

THE DIFFICULTIES IN ESP READING COMPREHENSION ENCOUNTERED BY ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study aimed at exploring difficulties of ESP (English for specific purposes) reading comprehension faced by English-majored students at one university in Vietnam. Eighty English-majored students were involved in answering a close-ended questionnaire, and three ESP teachers were invited to participate in semi-structured interview. The findings showed that students did not have much trouble in dealing with reading ESP texts; nonetheless, it was sometimes seen that two common areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension students were faced with were unknown words and background knowledge of subject matters. This study further revealed that students did not confront much with difficulties of text coverage, organization structure, and grammar used in ESP reading texts.

Keywords: difficulty, English-majored students, ESP, reading comprehension, Vietnamese context

1. Introduction

It has been widely noticed that ESP (English for specific purposes) has gained much concern in English language teaching and learning, and accordingly ESP courses are designed in accordance with learners' need (Hutchinson & Water, 1987). In ESL/EFL courses, learners are prepared with knowledge of ESP by having to read a large volume of academic texts in English; however, many of them fail to acquire such knowledge due to difficulties in comprehending such texts. Different researchers have pointed out the reasons learners encounter difficulties in dealing with ESP texts are a lack of both reading strategy knowledge and necessary reading strategies (Dreyer & Nel, 2003) and unfamiliarity of English use (Allen & Widdowson, 1978).

In the context of Vietnam, although English is taught as a foreign language, ESP

courses are in high demand since there has been a growing need for learning ESP among EFL learners in order to meet the working requirements in their later professions. Notwithstanding, EFL learners are faced with difficulties in ESP learning, especially in ESP reading comprehension. As for English-majored students at one university in Vietnam, it is not an exception. They still confront some discernible problems when reading ESP texts, which hinders them from being successful in their ESP learning process. For such reasons, this study aims at investigating the difficulties in reading comprehension for ESP encountered by English-majored students at tertiary level. The research questions are formed as follows:

1. What are the difficulties in reading comprehension for ESP encountered by English-majored students?

2. What are the most and least common difficulties in reading comprehension for ESP encountered by English-majored students?

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2. Literature review

It is agreed that reading comprehension is the ability to read the text and understand its meaning. In that sense, comprehension requires the reader to be an active constructor of meaning by dint of comprehension strategies. Many scholars (e.g., Eskey, 2002; Gascoigne, 2005; Khalaji & Vafaeeseresht, 2012) have asserted that reading comprehension is a complex process to which different approaches, viz. top-down, bottom-up and interactive approach, are applied. The top-down approach is the way in which learners use their knowledge of the genre to predict what will be in the text (British Council, 2006), whereas the bottom-up approach is the process in which readers must recognize a multiplicity of linguistic signals (e.g., letter, morphemes, syllables, words phrases, etc.) and use their linguistic data-processing mechanism to impose some sort of order on these signals (Brown, 2001). The interactive approach combines the interactions between readers and text with the bottom-up and top-down elements (e.g., Aebersold & Field, 1997; Gascoigne, 2005) because it is argued that neither bottom-up nor top-down could successfully describe the reading process (Eskey, 2002).

Regarding ESP, a general understanding of ESP is that it refers to the teaching and learning of English for particular learners and purposes (e.g., Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Widdowson, 1983). Since ESP contains both content-based and language-based knowledge, learners of ESP courses are required to be good at a specific field of knowledge and language. The reality, nonetheless, has shown that ESP learners often suffer from various problems ranging from acquiring the content to mastering language. It is further pointed out that ESP learners who struggle to comprehend the content have limited knowledge of language must (e.g., Ho, 2016; Pulido, 2004),

and those who cannot tackle ESP content in depth cannot recall information learned or locate information explicitly stated in a text (Abdulghani, 1993).

Recent studies (e.g., Ali, 2012; Mehdi & Mansoor, 2013; Rosyidah, 2013) have recognized different obstacles of ESP reading comprehension. Rosyidah (2013) conducted a study determining the students' difficulties in reading comprehension in ESP and their efforts to solve those difficulties at University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The subjects of the study were seventy-five students. The results of the study showed that difficulties faced by the students in reading ESP were from language and metalinguistic, phonological processing, word recognition problems, text-processing problems and other difficulties such as lecturers, teaching methods or uninteresting instructions. In the context of Vietnam, different studies in ESP (e.g., Ha, 2011; Nguyen, Pham & Nguyen, 2016) have been found. Most recently, Nguyen et al. (2016) conducted a study to analyze the effects of applying reading through ESP materials under the criteria of the communicative approach among a large group of senior law students at a university in Vietnam. The findings showed that reading ESP materials motivated students to increase both vocabulary and knowledge of their own field of study and encouraged them to use English in everyday situations.

3. Methodology

Research context

This mixed-methods study was conducted at one university in Vietnam offering two training programs in English, namely Technical English language teaching methodology and English language. Although both programs have many courses different from one another, students from both programs are required to study various ESP two-credit courses such as English

for Electrical and Electronics Engineering, English for Mechanical Engineering, English for Information Technology, English for Environment Technology, and Business English, which aim at providing students with technical and language knowledge for different working environments, viz. vocational colleges, industrial parks, export processing zones, companies, etc. where technical English is required.

Research participants

This study involved eighty English-major students (male: 20%; female: 80%) conveniently sampled in answering a questionnaire. Their age ranged from nineteen to twenty-seven. In addition, 59% of students allocated from one to three hours per week to ESP learning at home, while there were 27%, 10% and 4% of students spending three to five hours, five to seven hours and more than seven hours weekly respectively to study ESP at home. Three ESP lecturers (1 male; 2 females) who had more than five years of teaching experience were purposively invited to participate in a semi-structured interview.

Research instruments

Two research instruments (questionnaire and semi-structured interview) were employed to collect data. The questionnaire for students, which was adapted from Nguyen’s (2012) questionnaire, includes two parts: Background and content. The former features questions about students’ background information such as gender, age group, and time spent on ESP at home. The latter includes thirty five-point Likert-like scale (*never true, rarely true, sometimes true, usually true, and always true*) items divided into six categories (Table 1) asking about difficulties of ESP reading comprehension. This questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese in order that participants would not have any difficulties in understanding the questions.

Table 1. Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

No.	Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension	Number of items
1	Unknown words	4
2	Text coverage	2
3	Background knowledge	2
4	Organization structure	2
5	Grammar (Tenses, linking words, Pronouns)	4
6	Others (motivation, timing, strategies, materials)	18
Total		32

Regarding semi-structured, two main interview questions and follow-up questions were used to collect ESP lecturers’ in-depth information of difficulties encountered by students when they read ESP materials.

Data collection procedures

With respect to the questionnaire, one hundred questionnaires were delivered to students in person, and it took the participants about twenty minutes to answer it; however, eighty questionnaires were collected.

As far as the semi-structured interview is concerned, three interviewees were invited to take part in a 30-minute interview conducted individually in Vietnamese and recorded for later analysis.

Data analysis procedures

This study generated two types of data: quantitative and qualitative data. The former obtained from close-ended items in questionnaires were analyzed by using SPSS to do descriptive statistics. The latter garnered from interviews were analyzed by using content analysis approach, i.e., by dint of three steps, viz. familiarizing and organizing, coding and recoding, and summarizing and interpreting. Three interviewees were coded as T1, T2 and T3.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

As seen from Table 2, two categories, namely *unknown words* (M=2.9, SD=1.43) and *background knowledge* (M=2.9, SD=1.40) were the biggest factors hindering students' ESP reading comprehension, followed by *others* (M=2.8, SD=1.45). Noticeably, *text coverage* (M=2.5; SD=1.51) and *organization structure* (M=2.5, SD=1.50) also contributed to students' low ESP reading comprehension. It is further observed from Table 2 that students sometimes had difficulties with *grammar* (M=2.4, SD=1.53) in reading ESP texts.

Table 2. Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

No.	Areas of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension	n=80	
		M	SD
1	Unknown words	2.9	1.43
2	Text coverage	2.5	1.51
3	Background knowledge	2.9	1.40
4	Organization structure	2.5	1.50
5	Grammar (Tenses, linking words, Pronouns)	2.4	1.53
6	Others (motivation, timing, strategies, materials)	2.6	1.45

With respect to the qualitative data garnered from interviews, it was revealed that all three ESP teachers stated that their students could not understand accurately the meaning of the unknown words and their background knowledge was not substantial enough to understand the content of ESP reading texts. For example, two interviewees shared that:

Their most common problem is their background knowledge in ESP. There are some contents that they have never or rarely approached so they do not

understand what they read. However, firstly, students usually get stuck with vocabularies (T2).

When students face new information in ESP reading texts, they have difficulties in terminologies and background knowledge (T3).

Furthermore, interviewees also mentioned that their students did not face any difficulties in understanding the grammar used in ESP reading texts as they were English majors. A particular example of this is that one teacher confirmed that "Well, the grammar problem is almost nonexistent, they do that part very well."(T1)

Hence, ESP teachers suggested some ways in order to help students overcome such difficulties. They said:

Before learning this subject, [students] should be well-prepared, looking through the contents of the lesson and read the materials in Vietnamese, so they can understand how the machine works, then they can use it effectively (T1).

The common solution for this problem is that students should read ESP materials as much as possible in order to be familiar with terminologies and reading might become easier for them. In addition, they should cooperate with non-English majors in other faculties to help them work with their ESP project in order to get full exposure to ESP materials (T2).

Students should practice at home as much as possible to be well-prepared before learning new lesson (T3).

Specifically, in respect of the first category of *unknown words* which consists of four items (Table 3), it was sometimes true that students were unfamiliar with terminology (item 1: M=3.2, SD=1.42), could not "guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases" (item 2: M=3.1, SD=1.42), and did not "have enough vocabularies to translate a text" (item 3: M=2.9, SD=1.42), and it was rarely true that students did not "have enough vocabularies to understand a text" (item 4: M=2.6, SD=1.46).

Table 3. Difficulties in the area of unknown words

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
1	The terminology is strange to me.	3.2	1.42
2	I cannot guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	3.1	1.42
3	I think I do not have enough vocabularies to understand a text.	2.6	1.46
4	I think I do not have enough vocabularies to translate a text.	2.9	1.42

The second category of *text coverage* has two items (Table 4), and it was noticed that students did not often have difficulties in “generaliz[ing] the meaning of a paragraph” (item 5: M=2.4, SD=1.54) and “explain[ing] the meaning of the passage/ the process because [they] do not understand the context” (item 6: M=2.6, SD=1.48).

Table 4. Difficulties in the area of text coverage

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
5	I CANNOT generalize the meaning of a paragraph.	2.4	1.54
6	I CANNOT explain the meaning of the passage/ the process because I do not understand the CONTEXT.	2.6	1.48

As observed from Table 5 containing items of *background knowledge*, participants self-reported that they sometimes did not “understand much about the content of the reading texts because of [their] limited background knowledge of the topic of the reading texts” (item 7: M=3.1, SD=1.42), and rarely did they not “know anything about the topic when [they] read” (item 8: M=2.6, SD=1.47).

Table 5. Difficulties in the area of background knowledge

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
7	I do not know anything about the topic when I read.	2.6	1.47
8	I do not understand much about the content of the reading texts because of my limited background knowledge of the topics of the reading texts.	3.1	1.42

Table 6 of category of *organization structure* indicates that participants seldom encountered obstacles in dealing with the complexity of the structure of the reading texts (item 9: M=2.5, SD=1.49) and the organization of paragraphs (item 10: M=2.5, SD=1.51). Nor did they, as seen in Table 7 of category of *grammar*, find difficulties in recognizing *tenses* (item 11: M=2.2, SD=1.62; item 12: M=2.4, SD=1.55), understanding the use of *linking words* (item 13: M=2.7, SD=1.44), and determining *pronouns* used in sentences (item 14: M=2.5, SD=1.52).

Table 6. Difficulties in the areas of organization structure

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
9	I cannot define the structure of the reading texts.	2.5	1.49
10	The text is definitely complex to understand because of the organization of paragraphs.	2.5	1.51

Table 7. Difficulties in the area of grammar

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
	Tenses		
11	The text has many tenses in each paragraph.	2.2	1.62
12	The tenses are so complex.	2.4	1.55
	Linking words		
13	The usage/ meaning of linking words in ESP is really different from what I have learnt.	2.7	1.44
	Pronouns		
14	I feel confused to determine the pronouns in sentences.	2.5	1.52

Among four areas of category of *others* (Table 8), it was found out that *timing* (M=2.9, SD=1.1) and *ESP materials* (M=2.9, SD=1.4) were the factors most affecting respondents' ESP reading comprehension, followed by *Motivation* (M=2.5, SD=1.3) which was not a serious factor causing respondents problems in ESP reading comprehension. *Strategies* (M=2.2, SD=1.4) was noticed to be the least difficult factor influencing participants' ESP reading comprehension.

Table 8. Difficulties in the area of others

No.	Content	M	SD
1	Motivation	2.5	1.3
2	Timing	2.9	1.1
3	Strategies	2.2	1.4
4	Materials	2.9	1.4

Aligning with the quantitative data, qualitative data indicated that ESP teachers confirmed that their students sometimes could not manage to finish their ESP reading texts due to the abundant number of technical words in ESP reading texts, and the designs of reading materials did not support their students in understanding ESP reading texts.

Two obvious examples are:

My students have to deal with a lot of ESP vocabulary, so sometimes they cannot read as fast as they want. (T2)

The layout of ESP reading texts also hinders my students from comprehending whole content of ESP reading texts. (T1)

What is more, two interviewees revealed that their students did not have much trouble with their motivation of ESP reading materials and reading strategy use. They shared:

My students are not faced with problems of using reading strategies to understand the reading texts. (T1)

My students feel that ESP courses are useful for their future jobs. (T3)

When it comes to category of *others - motivation* (Table 9), it was found out that students were not demotivated in reading ESP materials since they did not "think ESP is not useful to [them]" (item 15: M=2.3, SD=1.59), and they did not suppose that "The lessons are boring" (M=2.6, SD=1.47), either. Moreover, they also believed that their teachers' teaching instructions were not a factor causing them trouble in "understand[ing] teachers' instructions on ESP lessons" (item 18: M=2.7, SD=1.45), but they sometimes were not encouraged to read because their teachers did not "give [them] interesting or useful topics" to read (item 17: M=2.8, SD=1.43). In another aspect of *motivation*, it was discovered that participants had "a purpose when [they] read" (item 19: M=2.0, SD=1.73), and they self-reported that "when a text becomes difficult", they sometimes still wanted to reread it (item 20: M=2.9, SD=2.42).

Table 9. Difficulties in the area of others - motivation

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
15	I think ESP is not useful to me.	2.3	1.59
16	The lessons are boring.	2.6	1.47
17	Teachers do not give me interesting or useful topics to encourage my reading.	2.7	1.45
18	I cannot understand teachers' instructions on ESP lessons.	2.0	1.73
19	I don't have a purpose when I read.	2.6	1.47
20	When a text becomes difficult, I don't want to reread it.	2.9	1.42

The next area of difficulties is *timing* (*others*) as seen in Table 10, which reveals that it was sometime true that students had to struggle with the ESP reading texts because time constraint (item 21: M=2.7, SD=1.44); their “reading speed is slower than [their] friends” (item 22: M=2.9, SD=1.42); and they “spend a lot of time looking up the meanings of the new words in the dictionary when reading ESP texts” (item 23: M=3.0, SD=1.41). Nonetheless, the data in Table 11 of category *others – strategies* shows that respondents did not have much trouble in ESP reading strategies as they “know how to decide what to read closely and what to ignore” (item 24: M=2.4, SD=1.42), and have to “translate every word into [their] native language” when reading ESP texts (item 26: M=2.3, SD=1.41), but they could “use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) to help [them] better understand what [they are] reading” (item 25: M=2.4, SD=1.42).

Table 10. Difficulties in the area of others - timing

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
21	The time to read a text is short.	2.7	1.44
22	My reading speed is slower than my friends.	2.9	1.42
23	I spend a lot of time looking up the meanings of the new words in the dictionary when reading ESP texts.	3.0	1.41

Table 11. Difficulties in the area of others - strategies

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
24	I do not know how to decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	2.4	1.42
25	I cannot use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) to help me better understand what I am reading.	2.0	1.47
26	When reading ESP texts, I translate every word into my native language.	2.3	1.41

As shown in Table 12 of category of *others - materials*, it was found out that students “prefer watching a video of an ESP topic to reading a text” (item 29: M=3.1, SD=1.42), and they realized that “It is hard to find reliable resources of ESP documents” (item 30: M=2.9, SD=1.41). Additionally, it was sometimes true that “The illustrations of a text are complicated [for students] to understand” (item 27: M=2.9, SD=1.42), but they were not very “strange to understand” (item 28: M=2.5, SD=1.49).

Table 12. Difficulties in the area of others - materials

Item	Content	n=80	
		M	SD
27	The illustrations of a text are complicated to understand.	2.9	1.42
28	The illustrations of a text are strange to understand.	2.5	1.49
29	I prefer watching a video of an ESP topic to reading a text.	3.1	1.42
30	It is hard to find reliable resources of ESP documents.	2.9	1.41

4.1.2. The most and least common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

Among thirty-two difficulties in ESP reading comprehension, it was discovered (Table 13) that the top five most common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension students encountered were that they were not familiar with terminology used in ESP (item 1), they could not guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases (item 2), they had to check their meanings in the dictionary (item 23), they did not have much background of topics of reading texts (item 8), and they seemed to prefer watching something rather than reading a text in terms of ESP (item 29). This means that participants lacked technical vocabulary and background knowledge, and they had problems with the current type of ESP reading materials and timing when reading ESP reading texts.

Table 13. Top five most common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

Rank	Item	Content	n=80	
			M	SD
1	1	The terminology is strange to me.	3.2	1.42
2	2	I cannot guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	3.1	1.42

3	8	I do not understand much about the content of the reading texts because of my limited background knowledge of the topics of the reading texts.	3.1	1.42
4	29	I prefer watching a video of an ESP topic to reading a text.	3.1	1.42
5	23	I spend a lot of time looking up the meanings of the new words in the dictionary when reading ESP texts.	3.0	1.41

Meanwhile, the top five least common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension (Table 14) participants faced were the lack of understanding teachers' instructions on ESP lessons (item 18), the inability to use illustrations for better understanding of what students are reading (item 25), the wide variety of tenses in each paragraph (item 11), the underestimate of the usefulness of ESP (item 15) and the word-by-word translation (item 26). This implies that participants were not much demotivated by their teachers' instructions and the usefulness of ESP courses, and they did not have difficulties in understanding grammar used in ESP reading texts and using reading strategies to read ESP reading texts.

Table 14. Top five least common difficulties in ESP reading comprehension

Rank	Item	Content	n=80	
			M	SD
1	18	I cannot understand teachers' instructions on ESP lessons.	2.0	1.73
2	25	I cannot use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) to help me better understand what I am reading.	2.0	1.47

3	11	The text has many tenses in each paragraph.	2.2	1.62
4	15	I think ESP is not useful to me.	2.3	1.59
5	26	When reading ESP texts, I translate every word into my native language.	2.3	1.41

4.2. Discussion

The findings show that English-majored students did not often encounter difficulties in reading ESP texts; nevertheless, when getting stuck with ESP reading comprehension, two significant factors which hindered them from comprehending ESP reading texts were insufficient technical vocabulary and background knowledge of ESP subject matters. One of the possible explanations for this may be that students were not exposed to ESP terminology very often, which may cause them some problems in understanding a particular ESP reading text. Besides, students had to learn different ESP courses of various fields, so comprehensibly they lacked much background knowledge of those ESP subject matters. This finding is aligned with the results of the study conducted by Ha (2011) who concluded that students often had difficulties in dealing with ESP reading texts because of inadequate ESP vocabulary and limited background knowledge of the ESP subjects. Therefore, it is advisable that students should be an active constructor of meaning when reading since reading comprehension is not a simple skill, and it involves readers in reading between the lines. Moreover, during the process of reading, students must not only look at the words on the pages (bottom-up processing), but also activate background knowledge (top-down processing), and then build all the elements into comprehension (Rumelhart, 1980). In another aspect, it may be due to students' low autonomy in studying ESP materials, which may lead to difficulties

in ESP reading comprehension. They reported that they allocated their time to studying ESP at home not much as the majority of them spent from one to three hours on a weekly basis studying ESP at home. It should be, thus, suggested that students should allocate more time to studying ESP materials at home before class as it is noticed that “Ideally, students should allow two hours of study for every one hour spent in class” (Marie, n.d.).

It was further revealed that *timing* and *materials* were two sub-categories, which also were noticeable factors influencing students' ESP reading comprehension. This result may be explained by the fact that because of unfamiliarity with technical words, students may have insufficient time to read and be unable to read the ESP texts, and because of unfamiliarity with ESP content, they may find ESP reading materials rather difficult to understand. Therefore, it may be suggested that “[p]roviding background knowledge through pre-reading as well as previewing content for the reader seems to be the most obvious strategies for ESP teacher to come up with the problems students have in reading comprehension” (Alemi & Ebadi, 2010: 6) so that students would activate their prior knowledge as well as get familiar with unknown technical words prior to reading ESP texts.

By contrast, it was found out that students did not think that they had problems with *text coverage*, *organization structure*, and *grammar* of ESP reading texts. It may be obvious that as the respondents, English-majored students had sufficient English knowledge to understand the general content, structures, and grammar use of ESP reading texts, difficulties in such categories did not obstruct students from comprehending the content of ESP reading texts. Additionally, in respect of *strategies* and *motivation*, the results indicated that students could use reading strategies relatively well to cope with the difficulties of ESP reading texts, and they

realized their motivation in ESP courses. This result of the current study is partially supported by the previous research carried out by Mehdi and Mansoor (2013) who reported that ESP readers used different reading strategies while reading ESP texts although ESP readers' English proficiency was at pre-intermediate level.

As regards the most common difficulties confronted by students when reading ESP texts were mainly about the problems of technical vocabulary, background knowledge, type of ESP reading materials and timing in reading ESP texts, and the least common difficulties were those of motivation in reading ESP texts, grammar used in ESP texts, and reading strategies. It seems that these results further confirmed the above-mentioned findings of this study which may be due to the fact that although the students were English-majored, they were still faced with the use of technical vocabulary and lack of knowledge of ESP subject matters which may lead to unfamiliarity of ESP reading materials and hindrance of inefficient time of reading ESP texts. On the other hand, it may be understandable that students had substantial knowledge of English in order to cope with any difficulties in grammar, reading strategies and motivation.

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that it was not very often seen that English-majored students had to struggle with reading ESP texts since they possessed substantial English proficiency to comprehend ESP reading texts. Notwithstanding, students still encountered a number of difficulties in ESP reading comprehension, namely technical words and ESP background knowledge, which were the most common areas of difficulties with which students had to face. Furthermore, students were found not to have any trouble with understanding the general content, structures, and grammar use of ESP reading texts. Among difficulties, the top five most common difficulties faced by students were about

problems of technical vocabulary, background knowledge, type of ESP reading materials and timing in reading ESP texts, while the top five least common difficulties were about motivation in reading ESP texts, grammar used in ESP texts, and reading strategies.

Taken together, these results suggest that students should be encouraged to be self-equipped with technical vocabulary and knowledge of ESP subject matters by searching for the meaning of new technical vocabulary and reading the in-advance-given ESP reading materials in order to get familiar with technical words and concepts used in ESP reading lessons. In respect of ESP teachers, it is advisable that different pre-reading activities should be carried out so as to trigger students' prior knowledge by applying the interactive reading method. Moreover, teachers should also supply ESP-related reading materials to students so that their students can understand concepts and terminology used in the class reading texts.

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TÌM HIỂU KHÓ KHĂN SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH GẶP PHẢI KHI ĐỌC HIỂU VĂN BẢN TIẾNG ANH KỸ THUẬT

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu những khó khăn mà sinh viên đại học chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam gặp phải trong quá trình đọc hiểu văn bản tiếng Anh kỹ thuật. Tám mươi sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tham gia trả lời bảng câu hỏi, và ba giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh kỹ thuật tham gia phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc. Kết quả cho thấy sinh viên không gặp nhiều khó khăn khi đọc các văn bản tiếng Anh kỹ thuật; tuy nhiên, nếu có thì hai nhóm khó khăn mà sinh viên gặp nhiều nhất là từ vựng chuyên ngành kỹ thuật và kiến thức chuyên ngành kỹ thuật. Ngoài ra, các vấn đề về nội dung chính, cấu trúc và ngữ pháp được sử dụng trong các văn bản tiếng Anh kỹ thuật không phải là các yếu tố gây nhiều khó khăn cho sinh viên.

Từ khóa: khó khăn, sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh, tiếng Anh kỹ thuật, đọc hiểu, ngữ cảnh Việt Nam