

# Enhancing Employability: A Systematic Literature Review on the Significance of English for Occupational Purposes in Higher Education

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## ABSTRACT

Employability of the graduates is the main issue that should be addressed by higher education institutions. The study aimed to investigate the implementation and importance of English for Occupational Purposes (hereinafter, EOP) to improve graduates' employability. This study utilized a systematic literature review to synthesize the literature related to EOP. There were 23 articles obtained from publication databases and search engines, namely ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and Semantic Scholar, published between 2013 and 2023. This study found that the implementation of EOP has been conducted in several areas of disciplines in higher education namely aviation, engineering, healthcare, tourism, and hospitality around the world. Furthermore, EOP is important to improve students' English communication skills in spoken and written form which contributes in improving students' employability. Besides, EOP also enhances students' soft skills in line with industry demand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of the fourth revolution industry and the fifth society, the corporate world has become more global and competitive. English competence can increase a graduate's employability. Many companies need staff to have strong employability skills, one of which is English communication abilities. English skills are crucial for career development (Mat Daud et al., 2019). Besides, staff members must have critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication to assist them in doing their jobs. Thus, higher education must ascertain that graduates as candidates for employment have appropriate employability skills before enrolling in the business industry (Xie, 2016). In regard to employability, students should have not only an understanding of technology in the workplace, but also a package of abilities, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, and the industry is seeking applicants at higher college to create that expertise set (Rautenbach et al., 2017). Many companies and stakeholders consider the crucial employability abilities of the graduates as the responsibility of higher education institutions (hereinafter, HEIs). Graduate employability is a fundamental concept in higher

education; consequently, improving it is a critical obligation of all HEIs around the world (Rautenbach & Mann, 2019). Hence, there is an increasing number of graduates who are attending colleges to obtain such abilities. Besides, to solve this issue, HEIs should collaborate with industry (Mechraoui et al., 2013). HEIs are expected to create marketable graduates as a result of this collaboration, and graduates are intended to consistently improve their skills, traits, and expertise to enable them to remain competitive in the graduate workforce. Nevertheless, many candidates lack of employability skills in job application entry, thus EOP classes are one effort of higher education institutions to improve graduate employability skills (Banaganipalli, 2017; Mechraoui et al., 2013). Every university and college must acknowledge the meaning of graduate employability and how to attain and improve it in the HEIs (Cheng et al., 2022). In short, every university and college and the lecturers should concern with enhancing students' English communication skills in the workplace context by providing appropriate EOP course for their students.

EOP course aims to help students preparing for employment that provide students with the fundamental English communication skills for future employment (Kamil & Muhammad, 2021; Yekta, 2014). English learning is increasingly concerned with preparing a mix of specific aspects of professional knowledge and accordance with specific job needs which is far from attainable through basic English education since English for general purpose is incompatible with employability world (Chen, 2017; Qian & Chongshun, 2018). There is a mismatch between the business industry need and the students' competence especially in English (Hellekjær & Fairway, 2015). EOP is considered as the panacea to this drawback (Ke & Yang, 2018). EOP courses are designed to increase students' practical skills. As a result, actual job settings and conditions are great for students to utilize what they learn in class into practice. Students' vocational skills can be considerably enhanced by doing so (Ke & Yang, 2018). The application of EOP should not be limited to the college structure, but should evolve in line with social development and employment need (Ke & Yang, 2018) (Abelha et al., 2020)

Globally, there is an increasing need for the teaching and learning of EOP (Rautenbach et al., 2017). EOP teaching is the utilization of English in the professional area, involving the achievement of students' written and spoken communication in particular occupation fields, to train students to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills according to industry job needs (Chen, 2017). The previous researchers have implemented EOP on their students based on their expertise namely engineers, aviation, healthcare, agriculture, petroleum, tourism and hospitality (Millrood, 2014; Rautenbach & Mann, 2019; Staňková, 2017; Sutrisna & Pradnyana, n.d.; Taghipour & Mohseni, 2021). The studies' objective was to improve students' employability. Employability is defined as a set of achievements, skills, knowledge, and individual attributes that makes graduates have better chance to obtain job opportunities, success in their jobs' field which is beneficial for themselves, their workplace, and society (Abelha et al., 2020; Al Hinai et al., 2020).

The previous studies revealed that the implementation of EOP courses in HEIs contributed to the improvement of the students' English communication skill which assisted them to compete in the employment setting accordance with their expertise. Besides, EOP course enhance their soft skills namely critical thinking, leadership, and collaborative skills that are needed in the world job market in the 4<sup>th</sup> revolution industry. However, further research is required to explore the development and implementation of EOP in the world. Besides, there are limited studies discussing the EOP course by using a systematic literature review. Thus, this study was conducted to fill the research gap driven by two research questions namely: (1) How the implementation of the EOP course in higher education? and (2) How important is the EOP course in higher education? This study sheds light on the implementation and importance of EOP in improving university students' employability.

## 2. METHODS

This study aimed to determine the implementation and importance of EOP in higher education. Library research was used in this study to gather publications from journals and databases. The

accepted publications were analyzed using a systematic literature review (SLR) technique. The PRISMA framework was used to carry out the study, which was divided into four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and synthesizing (Page et al., 2021; Siddaway et al., 2019).

### **2.1. Identification (searching)**

The literature that relevant to the research was sought by the researchers from online databases and article search engines namely ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and Semantic Scholar published from 2013-2023. The researchers employed key terms 'English for Occupation Purposes', 'EOP course', 'development of EOP' and 'EOP implementation'. In the searching step, the inclusion criteria utilized by the researchers were publications namely articles and proceedings related to EOP course published from 2013 to 2023 and written in English. In the initial identification, 341 articles were obtained by the researchers. Nevertheless, 154 articles were eliminated since they did not meet the inclusion criteria.

### **2.2. Screening**

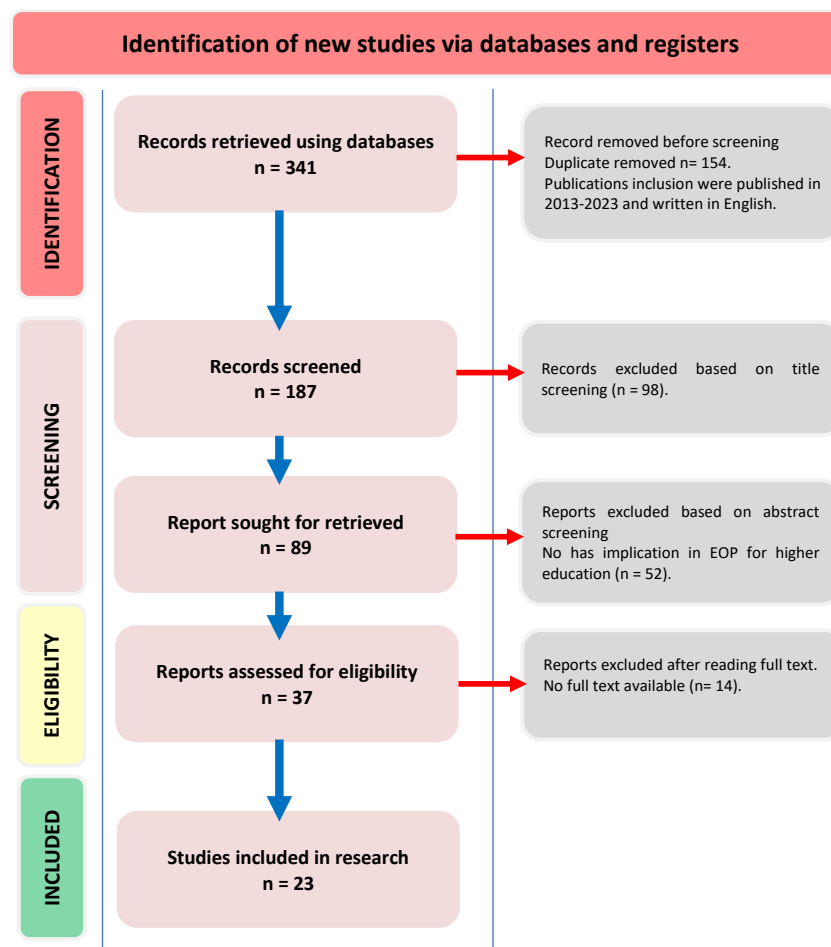
The researcher reviewed the titles and abstracts of the articles to assess the inclusion and exclusion of papers. The researcher would save the articles that were related to the study's research questions and eliminate those excluded articles that were inappropriate to the investigation at this point. In this stage, there were 187 articles screened by the researchers. First, the titles of the articles were reviewed by the researchers since the titles of 98 articles were not relevant to the study. Next, the abstract of the articles were screened by the researchers; 52 articles were eliminated since they did not have implications in EOP for higher education.

### **2.3. Eligibility**

In eligibility stage, there were 37 articles related to EOP course for higher education. Then, the researcher reviewed these articles by analyzing the full texts in order to ensure they were accordance with the inclusion criteria. At the end of the stage, 14 articles were removed since the researchers could not accessed the full texts due to it need author's membership on the journal publishers.

### **2.4. Synthesize and results**

There were 23 articles synthesized by the researchers in this stage. All of these articles met the inclusion criteria namely published between 2013 and 2023, written in English, articles or proceedings, the availability of full articles, the articles focus on EOP course in higher education. Figure 1 shows the steps of the literature review.

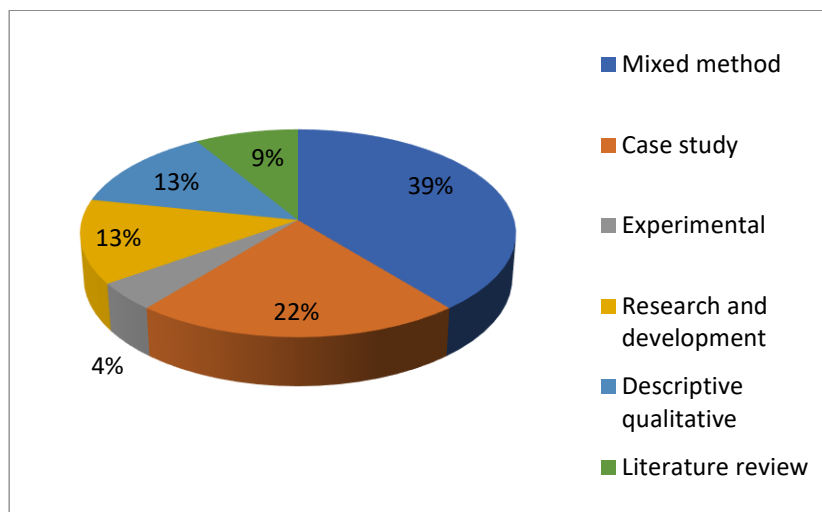


**Figure 1.** PRISMA flowchart illustrating the systematic review process

Figure 1 describes that there were 23 articles synthesized by the researchers and the others articles were excluded since they did not meet the inclusion criteria. The articles were excluded if: (1) the articles are published before 2013, (2) they are not free access from the specific databases, (3) they are books or personal point of view from blogs, and (4) the study are not related to the purpose of this research.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researchers examined 23 articles which fulfilled the study's requirements. All of the papers related to EOP course in higher education. The majority of the articles used mixed method research design and the rest used case study, research and development, descriptive qualitative, literature review and experimental research design. The calculation of the articles is shown in the figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Description of Classified Articles based on Research Design

Below is a list of countries that published articles related to EOP implementation to improve graduates employability.

**Table 1.** The description of countries’ reviewed articles

| Country      | Number of publication |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| China        | 5                     |
| Indonesia    | 3                     |
| Malaysia     | 3                     |
| Spain        | 2                     |
| South Africa | 2                     |
| Iran         | 2                     |
| Oman         | 2                     |
| Czech        | 1                     |
| Iran         | 1                     |
| Oman         | 1                     |
| Rusia        | 1                     |

From Table 1, it can be seen that China has the greatest number of publications related to the EOP course to enhance their prospective employee in the business and industry workplace. This country prepares their university students to have English communication skill to face the workforce in the future. Whereas, Indonesia, Malaysia, Spain, South Africa and other countries also implemented EOP course to enhance students’ English skill to meet the students’ demand for future employment and enhance their employability.

The following table will presented the data source reviewed by the researchers related to EOP implementation in several countries. Hence, table 2 contains a description of the reviewed articles.

**Table 2.** The summary of reviewed articles of the EOP course in 2013-2023

| No | Authors          | Aims of the study   | Research Methods | Findings  | Country and year |
|----|------------------|---|------------------|---|------------------|
| 1  | Mechraoui et al. | To explore the students, lecturer, and academic administrators perception towards | Mixed method     | The students, lecturer and administrators of academic were pleased with EOP course and agreed that the course | Malaysia, 2013   |

|   |                   |  |                         |   |                     |
|---|-------------------|--|-------------------------|---|---------------------|
|   |                   | the strengths and drawbacks of EOP course for undergraduate students of Economics and Management Science at Islamic Malaysia university.   |                         | have contributions to their learning outcomes.  |                     |
| 2 | Millrood, R       | To investigate the impact of the EOP teaching on the engineer students' attitude at university in Rusia.                                   | Descriptive qualitative | EOP influences both the educational concept and the instructional approach.   | Rusia, 2014         |
| 3 | Xie, Q            | To explore EOP instruction in China university and how it contributes to the improvement of communicative skills in a worldwide workplace. | Case study              | EOP achieved better learning outcomes and effective training activities, customized learning materials, and improved strong motivation of the learners. | China, 2016         |
| 4 | Staňková, E       | To develop and implement EOP course for Aviation industry through Moodle.  | Mixed method            | EOP enhanced the students' English comprehension and knowledge.   | Czech, 2017         |
| 5 | Chen, Z           | To examine and evaluate the application of ESP and EOP instruction in higher vocational education.   | Literature Review       | ESP and EOP influence social development, the intrinsic needs of vocational education to produce talented workers.                                      | China, 2017         |
| 6 | Ke & Yang         | To presents the current implementation of ESP and the necessity of establishing EOP course   | Literature review       | ESP and EOP are needed in job market demand and the country must drive EOP teaching and learning to meet the job industry.                              | China, 2017         |
| 7 | Rautenbach et al. | To implement EOP in order to produce graduates who have English skills and successfully upon entry into the occupational world.            | Case study              | EOP enhances students' English literacy that required immediate to enter industries.  | South Africa, 2017. |
| 8 | Wang Qian         | To examine the significance and need of the EOP  | Mixed method            | The use of the EOP model increases knowledge, necessitates self-study by vocational students, and   | China, 2018         |

|    |                   |   |                         |  |                    |
|----|-------------------|---|-------------------------|--|--------------------|
|    |                   | framework, and also its application.  |                         | fosters the development of their professional English abilities.   |                    |
| 9  | Mat Daud et al.   | To determine if an EOP course is appropriate to the needs of graduates of the Arts Faculty in a public universities in Malaysia   | Mixed method            | The combination of English language learning with job communication demonstrates the applicability and professionalism of graduates in Malaysia.   | Malaysia, 2019     |
| 10 | Huan, J           | To compare EGP, ESP, and EOP, and propose for occupation as the foundation.   | Case Study              | The vocational skill-oriented EGP, ESP and EOP reform education adheres to the cognitive pattern of the English language and also the present growth pattern of vocational colleges in China. The integration of English language learning with job communication demonstrates the applicability and professionalism of English education. | China, 2019        |
| 11 | Naranjo, M. J     | To convey a research conducted EOP students enrolled in an e-learning program delivered via the Moodle management platform, with final communicative tasks produced in the virtual world. |                         | The implementation of EOP via online learning might provide a novel educational approach to improve vocational language learning achievements that is a good resource for lowering student fear and increasing enthusiasm to study English.  | Spain, 2019        |
| 12 | Rautenbach & Mann | To investigate the interests and demands of stakeholders in the tourism sector.   | Descriptive qualitative | Both academic and industry stakeholders considered EOP to be critical in the training of employable tourism graduates. They emphasized EOP goals and requirements particular to tourism that improve employability.  | South Africa, 2019 |
| 13 | Rico et al.       | To investigate the influence rate and the elements that contribute to the success of EOP courses and to obtain information about the primary demand, results, and failures                | Mixed method            | The findings indicate course satisfaction and point to a lack of language policies, which has an impact on professional successes.   | Spain, 2019.       |

|    |                      |   |                          |  |                 |
|----|----------------------|---|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
|    |                      | related to these courses.   |                          |  |                 |
| 14 | Sukmaantara et al.   | To examine how PBL was used for vocational reasons in English for traveling, hotels and restaurant.   | Descriptive qualitative  | PBL EOP is vital, intriguing, and demanding for vocational students.   | Indonesia, 2019 |
| 15 | Sutrisna & Pradnyana | To assess the demand for English language teaching sources, indicate courses midwifery curriculum, and produce an EOP-materials for ITEKES Bali midwifery students.   | Research and development | EOP-based learning material is important to covers a variety of themes for midwifery students like greeting, presenting the room, creating a timetable, describing the labor process, the reproduction system, and the human body. | Indonesia, 2019 |
| 16 | Taghipour et al.     | To investigate the demand for EOP sources for aviation students from their own perception.  | Mixed method             | Both learners and teachers identified communicative skills, speaking skills, and listening skills as the first crucial skills in learning English in aviation context.   | Iran, 2020      |
| 17 | Soekarno & Ting      | To investigate students' utilization of communication techniques and proficiency in working together in an EOP setting utilizing a combined problem-solving, collaborative, and discourse communication methods | Case study               | Communication strategy in EOP can improve students' metacognitive awareness of the participants' communicative demands in order to improve meaning negotiation that is crucial in workplace.                                       | Malaysia, 2020  |
| 18 | Taghipour & Mohseni  | To produce EOP materials and investigate it implementation on pre-service cabin crew in an aviation college.  | Experimental             | EOP materials gave positive contribution to experimental students achievements and the materials are crucial extensively taught in airlines and aviation college.  | Iran, 2021      |
| 19 | Urunova, S           | To reveal a theoretical examination of teaching EOP to robotics students and also strategies for developing professional skills.  | Case study               | Students in the area of robotics master the terminology linked to their expertise in the research of the profession-oriented English language, gain experience with authentic resources related to their specialty, and develop    | Germany, 2022   |

|    |                       |   |                          |   |                 |
|----|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|---|-----------------|
|    |                       |   |                          | their professional skills and communication abilities.  |                 |
| 20 | Yuliantini & Paramita | To identify and evaluate demand and generate work related to EOP learning content.  | Research and development | There is a demand for learning materials for EOP topics in Electrical engineering such as descriptive and procedure text genres that prepare them in workplace context.   | Indonesia, 2022 |
| 21 | Al-Khalidi et al.     | To evaluate undergraduates' perspectives on the addition of an online program for delivering workplace English to the currently offered curriculum. | Mixed method             | The majority of participants supported the notion of including the recommended course. The study produced a collection of consequences and suggestions that will be useful to users and designers of courses in universities and business industries. | Oman, 2023      |
| 22 | Al-Khalidi et al.     | To develop EOP digital course for petroleum college and industry  | Mixed method             | EOP digital course is suitable to improve students' English language skills that must be addressed while creating a successful and engaging course that meets the employment context in the digital era.  | Oman, 2023      |
| 23 | Bui & Huong           | To compare students' and teachers' perceptions of successful EOP instruction  | Mixed method             | Students and teachers agreed on communicative language teaching practices should be taught in EOP.  | Vietnam, 2023   |

### 3.1. The Implementation of EOP Course in Higher Education

Many universities and colleges all over the world have been developing and implementing EOP course to enhance the employability competence of university students (Abelha et al., 2020). Moreover, before implementing an EOP course, the lecturers must be concerned with the curriculum or syllabus that is going to be implemented already based on the students' and industries' needs by conducting a need analysis. Mat Daud et al. (2019) point out that need analysis is typically the driving force for an EOP course. The implementation of EOP is intended to prepare learners to perform in a work environment. Despite the advancement of technology, there is a greater demand for integrating components that will assist them in preparing for a shifting working atmosphere. Conventional classroom language instruction approaches may not adequately equip learners for the workplace of the twenty-first century (Mat Daud et al., 2019). In increasing the quality of EOP material, Mad Daud et al. (2019) also recommended obtaining stakeholders' and alumni feedback since they would be able to give suggestions according to their professional experience. In addition, the use of local and cultural aspect is also important in conducting business English communication.

The teaching of English at higher vocational colleges must shift to EOP to increase the proficiency of English and teaching quality that assists students in achieving better jobs and entrepreneurship

(Jiang, 2019). Jiang (2019) asserted that in the teaching process of EOP, lecturers should provide different simulated occupation scenarios based on students' various fields of study, so that students may apply technical expertise in their own context to deal with the professional atmosphere after graduation and coincide with their needs for job searching in the future. To strengthen students' professional capabilities, lecturers should also promote their employment qualities and comprehensive skills to increase their level of competitiveness in the job market. Next, Taghipour et al. (2020) also agreed that before developing EOP materials the lecturers should conduct a need analysis to provide appropriate materials for students namely deal with communication services and handling the complaints of the passengers (Taghipour et al., 2020). Besides, the teacher also evaluated the textbook used as an endeavor to analyze the potential value of textbooks namely validity, credibility and flexibility which involves reaching judgments regarding textbook implications on students, teachers, and administrators (Taghipour & Mohseni, 2021). This evaluation is used to assist instructors in deciding whether to continue, discontinue, or modify an English course book in their college. In short, the strength of the created materials is founded on the results, and they precisely match what EOP learners require in their profession. In addition, the study carried out by Millrood (2014) and Urunova (2022) showed that lecturers need to develop EOP modules based on content-based learning to support the students in achieving their professional competence. The primary responsibility of English lecturers in engineering colleges is to train students how to deal with English scientific literature and to interact in English in their field (Millrood, 2014; Urunova, 2022). Hence, the development of the EOP module using authentic materials included speaking, listening, reading and writing skills for robotic students. The students learn EOP for their professional communication namely report presentations, reading texts related to their field and writing business letters. In short, lecturers should conduct a needs analysis survey of students and stakeholders before developing EOP courses and materials. Thus, the materials used by the students will be congruent with the industry need and students' employability.

In terms of EOP development and implementation, Mechraoui et al. (2013) conducted a study to determine the benefits and drawbacks of the EOP course for students of Economics and Management Science. Their findings revealed that there was significant development in their writing and speaking skills after applying EOP. Participants have noted the course's usefulness and added advantages in helping them prepare for prospective employment and work-related communication skill improvement. The participants feel that working in a foreign organization needs good English business communication abilities. Furthermore, the study conducted by Xie (2016), which implemented an EOP course for business writing and speaking to engineering students, showed that the majority of participants improved their English communication skills. They were taught how to compose oral and written communications, namely presentations, emails, faxes, business letters, and reports, using authentic context. They also collaborated with their friends in groups to accomplish the project given by the lecturer namely the English presentation. The study's findings indicate that the EOP course enhanced writing and speaking abilities (Xie, 2016).

Furthermore, Stankova (2017) designed and implemented EOP for the aviation industry especially for air traffic control officers. Air traffic controllers have an important role in the aviation industry since they have to manage and direct the aircraft flow into or out of the airspace of the airport. Hence, they must be able to communicate well in English particularly for those who work in international aviation companies as the aircraft's flow is managed efficiently. Thus, in the EOP course the materials used focus on enhancing the students' language structure, vocabularies related to aviation terminologies, listening and speaking skills. The course was also conducted via blended learning through Moodle. EOP courses for the aviation industry majoring in air traffic control students may be used to facilitate learners' professional growth. However, there were recommendations to improve the course syllabus which is by adding several topics namely radiotelephony, presentation and medical aids (Staňková, 2017). In the same vein, Stankova, Taghipour and Mohseni (2021) developed EOP materials for airline students or pre-service cabin crew after evaluating the old English course materials since it was not matched with students' needs and professions. EOP is designed to solve the problems encountered namely the

number of dissatisfied passengers has been steadily increasing, with the primary cause being ineffective communication among cabin crew and passengers attributed to cabin crew members' lack of language ability (Taghipour & Mohseni, 2021). Their study revealed that there was a significant improvement in the students' English communication skills after learning EOP.

Next, Rautenbach et al. (2017) implemented EOP on university students of the Department of Tourism Management. The use of authentic materials in teaching and learning EOP is suggested to be in line with each student's field of expertise. Then, there must be coordination between institutions providing language services and those needing language services or companies or industry (Mat Daud et al., 2019; Rautenbach et al., 2017). Similarly, Naranjo (2019) developed the EOP course for tourism topics, which was conducted via Moodle. The students were asked to do communicative tasks in a virtual world that were relevant to their real-life context, namely, acting as a travel agent and working with a hotel staff. In addition, the technology integrated into the EOP course was proven could motivate and engage the students in the teaching and learning process. The findings suggest that learning EOP in virtual environments has several advantages namely educational application is captivating, eco-friendly, effective, encouraging social engagement, motivating, autonomous learning, authentic language use, and overcoming physical and linguistic challenges. Sukmaantara (2019) also implemented EOP related to travel, hotels, and restaurants, which integrated into project-based learning. Project-based learning matches to the students' need to employ EOP in the workplace simulation (Sukmaantara, 2019). In addition, Rico et al. (2019) developed an EOP module for Professional English for Commercial and Tourism based on European guidelines that were conducted via Moodle or online learning. In productive industries, prospective workers should improve their spoken and written English skills since they are likely to operate businesses or affiliations, and interact with many people for sales scenarios (Rico et al., 2019). EOP is also used to improve students' communication competence in hospitality and culinary students (Soekarno & Ting, 2020). They design the communication strategy for the front liner hotel staff will be different with assistant cooks, cleaners, pool staff, and lifeguards who do not have close interaction with customers. As a result, the students are compelled to interact in English and get acquainted with technical terminologies in English through the EOP course.

Next, Sutrisna & Pradnyana (2019) developed EOP material for midwifery students by using a website. Designing EOP material for midwifery students, should address the demands of students as well as the use of English in professional settings by obtaining need analysis and assessment to determine the imperative content included in EOP materials namely English is utilized to create an acquaintance with their patients, to comprehend the human body, to discuss the process of pregnancy, and labor process (Sutrisna & Pradnyana, 2019). It means that EOP is needed to communicate effectively in working as a professional midwifery in the future.

In 2022, Yuliantini and Paramita designed EOP materials for electrical engineering students. The activities for learning are developed through the context of professionalism in the workplace to achieve spoken and written abilities namely writing reports, emails, and letters and interacting with foreign clients (Yuliantini & Paramita, 2022). They used procedure and descriptive texts in the EOP materials to learn the social function and language structure of the texts. The students comprehend a product by reading the text, then they present it in an oral presentation by describing the process, specification and qualities of the product. Thus, the students not only obtain knowledge accordance with electrical, but also will learn about the social function and language structure contained in the texts that contribute to their job in the future. Next, the study of Al-Khalidi et al. (2023) reported that the students at a vocational institute lacked of technical English abilities and motivation since the materials employed were mismatched with the students' study-field. The students stated that General English is inappropriate for advancing their professional growth. The students' needs and materials should be relevant to their profession in the future. Hence, Al-Khalidi et al. (2023) proposed a digital course for EOP that is in line with the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce. The materials provide the students communicative competence that facilitated the prospective worker to enrich their English ability related to conducting

presentations, meetings, and writing letters. Having technology skill is also recognized as a crucial skill that is possessed by students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, they developed an EOP digital course for the oil and gas industry academy (Al-Khalidi et al., 2023). The findings showed that EOP digital course affect the students' English ability and enhance their motivation to learn EOP. EOP is important to improve students' writing and speaking skills for their workplace preparation (Al-Khalidi et al., 2023).

Taking into accounts the aforementioned, importance of EOP courses in improving graduates' ability, colleges have to consider obtaining feedbacks or suggestions from stakeholders, alumni and the business industry that will aid in the improvement of the course's materials. In assessing the relevance of a course, alumni feedback is a significant source of information. Furthermore, it is important to utilize authentic materials while teaching an EOP course, thus the materials will be relevant to the workplace. As more technological applications are being employed by businesses, instructors delivering the course must additionally implement technology in teaching language skills that are required in the twenty-first century. In addition, EOP has been implemented in many areas disciplines to improve students' employability namely in aviation, engineering, midwifery, tourism, etc. The majority of the aims of the EOP course is to improve students' English communication both in spoken and written form for their future employment. The students are encouraged to master speaking, listening, writing and reading skills by using relevant grammar, vocabulary and language function.

### **3.2. *The Importance of EOP in Higher Education to Improve Graduates' Employability***

EOP is typically taught as part of an occupational program and is intended to help students improve both language and employability abilities. In other words, EOP is designed to provide professional and pre-work training (Bui & Huong, 2023). The study conducted by Xie (2016) revealed that the implementation of the EOP course could improve engineering students' communication skills in line with industry needs and would be beneficial for their future professions. EOP is crucial to enhance their spoken and written skills in doing their responsibilities (Al-Khalidi et al., 2023; Urunova, 2022). Then, there was learning transfer in EOP learning, which was an important aspect of applying their knowledge in practice in the workplace worldwide. In addition, working in groups could improve the participants' communication ability, and they embraced the process with excitement. Their presentation abilities have enhanced as a result of group practice. They also employed authentic materials during the course. Furthermore, developing communication skills for the international workplace need authentic material involvement as well. The inclusion of an EOP module to vocational English instruction, not only implement the teaching materials that are closely associated with the students' future career prospects, but also their learning passions may also be substantially motivated (Qian & Chongshun, 2018). Effective training methods and activities, tailoring learning materials, a teacher's appropriate expertise and experience, the utilization of multimedia resources, student motivation, and clear learning objectives are all success factors that positively impact the improvement of communicative competence for the worldwide employment (Xie, 2016). In short, the EOP course in important in responding to current marketplace demands and empowering students to adjust to industry growth, vocational colleges provide not only an essential service, but also a potential trend of the English education (Chen, 2017).

As English plays an important role to the tourism business, the majority of respondents said it should be included in the curriculum at the university for tourism students (Rautenbach et al., 2017). The finding showed that hat writing skill namely writing job application and speaking skill namely presentation are important in preparing students to face job force in the future. Considering tourism is a worldwide service sector, students preparing to work in this field should be taught foreign language and English communication skills (Rautenbach & Mann, 2019). The combination of abilities in writing letters, reports, interacting with customers and peers at work would be required not only to work in the tourist business, but also for entry-level positions. It is relevant to all industries, especially tourism, because employability is critical for achieving success in the workplace. Tourism EOP skills will boost tourism graduates' job opportunities and prepare them to perform in the tourist business just after

joining the workforce. This finding is congruent with the findings of the study conducted by Mat Daud et al. (2019) that in terms of speaking skill is needed for candidates for attending job interview, presentation, and meeting; whereas, writing skill is needed to write business letter, resume, memo, email and report. It means that English communication demands in the workplace requires both spoken and written abilities (Mat Daud et al., 2019). In short, EOP is crucial for the students since it is applicable to their employment lives. Besides, the students felt more motivated and engaged in the EOP teaching and learning process since they perceived EOP course is captivating, eco-friendly, effective, encouraging social engagement, autonomous learning, and authentic language use. They also felt more confident compete in the workplace in the future as they already learned many tasks that relevant to the employment (Naranjo, 2019). The implementation of EOP also integrated with learning model namely project-based learning also imperative in enhancing students' soft skills namely critical thinking, collaboration, communication, leadership, and problem solving that will be required in the workplace (Sukmaantara, 2019).

Students learn communication strategy during EOP course that allowed students to cooperate in problem solving and develop their target language expertise. In terms of EOP for hospitality students that will work at the hotel industry, service personnel at the front office and housekeeping frequently have technical terms interwoven with their greets and fundamental communication. It is more vital for frontline hospitality staffs to learn the usage of technical terminology in English that require additional communication strategy training in this regard (Soekarno & Ting, 2020). It means that, EOP is crucial for the hospitality students that will have responsibility to work with many people from many cities or countries that have various background and cultures, thus they must have communication strategy that can be learned through EOP.

Furthermore, EOP is very needed for pre-service cabin crew since the most crucial role of a flight attendant is to communicate with many personnel working for an airline, and especially with customers, in order to solve their demands, issues, and desires (Taghipour & Mohseni, 2021). People buy an experience when they take in an airline as a service, which implies they expect to be content. Thus, all airline industries must ensure all their staff especially cabin crew or flight attendant master EOP in order to give the best services by communicating effectively to passengers or clients. Besides, for air traffic controller, EOP is needed to assist them in performing their responsibilities namely to direct and manage the aircraft flow into or out of airspace of airport. Hence, they must be able to communicate well in English particularly for those who work in international aviation company as the aircrafts' flow managed efficiently by using appropriate grammar, terminologies and language function (Staňková, 2017). They should also have good pronunciation or speaking ability since their main responsibility is giving direction to the pilot via radio. Thus, they must give clear direction to keep the passengers and cabin crews' safety.

Besides, EOP also crucial for healthcare employment namely midwifery students that can be worked in the international standard hospital, thus they must be able to communicate with their patients effectively (Sukmaantara, 2019). Moreover, for the midwifery that work in international standard hospital that serving foreign or expat patients. They must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently namely explaining how to maintain health, the process of pregnancy, and labor process. In term of speaking skill, they must know how to perform job interview, report presentation and meetings.

Based on aforementioned, it can be concluded that EOP is crucial in improving students' English skills and their employability. EOP can enhance students' spoken and written skills. They need writing skill to write job application letter or business letters, email, reports, etc. in term of speaking skill, they need it for job interview, report presentation, and meetings. Next, the students also learn the language structure and language function in order to assist them in giving instructions how to operate technology or media. It means that to achieve employability competence, students must improve their English skills that facilitate them in English communication. In addition, EOP is used not only to enhance

students' English communication skills, but also students' soft skills namely leadership, critical thinking, collaboration, adaptability, etc that congruent with the employability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study has shed light on several results. First, the implementation of EOP has been conducted in several areas of disciplines in higher education namely aviation, engineering, healthcare, tourism, and hospitality. Second, EOP is important to hone students' English communication skills in spoken and written form which is crucial to improve students' employability. Besides, EOP also enhances students' soft skills in line with industry demand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In conclusion, EOP has a significant contribution to enhance students' English skills, soft skills and employability. However, this study still has limitations in terms of the topic reviewed by the researchers. Thus, it is recommended for the next researchers to explore more areas related to the effectiveness of EOP course in higher education.

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