

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter represents the results obtained from the group interview and questionnaire. The findings of needs analysis of MA/ESP students at Kasetsart University are illustrated in detail, with tables presenting the data obtained from participants in the form of frequency, percentage, and description.

The chapter consists of two main parts: general information and academic writing needs of MA/ESP students.

Part I. General Information

This part presents general information on the 23 participants who attended the group interview, consisting of personal information and educational background.

Information about Participants' Personal Information

This section consists of participants' personal information: their gender, ages, year levels, the average English score from previous academic courses, the extent of background in writing English, and educational background.

Table 4.1 General Information about the Participants: Gender, Age, Year Level

(n = 23)

General Information	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	6	26.09
Female	17	73.91
TOTAL	23	100.00
Age		
23-25	12	52.17
26-28	2	8.70
Over 28	9	39.13
TOTAL	23	100.00
Year level		
1	12	52.17
2	11	47.83
TOTAL	23	100.00

The number of females (17) in the study group was much greater than that of males (6) (See Table 4.1). The number of first- and second-year students was approximately the same. The ages vary from 23 to over 28 years old. The age group with the largest number of participants was 23 to 25 years; the second largest age group was 28 years or older. Eleven (11) students were in the second year of academic study (ESP 4); 12 students were in their first year (ESP 5).

Table 4.2 General Information: Years of Academic Study of English

(n = 23)

General Information	Frequency	Percent
No. of years of academic study		
Less than 5 years	0	0
6-10 years	1	4.35
11-15 years	10	43.48
Over 16 years	12	52.17
TOTAL	23	100.00

The number of the students with academic study of 16 years or more (12) was slightly greater than the number from 11 to 15 years (10) (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.3 General Information: Average English Score from Previous Academic Courses

(n = 23)

General Information	Frequency	Percent
Average grade from previous academic courses		
A	2	8.70
B+	13	56.52
B	7	30.43
C+	1	4.35
C	0	0
D+	0	0
D	0	0
Other	0	0
TOTAL	23	100.00

All students attained an average grade of C+ or greater, with more than 65% attaining a grade of B+ or greater (See Table 4.3). The average grade was B+.

Table 4.4 General Information: the Extent of Background in Written English

(n = 23)

General Information	Frequency	Percent
Extent of background in written		
Excellent	1	4.35
Good	6	26.09
Fair	15	65.21
Poor	1	4.35
Very Poor	0	0
TOTAL	23	100.00

The extent of background in writing ranged from excellent to poor, with the majority (15) reporting a level of fair (See Table 4.4).

Table 4.5 General Information: Educational Background

(n = 23)

General Information	Frequency	Percent
Attended extra class(es) in writing before attending KU		
Yes	5	21.74
No	18	78.26
Total	23	100.00
Attended extra class(es) in academic writing before attending KU		
Yes	2	8.70
No	21	91.30
Total	23	100.00
Attended extra class(es) in academic writing during attending KU		
Yes	6	26.09
No	17	73.91
Total	23	100.00

The majority of students did not attend one or more extra classes, either in writing and academic writing (See Table 4.5). Five (5) students attended one or more extra writing classes before enrolling in the ESP program at KU; Two (2) students attended one or more extra academic writing classes before enrolling in the ESP program. Six (6) students attended one or more extra academic writing classes while enrolled in the ESP program, comparing to two (2) students that enrolled in one or more extra academic writing classes before enrolling in the ESP program.

Part II. Academic Writing Needs of MA/ESP students

This part consists of ten interview questions regarding the following: needs of academic writing; aspects of needs in academic writing; knowledge in academic writing; confidence in academic writing; difficulties or obstacles in academic writing; plan and resolution in academic writing; needs in developing academic writing skills; tools in developing academic writing skills; and opinions about people or organizations that facilitate development of academic writing skills.

Table 4.6 MA/ESP Students' Needs of Academic Writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Thesis	11 (30.56%)	11 (30.56%)
Career	4 (11.10%)	2 (5.56%)
Academic writing	2 (5.56%)	1 (2.78%)
Further education	1 (2.78%)	3 (8.32%)
Publishing books	1 (2.78%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	19 (52.78%)	17 (47.22%)

The greatest need expressed by both groups of MA/ESP students in academic writing was the immediate need for completing their thesis requirement (See Table 4.6). As one student stated, "Writing in academic style would make people pay me more respect. However, I think writing something too academically would make people lose interest and possibly not read it. Therefore, I think writing the thesis is most important". The least need expressed for use of written English was for publishing books. In ESP 4, the participants ranked their responses in the following order (greatest to least): thesis, academic article, career, further education, and publishing books. In

ESP 5, the order of the responses was thesis, further education, career, and academic article. Sample responses include: “My need for academic writing is for preparation of a thesis. I would also like to write my own book.” (ESP4 student); and “For preparation of my thesis and future Doctoral degree program. The use of academic writing is important because it will distinguish us (ESP students) from other academic fields” (ESP5 student).

Table 4.7 MA/ESP Students’ Aspect of Needs in Academic Writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Assignment, essay, report	9 (16.36%)	11 (20%)
Vocabulary	5 (9.09%)	8 (14.55%)
Promotion test	4 (7.27%)	0 (0%)
Grammar	4 (7.27%)	6 (10.90%)
Thesis	2 (3.64%)	0 (0%)
Examination	2 (3.64%)	0 (0%)
Taking note to higher rank of people	1 (1.82%)	0 (0%)
Proposal	1 (1.82%)	0 (0%)
Further education	1 (1.82%)	1 (1.82%)
TOTAL	29 (52.73%)	26 (47.27%)

The most frequent response reported for both groups regarding aspects of needs in academic writing was assignments, essays, and reports (See Table 4.7). Sample comments from students that support the findings include: “For completion of essays, reports or assignments.” and “Written class assignments, writing essays in conjunction with examinations and also writing a thesis” .The second frequent response by ESP5

students was vocabulary. For example, one student responded, “For improvement in my use of vocabulary, since I don’t know appropriate words in the context where I have to use a long phrase. I believe there are words that express the required thought clearly and concisely”. For ESP4 students, the second most frequent response was almost evenly divided between vocabulary, grammar and promotional test. Grammar was the third most frequent response for ESP5 students.

Table 4.8 MA/ESP Students’ Knowledge in Academic Writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Below moderate	2 (8.70%)	1 (4.35%)
Moderate	7 (30.43%)	10 (43.48%)
Above moderate	2 (8.70%)	1 (4.35%)
TOTAL	11 (47.83%)	12 (52.17%)

When asked about their knowledge in writing academically, most students in the study group placed themselves in the “moderate level” (See Table 4.8). Many responses verify this grade level; for example, “Moderate, because I studied English previously. My writing is not that bad; however, if required to write in an academic style, I am unable.” (ESP4 student) and “Moderate. I know what should or should not be written.” (ESP5 student). The percentage of the students that thought they had below and above moderate skills in academic writing was 8.7% respectively for ESP4 students and 4.35% respectively for ESP 5 students. In some instances, the response given was inconsistent with the ranking; for example, a moderate level was given for the response, “Only a little. I don’t think I have much knowledge about writing, and I am unable to write good enough for my current needs” (ESP4 student).

Table 4.9 MA/ESP Students' Confidence in Academic Writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Very low	1 (4.35%)	0 (0%)
Low	6 (26.09%)	5 (21.74%)
Average	1 (4.35%)	5 (21.74%)
High	2 (8.70%)	2 (8.70%)
Very high	1 (4.35%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	11 (47.83%)	12 (52.17%)

Responses to the question concerning the confidence of the participants in their academic writing indicate that both groups of students had a low-to-average level of confidence (See Table 4.9). The highest percentage of ESP4 students put themselves in the “low confidence category”. For example, one student stated, “Not very confident. I don’t feel confident because it not my native language”. Among ESP5 students, an equal percentage responded that they had “low confidence” “average confidence” (21.74%). For example, one student stated, “I feel confident up to 50%, since we do a lot of reading. It does help that what I use is correct”. The data showed low variance by the fact that few students in either grade level responded that they had ‘very high confidence’ or ‘very low confidence’ regarding their academic writhing. The majority of students in the group agreed that their confidence stems from reading and assignments. This can be verified by the fact that the percentages can be changed when ESP5 students already went through what ESP4 did.

Table 4.10 MA/ESP Students' Difficulty or Obstacle in Academic Writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Self		
• Knowledge (vocabulary and grammar)	6 (8.96%)	8 (11.94%)
• Practice	3 (4.48%)	3 (4.48%)
• Laziness	3 (4.48%)	0 (0%)
• Attitude	2 (2.99%)	0 (0%)
• Idea	3 (4.48%)	4 (5.97%)
• Behavior	2 (2.99%)	0 (0%)
• Confidence	1 (1.49%)	0 (0%)
• Writing style	1 (1.49%)	2 (2.99%)
• Experience	1 (1.49%)	4 (5.97%)
Lecturer		
• Communication	3 (4.48%)	4 (5.97%)
• Writing style	1 (1.49%)	4 (5.97%)
• Background	1 (1.49%)	0 (0%)
• Nation	1 (1.49%)	1 (1.49%)
Culture		
Native language → second language (L1 → L2)	3 (4.48%)	3 (4.48%)
Familiarization	2 (2.99%)	0 (0%)
	1 (1.49%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	34 (50.75%)	33 (49.25%)

The responses from the focus group varied. The category with the largest response for both ESP4 and ESP5 was knowledge (vocabulary and grammar). One student stated that “Vocabulary. Normally we use easy words like ‘do’ rather than ‘conduct’ or ‘get’ rather than ‘obtain’, but in the academic writing the vocabulary requirements are quite complex. This is not familiar to me, and therefore it would take time to develop these skills”. Table 4.10.1 contains a sample of errors obtained from the students’ mid-term project writing assignment:

Table 4.11 Sample Errors

Sample error	Correction
Errors made in the use of “Tense”	
1. ‘it is rooted in phenomenology which <i>argued</i> that ...’	‘it is rooted in phenomenology which <i>argues</i> that ...’
2. ‘the purpose of scientific research is to test hypotheses that have been developed before the research project <i>stared</i> and to ...’	‘the purpose of scientific research is to test hypotheses that have been developed before the research project <i>starts</i> and to ...’
Errors made in the use of “Articles”	
1. ‘in addition, understandings alternative paradigm ...’	‘in addition, understandings <i>the</i> alternative paradigm ...’
2. ‘Both writers usually write <i>the</i> stories which reflect ...’	‘Both writers usually write stories which reflect ...’
Errors made in use of “Vocabulary”	
1. ‘... to create <i>good</i> changes in some activities ...’	‘... to create <i>positive</i> changes in some activities ...’

Table 4.11 Sample Errors (Cont'd)

Sample error	Correction
Errors made in use of “Vocabulary”	
2. ‘... a case study that helps explain a <i>phenomena</i> ...’	‘... a case study that helps explain a <i>phenomenon</i> ...’

Students stated that in some instances their difficulties in learning English were attributable to the lecturer. The highest number of responses by both ESP4 and ESP5 were in communication. One ESP4 student stated that s/he did not understand the teacher very well.

Differences between cultures were another area that both ESP4 and ESP5 cited as a source of difficulty in academic writing. For example, one student stated, “I think culture causes me problems. The English language it has various levels of vocabulary, but I don’t know which word is suitable for a specific context”. No student from ESP5 responded that writing in a second language like English was problematic.

A relation was not found between a lecturer’s nationality and a student’s ability to learn academic writing. Only a small percentage of the students cited this as problematic. (See Table 4.11)

Table 4.12 MA/ESP Students' Plan and Resolution in Academic Writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Practice writing	5 (12.20%)	1 (2.44%)
Don't want to solve	4 (9.76%)	3 (7.32%)
Practice reading	4 (9.76%)	3 (7.32%)
Consult with teachers	2 (4.88%)	1 (2.44%)
Attend academic writing course	2 (4.88%)	0 (0%)
Consult with friends	1 (2.44%)	2 (4.88%)
Find more knowledge	1 (2.44%)	1 (2.44%)
Familiarize with the particular field	1 (2.44%)	0 (0%)
Dictionary	1 (2.44%)	0 (0%)
Collect and use more vocabulary	1 (2.44%)	0 (0%)
Follow foreigner style	0 (0%)	3 (7.32%)
Practice grammar	0 (0%)	2 (4.88%)
Study more	0 (0%)	1 (2.44%)
Have no idea	0 (0%)	1 (2.44%)
Study on academic article	0 (0%)	1 (2.44%)
TOTAL	22 (53.66%)	19 (46.34%)

Students were requested to suggest resolutions that would address their problems in learning academic writing. The (See Table 4.12) largest percentage of students from both groups (9.76% for ESP4 and 7.32% for ESP5) did not think they need to solve anything. The percentage of students that thought they should practice reading was similar, 9.76% for ESP4 and 7.32% for ESP5. Sample responses include, "I

think the best way is to read a lot, keep practicing writing and use a dictionary for guideline some sentences” (from ESP4) and “I read a lot and write a lot” (from ESP5) 12.20% of ESP4 students believed that practicing writing was the solution to their problem, while only 2.44% of ESP5 students responded similarly.

Table 4.13 MA/ESP Students’ Needs in Developing Academic Writing Skill

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Take writing course	3 (9.09%)	1 (3.03%)
Don’t want to improve	2 (6.06%)	1 (3.03%)
Take writing course individually	1 (3.03%)	0 (0%)
Self study		
• Practice writing	3 (9.09%)	0 (0%)
• Study more or find more knowledge	2 (6.06%)	1 (3.03%)
• Read article, journal, textbook	2 (6.06%)	6 (18.18%)
• Study format (genre)	1 (3.03%)	3 (9.09%)
Consult with teacher	1 (3.03%)	4 (12.12%)
Follow format (genre) of each type of writing	0 (0%)	2 (6.06%)
Total	15 (45.45%)	18 (54.55%)

Responses received regarding the question of students’ needs in developing academic writing skill were listed in Table 4.13. Six students (18.8%) from ESP5 stated that reading would help them develop their writing skill, as compared with two

(6.06%) from ESP4. A sample response from ESP5 endorsing this need states, “I plan to read journal articles, learn the format (genre) of each type of academic writing, and try to use the style of foreigners”. ESP4 participants had different perception of their 9.09% recommended taking writing courses ; 3.03% recommended taking writing courses individually; 6.06% recommended to study more and find more knowledge; and 6.06% recommended did not want to develop any tasks. For ESP5, 12.12% recommended to consult with the teacher in order to develop writing skill. A sample response states, “I plan to use self study up to 80% in developing academic writing. I also plan to consult with the teachers or advisor”. This contrasts with 3.03% response from ESP4. 6.06% of ESP recommended following the format (genre), which may correlate to those students that previously enrolled in the genre course. No student in ESP4 previously enrolled in the genre course, and no student selected this response.

Table 4.14 MA/ESP Students' Tools in Developing Academic Writing Skill

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Native environment	3 (7.5%)	0 (0%)
Attend English writing course or seminar	3 (7.5%)	0 (0%)
Dictionary	2 (5%)	5 (12.5%)
Study from academic textbook or journal	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
Internet	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)
Suggestions from friends	1 (2.5%)	4 (10%)
Study from textbook	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)
Thesaurus	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)
Self	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)
Suggestions from teachers	0 (0%)	5 (12.5%)
Reading academic article	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)
Activator	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)
Foreigners	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)
Total	15 (37.5%)	25 (62.5%)

Responses by the study group regarding students' tools in developing academic writing skill are listed in Table 4.14. The responses by ESP4 were more scattered than for ESP5. The largest number of responses by ESP4 was for native environment (7.5%) and attending English course/seminar (7.5%). These needs were not expressed by any ESP5 students. A sample response from ESP4 states, "I think it would be beneficial to live in an environment that uses English. If I want to be a good academic writer, I would like to go aboard and live and work in an academic environment". For ESP5,

their preferred developing tools were the Internet (12.5%), dictionary (12.5%) and suggestions from the teachers and friends (22.5%). Sample responses include, “A dictionary is useful, especially collocation and definitions. I can learn whether or not the word is used in an academic context, based on the example given.” and “We can use the Internet to check the whether sentences are grammatically correct. I use a search engine and type my sentence with a capture. If the result contains a thousand similar examples, that would indicate an acceptable foreigner style. If it is not found or only a few examples are identified, it is probably not acceptable”. Use of a dictionary was the most needed tool when assessing ESP4 and ESP5 in aggregate; nonetheless, the response was lower as a percentage of the total study group. A sample response (ESP4) states, “A dictionary is helpful in finding suitable words for essays”.

Table 4.15 MA/ESP Students’ Opinion about People or Organization that Can Help Developing Academic writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Teachers in ESP	7 (17.95%)	7 (17.95%)
ESP program designers	3 (7.69%)	3 (7.69%)
Native teachers	3 (7.69%)	3 (7.69%)
Self	2 (5.13%)	3 (7.69%)
Language institute of KU	2 (5.13%)	2 (5.13%)
Friends	1 (2.56%)	2 (5.13%)
Humanities faculty	1 (2.56%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	19 (48.72%)	20 (51.28%)

Responses by the study group regarding students’ opinion about people or organization that can help develop academic writing were listed in Table 4.15. A total

of 35.9% of the respondents in both groups stated that the ESP teacher was the most helpful person. Sample responses include, “ESP teachers, because all my academic writing knowledge comes from them.” and “ESP teachers -- both Thai and native teachers”.

The remaining responses did not indicate uniformity in opinion among the students. 7.69% from each group stated other program designers and 7.69% stated Native teachers, with smaller percentages among the remaining responses. A sample ESP4 student stated “Teachers who design the course. I think they could adjust the knowledge base of each other before the ESP program starts”.

Table 4.16 MA/ESP Students’ Opinions and Suggestions for Academic Writing

Response	No. and percentage of respondents for each class	
	ESP 4	ESP 5
Duration		
• Pre-sessional course	8 (10.67%)	10 (13.33%)
• During the course	4 (5.33%)	3 (4%)
Lecturer		
• Communication	7 (9.33%)	5 (6.67%)
• Teaching style	2 (2.67%)	7 (9.33%)
• Tools	2 (2.67%)	5 (6.67%)
Self		
• Behavior	5 (6.67%)	3 (4%)
• Attitude	2 (2.67%)	6 (8%)
Textbook	3 (4%)	2 (2.67%)
Total	34 (45.33%)	41 (54.67%)

Responses by the study group regarding students' opinions and suggestions for their academic writings were listed in Table 4.16. The greatest percentages for both ESP4 (10.67%) and ESP5 (13.33%) stated that they needed the academic writing in pre-sessional course. A sample response from an ESP5 student states, "A preliminary course should teach only academic writing, not like many courses like I have previously studied. I think they were a waste of time. I believe that not only me but others, too, didn't gain much knowledge from these types of courses. The topics were not taught in detail. Therefore, I recommend concentration on a single subject like academic writing. This would provide greater benefit compared to teaching many subjects superficially". The remaining responses were again scattered rather than to show specific trends. In aggregate, the second largest number of responses from ESP4 (9.33%) and ESP5 (6.67%) was priority to the lectures' communications. A sample response stated, "Teachers should to pay attention to the tools for an academic writing course, too. If teachers teach us how to use the tools, we can then practice and improve our academic writing skills -- not only during class but also outside of class". Attitude was emphasized greater by ESP5 (8%) than ESP4 (2.67%). A sample response states, "You have to open your mind and pay attention to what you were going to learn so I think attitude is important." Only 6.67% of the entire study group stated that text books were an important factor in facilitating understanding of academic writing. 9.34% of ESP5 and 12.00% of ESP4 held themselves primarily responsible for advancement in their academic writing skills. A sample response states, "We should not be lazy. We should do a lot of reading and academic writing".

This chapter has reviewed the results of the study, with tables presenting the responses of the participants in the form of frequency, and percentage. Sample responses were cited from transcriptions from taped interviews. The next chapter will discuss the study findings, implications, limitations, recommendations and the conclusion of the thesis.