them unwilling to use the language. From a CLT perspective, teachers should distinguish errors from mistakes. Errors are consistent and indicate students' lack of knowledge, and thus should be corrected. However, mistakes result from random ungrammatical formations and therefore can be self-corrected (Salehi et al, 2018). Surprisingly, the students in the study expected EOP teaching to be more content-focused than language-focused. This finding could be explained by the fact that EOP is an interdisciplinary area intersecting with CLIL and EOP curriculum and teaching are context-bound and flexible, depending on local needs. The incongruences between the students' and teachers' beliefs were determined by the significance level (p value) and effect size (Cohen's d) as the dependence solely on the mean difference and significance level may provide false positive or false negative results (Wei et al., 2019).

There were three main limitations of this study. First, as this study was confined to the Vietnamese context; thus, it lacked generalizability. Further studies can replicate this study in other contexts. Second, although the sample size was considered adequate, it was marginal

($n = 306$), with Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) = 0.769 and the significance level (p) < .001. Finally, it mainly investigated and compared students' and teachers' beliefs. Future research that investigates the effects of EOP teaching, and students' language use from classroom observations and student performance would contribute more to the international literature.

Conclusion

This study explored students' and teachers' beliefs about effective EOP teaching in the Vietnamese context. The overall results revealed that the students tended to agree most strongly with CLTS, C, CFA, and ORS but there were discrepancies in both groups' beliefs about effective EOP, especially in such factors as linguistic and learning environment challenges. Thus, it is essential to bridge the mismatches between students' and teachers' beliefs to make the teaching and learning process more effective.

The results of the current study suggest some implications. First, it is necessary that administrators offer training courses in EOP teaching to teachers to raise teachers' perceptions of what leads to effective EOP and how EOP should be practiced. Second, EOP students need to explicitly express their wants and needs to their teachers for the sake of effective language learning to serve their future careers.

Appendix A. Students' Beliefs About Effective EOP Teaching.

	Item EOP teachers should	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SD error</i>
Communicative language teaching strategies ($N = 198$, $M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.38$, SD error mean = 0.02718)				
7	Often provide scenarios and topics for group discussions and role play.	4.73	.64	.04565
16	Teach language by requiring students to complete tasks.	4.72	.57	.04028
36	Allow students to use non-verbal or native language when they are unable to express their ideas in English.	4.64	.60	.04291
33	Simplify language in instruction to make students understand the target input.	4.65	.62	.04392
28	Offer tasks that require students to integrate different language skills.	4.67	.60	.04286
21	Use activities requiring students to practice specific grammar points rather than to merely complete grammar exercises.	4.68	.63	.04499
1	Distribute much time to the practice of language.	4.76	.53	.03733
32	Predominantly assign group/ pair work to complete required tasks.	4.71	.59	.04193
Language Use ($N = 198$, $M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.46$, SD error mean = 0.03292)				
3	Encourage students to use English in group work.	3.82	.72	.05084
15	Predominantly use English in class.	3.90	.71	.05042
9	Encourage students to use English rather than their native language to respond to questions.	3.89	.74	.05261
20	Encourage students to raise questions in English.	3.77	.68	.04838
27	Expose to expect good pronunciation of English.	3.88	.68	.04865
30	Require good control of grammar.	3.91	.71	.05022
Corrective feedback and assessment ($N = 198$, $M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.51$, SD error mean = 0.03590)				
10	Correct students indirectly in language use.	4.25	.61	.04307

(continued)

Appendix A. (continued)

	Item EOP teachers should	M	SD	SD error
5	Delay correcting students' errors until they finish their speaking.	4.33	.65	.04585
25	Base some part of students' grades on group work.	4.21	.62	.04429
6	Base some part of students' grades on in-class participation.	4.27	.63	.04424
Content and language integrated learning (N = 198, M = 3.72, SD = 0.55, SD error mean = 0.03889)				
37	Teach vocabulary in context.	3.71	.69	.04883
35	Use authentic materials related to the occupation.	3.76	.66	.04691
17	Give feedback immediately when a student's idea has incorrect content.	3.78	.68	.04848
22	Offer occupation-oriented readings.	3.65	.67	.04783
Grammar teaching (N = 198, M = 3.56, SD = 0.59, SD error mean = 0.04225)				
24	Present a grammar point by illustrating it in a specific real-world context.	3.49	.70	.04948
18	Assign productive tasks that require students' practice of the target grammar points.	3.67	.73	.05205
34	Teach grammar by explaining grammar rules accompanied by examples in context.	3.53	.69	.04893
Culture (N = 198, M = 4.31, SD = 0.54, SD error mean = 0.03846)				
12	Explain culture-related cases.	4.33	.62	.04404
38	Raise students' awareness of cross-cultural issues in teaching.	4.31	.64	.04545
23	Require students to speak English only when they feel they are ready to.	4.30	.63	.04512
Technology (N = 198, M = 4.03, SD = 0.38, SD error mean = 0.02715)				
29	Partly base students' grades on online tasks.	4.02	.48	.03395
8	Use technologies (PowerPoint, video clips, etc.) to illustrate the target input.	4.01	.47	.03395
14	Use computer-based technologies to assign tasks.	4.05	.46	.03262
Occupation-Related Skills (N = 198, M = 4.25, SD = 0.43, SD error mean = 0.03067)				
11	Encourage students to debate with their classmates on occupation-related topics.	4.36	.56	.03972
19	Encourage students to present their ideas to the whole class.	4.19	.58	.04116
31	Ask questions that require critical thinking about the target occupation.	4.20	.67	.04748
4	Encourage students to explain their answers.	4.26	.60	.04232

Note. Q = item number; N = sample size; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; SD error = standard deviation error mean.

Appendix B. Comparison of Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Effective EOP Teaching From t-Test.

Q	Teacher	Student	Levene's test for equality of variance		t-Test for equality of means effect size			
	M N = 108	M N = 198	F	Sig.	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean diff.	Cohen's d
7	4.46	4.73	9.481	0.002	-3.422	0.001	-0.27	
16	4.48	4.72	17.122	0.000	-3.260	0.001	-0.24	
36	4.41	4.64	10.726	0.001	-2.798	0.006	-0.23	
33	4.39	4.65	10.193	0.002	-3.177	0.002	-0.26	
28	4.51	4.67	7.600	0.006	-2.114	0.036	-0.16	
21	4.53	4.68	4.585	0.033	-2.017	0.046	-0.15	
1	4.59	4.76	10.230	0.002	-2.555	0.011	-0.17	
32	4.36	4.71	21.476	0.000	-4.239	0.000	-0.35	
CLTS	4.47	4.70	4.950	0.027	-4.430	0.000	-0.23	0.55
3	4.12	3.82	.370	0.544	3.510	0.001	0.30	
15	4.00	3.90	1.800	0.181	1.145	0.253	0.10	
9	4.06	3.89	1.035	0.310	1.806	0.072	0.17	
20	4.14	3.77	1.491	0.233	4.569	0.000	0.37	
27	4.16	3.88	.508	0.477	3.468	0.001	0.28	
30	4.11	3.91	.839	0.361	2.380	0.018	0.20	
LU	4.10	3.86	.803	0.371	4.096	0.000	0.24	0.49
10	3.99	4.25	.334	0.564	-3.485	0.001	-0.26	
5	4.16	4.33	1.117	0.291	-2.281	0.023	-0.17	
25	4.01	4.21	3.107	0.079	-2.574	0.011	-0.20	
6	4.13	4.27	1.934	0.165	-1.811	0.071	-0.14	
CFA	4.07	4.26	.202	0.653	-3.207	0.001	-0.19	0.37
37	3.91	3.71	.079	0.778	2.352	0.019	0.20	

(continued)

Appendix B. (continued)

Q	Teacher M N = 108	Student M N = 198	Levene's test for equality of variance		t-Test for equality of means effect size			
			F	Sig.	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean diff.	Cohen's d
35	3.99	3.76	1.899	0.169	2.842	0.005	0.23	
17	3.89	3.78	.258	0.612	1.296	0.196	0.11	
22	3.88	3.65	.029	0.865	2.867	0.004	0.23	
CLIL	3.92	3.73	1.006	0.317	3.012	0.003	0.19	0.33
24	4.19	3.49	.089	0.766	8.318	0.000	0.70	
18	4.34	3.67	.139	0.709	7.731	0.000	0.67	
34	4.10	3.53	.001	0.975	6.578	0.000	0.57	
GT	4.12	3.56	.246	0.620	8.937	0.000	0.65	1.11
12	4.31	4.33	5.524	0.019	-.164	0.870	-0.02	
38	4.18	4.31	1.548	0.214	-1.713	0.088	-0.13	
23	4.04	4.30	2.585	0.109	-3.092	0.002	-0.26	
C	4.17	4.31	3.264	0.072	-1.978	0.049	-0.14	0.25
29	4.04	4.02	9.824	0.002	.323	0.747	0.02	
8	4.13	4.01	30.786	0.000	1.476	0.142	0.12	
14	3.95	4.05	15.645	0.000	-1.354	0.178	-0.10	
T	4.04	4.03	19.847	0.000	.240	0.831	0.01	0.02
11	4.13	4.36	.945	0.332	-3.129	0.002	-0.23	
19	4.04	4.19	4.344	0.038	-1.830	0.069	-0.15	
31	3.94	4.20	9.558	0.002	-2.833	0.005	-0.26	
4	4.09	4.26	6.324	0.012	-1.938	0.054	-0.17	
ORS	4.05	4.25	11.347	0.001	-3.134	0.002	-0.20	0.42

Note. Q = Question item; Mean = mean score; N = sample size; Sig. = significance; diff. = difference.

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The authors declare that this is their original work, except where proper citations are made. It is not considered for publication anywhere else.


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