

# Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

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**Abstract-** With the expansion of economic globalization, joint ventures and foreign-funded enterprises have increased rapidly, intensifying the demand for interdisciplinary professionals with advanced foreign language competence. In contemporary society, general English proficiency is no longer sufficient; instead, professionals require specialized and functional English skills tailored to their occupational contexts. For instance, English is essential for business negotiations, journalism, international legal practice, and technical communication. In Mongolia, the rapid growth of foreign relations and increased investment in business and mining sectors have created an urgent need for professionals equipped with high-level, occupation-specific English skills. Consequently, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become increasingly important in supporting national economic development and international cooperation. This study aims to contribute to the development of ESP in Mongolia by examining ESP policies and training characteristics in selected Asian countries with cultural similarities to Mongolia. Adopting a comparative research approach, the study analyzes ESP policy implementation in Mongolia and prevailing ESP training trends across Asia. Data were collected from academic literature and online sources and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The analysis covers five countries from Kachru's Outer Circle and three from the Expanding Circle, with particular emphasis on China, Japan, and Taiwan. Findings reveal that ESP development in China has been uneven; however, Business English has gained strong social recognition and has evolved into a major academic discipline. In Taiwan, universities increasingly integrate ESP with English-medium instruction across various disciplines. In Japan, ESP programs are often teacher-designed and refined through systematic student feedback, although the number of ESP specialists remains limited. Overall, Mongolia is transitioning from General English to ESP education but continues to face challenges, including limited curriculum implementation and insufficient teaching materials. The experiences of other Asian countries provide valuable insights for advancing ESP policy and practice in Mongolia.

**Keywords-** English language policy and ESP, ESP in Asian countries, ESP at public universities in Mongolia

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## I. INTRODUCTION

English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain [1]. ESP has come a long way in terms of research practices since its inception in the 1960s, but genre, a topic initiated in 1981, remains with us. In addition, other topics and methodologies have opened the way for learner centered approaches, advocated by Hutchinson and Waters [2], and later, by Tardy [3]. This has now expanded to include other areas such as English for academic purposes (EAP), English for occupational purposes (EOP), English for vocational purposes (EVP), English for medical purposes (EMP), English for business purposes (EBP), English for legal purposes (ELP), and English for sociocultural purposes (ESCP) [4]. There will probably be further interest in classroom-based research and in studies in less-popular academic locales, such as secondary and vocational schools or in regions where English is the lingua franca. Perhaps, unfortunately, for the needs of local students and international scholars, research may become more centralized in international journals, though online publications may mitigate some of these issues [1].

## II. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The most common classification of English, especially in the language teaching world, has been to distinguish between English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). Kachru [5] however, put forward another classification outlining the roles of English in the world as three concentric circles: the inner circle, Outer circle and expanding circle. The Inner Circle refers to countries where English is used as a mother-tongue language for example, USA, UK, and Ireland. The outer Circle refers to countries where English is used as a second language for example, Singapore and India. The expanding circle refers to countries where English is used as a foreign language or an additional language, for example Thailand and China. When we study language policy and ESP teaching policy, we have chosen Asian countries which included in expanding circle. For example, China, Taiwan, Japan, Spain and Mongolia. The main aim of this research is to study ESP teaching policy in Asian countries, take example of ESP teaching and curriculum developing method, make comparison with Mongolia's ESP teaching policy.

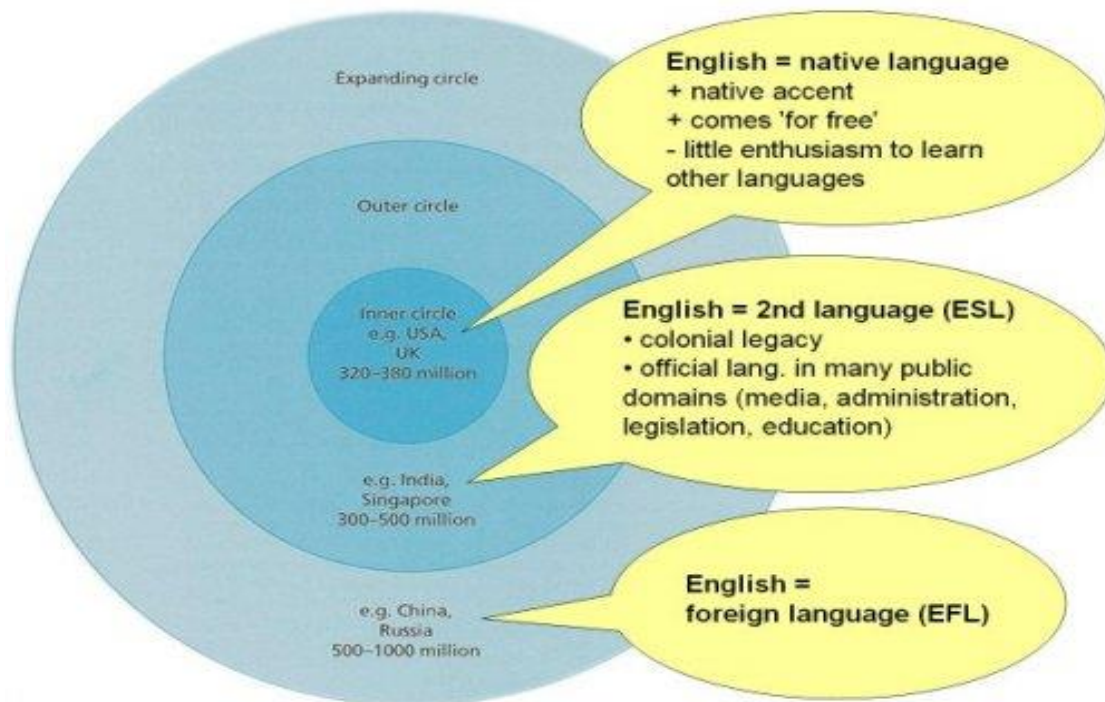


Figure 1. Kachrus three circle model

Needs analyses, carried out to establish the “what” and the “how” of a course, is the first stage in ESP course development, followed by curriculum design, materials selection, methodology, assessment, and evaluation. However, these stages should not be seen as separate, proceeding in a linear fashion. Rather, as noted by Dudley-Evans and St John [6], they are interdependent overlapping activities in a cyclical process. A broad, multi-faceted definition of needs analyses is provided by Hyland [7].

### III. SURVEY OVERVIEW

The main task of the study was to determine ESP future developments trend in Mongolia carrying out current development of ESP influence of universities in Asian countries. The study was carried out over a period of four years from September, 2020 to June, 2024.

The objectives of the study are:

- (1) To identify ESP teaching policy, training features at public universities in Mongolia
- (2) To determine what initiatives school leaders initiate to create school climate for promotion of education for sustainable development in culturally diverse schools.

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

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To accomplish the proposed goal, the study raised three research questions:

- (1) What are the main characteristics of ESP curriculum, textbooks, teaching materials and teaching staff of ESP in Asian countries that have same culture as our country?
- (2) What are the features, curriculums, textbooks, teaching materials and teaching staff of ESP at public universities in Mongolia?
- (3) What to do to determine the future direction of the development of ESP at universities in Mongolia by studying the similarities and differences of ESP curriculum, textbooks, teaching materials and teaching staff of universities in Asian countries.

### *Composition of the Research Team*

The team consists of 8 members – three ESP experts and five graduate students earning their degrees in educational studies. First, all the team members have been trained to build a common understanding of ESP. The team is divided into two groups: some focused on the observation of ESP training process at universities in Mongolia and the others analyzed ESP curriculum, textbooks, teaching materials and teaching staff.

### *Methodological Overview*

The distinctive methodological characteristics of the study are:

1. Focus group interview was conducted with ESP teachers and a questionnaire with 12-questions was taken not only from ESP teachers but also ESP students. Also needs survey was taken from the ESP students.
2. Research was conducted on textbooks, teaching materials and teaching staff at public universities in Mongolia.
3. Studied the characteristics of ESP in Asian countries and determine the future direction of ESP in our country.

### *The Study and Data*

The main study is concerned with a comparative study on current implementation of ESP policy in Mongolia and ESP training trends in Asian countries. With the emphasis in this study it is intended to analyze actual ESP practices in some Asian countries included in outer circle and in an expanding circle for the scope of English language and tried to compare their ESP training features and policy. Different types of articles through internet sources were used for data procession. The results of quantitative and qualitative analyses were combined and conclusion was drawn. 5 countries from the Asian countries included in outer circle of the scope of English language and 3 Asian countries included in an expanding circle for the scope of English language ESP teaching features were analyzed, but we focused more on China, Japan and Taiwan where ESP training has been developing rapidly.

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

Table 1. Comparative research on ESP in Asian countries and role of English

Countries	ESP policy and training features
Countries learning English as a second language	
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some scientific courses are taught in English</li> <li>• English is important and also plays a role in ranking</li> </ul>
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some universities have a policy of teaching some courses in English</li> <li>• The policy is to use English in the profession</li> <li>• Books compiles in Canada are used for English language courses and teachers are trained in Britain.</li> </ul>
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malaysia has a vision to reach international communication technology (ICT) by 2025 and main key to reach this is considered English language training (ELT).</li> <li>• For all levels of schools Math and Science courses are being taught in English starting from 2003.</li> </ul>
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English is considered as a first language.</li> <li>• English has been identified as the main language of international workplaces.</li> <li>• All courses are taught in English besides native language.</li> </ul>
Taiwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The country with the best English language courses in Asia</li> <li>• There is a competition between English teachers and subject teachers</li> </ul>
Countries where English is studied as an international language	
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New model of dual vocational training “Major+English”</li> <li>• Business English has been approved as a compulsory subject by the Ministry of Education starting from 2007</li> </ul>
Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English as understood as an international language</li> <li>• English is believed the most important subject than other courses</li> </ul>
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program named “Japan with English ” implemented in 2007</li> <li>• Model named 4-4-4 to improve general English and ESP</li> <li>• ESP community with 28 members.</li> </ul>

This study did not evaluate learning outcomes of students in terms of ESP and therefore, only focused on observations and analyze of ESP actual educational practice in classrooms and universities.

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

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### *Sample of Selected Schools*

Team members discussed and 3 top public universities in Mongolia were selected to visit and to observe actual educational practices in the area of ESP. These are MNUE (Mongolian National University of education) where the researchers and teachers who made this research work, MNUD (Mongolian National University of Defense), and MNUMS (Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences).

Research conducted from 2020-2024 and 3 public universities, 909 bachelor students, 104 master students and over 50 ESP teachers included in our survey. From the public universities we will focus on MNUE (Mongolian National University of Education), where we teach.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The following instruments were developed to obtain standardized baseline data on the mainstreaming of ESP in Asian countries and at universities in Mongolia:

- Microscopic analysis (observations, survey, interviews on actual practice):
  - i. Classroom observation instrument: 8 pages
  - ii. Guideline for expert team report: school visit – 5 pages

The instruments for the analysis of Chinese universities the researchers developed a model for ESP teachers in China and determined 7 stages of routes of disciplinary development of business English as a sub-brunch in China. Most of the international items in these research instruments are built upon the following well-known studies and frameworks of ESP:

- English as A Lingua Franca in the international University Toolkit [4]
- World Values Survey 7 (WVS 2017-2022)

The study on textbooks and training materials were conducted from 2020-2024. First an evaluation sheet was developed for 18 ESP textbooks compiled by ESP teachers of English Department at MNUE (Mongolian National University of Education). To develop a textbook evaluation sheet a handbook compiled by UNESCO “Education for Sustainable development” and “A joint research report for ESD” conducted in Asia Pacific region were used as a methodological recommendation. Research on books and handbooks of ESP at MNUD (Mongolian National University of Defense) was analyzed to compare it with our university ESP textbook and handbooks and to determine specific features of ESP.

Also, a gender survey and a citizenship survey of students participated in survey were conducted. 13 ESP curriculum developed by ESP teachers and difficulties for ESP teachers and their degree of education, employment years at MNUE were analyzed. Research on ESP curriculum of the Mongolian National University of Medical Science was analyzed to compare it with our university ESP curriculum and to determine specific features of ESP.

Besides of students needs analyzes research on improvement of ESP training was conducted from ESP teachers based on inquiry and continuous improvement criteria.

#### IV. RESULTS

China- With the development of China's economy and the enhancement of the country's internationalization, ESP has developed to some extent. To meet the needs of the market-oriented economy, various English training courses are offered, for example, foreign trade English, tourism English, English secretary, international finance and so on. About two decades ago, universities and colleges began to offer English courses concerning students' specific professional needs.

However, there is not yet a sound ESP system which is suited to the specific situation of China's higher education. In College English Syllabus, it has been stated that the ESP course should be a compulsory course; in the first two years of the undergraduate study, students are offered the course of Basic English; ESP should be set from the fifth to seventh semesters with no less than 100 hours altogether and two periods each week is required. If time or resources permit, it is better to offer EAP reading, ESP translation or ESP writing courses on the eighth semester. According to the survey conducted by the Foreign Language Department, Henan University, 58% of institutions of higher learning questioned failed to set up the ESP course as regular course due to lack of finance, equipment and teacher resources. So we can see that ESP develops very unevenly in China.

At present, business English in China is highly recognized in the society as one of the most popular disciplines. Statistics shows that the number of universities that have opened Business English major courses exceeds 800, and the schooling levels, majors and degrees are more diversified. For example, in Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, there are already five undergraduate programs and four postgraduate programs. Include the status of disciplinary development, course design, teaching approach, teaching staff development, and student evaluation system, which are seen as follows:

In China today, Business English evolving from ESP has developed into a formalized discipline the concept of register analyses in recent years, which forms a brand-new innovative way to the development of ESP different from other countries. (See Table2)

Table 2 Route of disciplinary development of business as a sub-brunch in China.

Stage1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7
Register analyses	Discourse analyses	Target situation analyses	Skills and strategies analyses	Learning-centred approach	Business English major	Business English discipline

In general, Business English evolving from ESP has a development history of over 50 years 7 stages in China.

Due to the different teaching or learning objectives, the courses of Business English for undergraduate or postgraduate programs have been designed with a general principle of approximately 70% of English language courses and 30% of business theories and practices such

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

as introduction to Business, Introduction to Economics, International trade, Business communication, International finance, International settlement, etc.

For the teaching approach single English teaching and bilingual teaching tends to be smaller and smaller in China. Besides simulation teaching, task teaching, interactive teaching methods can be very applicable in business English. Type of multi skilled teacher can be divided into three basic categories. (See table 3)

Table 3. Three basic types of multi-skilled teacher team proficient for business English in China

	Type	
1	Teachers of English major+ business management major	This type of business english teachers has two majors, who can teach both English courses and business management courses and conduct academic researches in both the fields of study.
2	Teachers of English major+fairly good business management knowledge base	This type of business English teachers has an English major, who can mainly teach English courses and conduct academic researches mainly in the linguistic field of study.
3	Teachers of business management major+ fairly good English language base	This type of business teachers has a business management major, who can mainly teach business management courses in English, and conduct academic researches mainly in the field of business management.

*Taiwan-* Today, an effective English program must meet both students' academic and career needs. Universities in Taiwan, in keeping with global trends, have begun to incorporate academic language skills, which students need to cope with English-taught programs in their majors, into English instruction (Hu, Chen & Liu 2008, cited in Tsou, 2009:78). Tsou (2009) describes the structure of the program at NCKU as follows: National Cheng Kung University successfully transformed sophomore English courses into an ESP format, helping students develop academic and professional skills. Thus, starting the fall of 2009, first-year students enroll in the EGP-based Freshman English, and in the second year, ESP-based sophomore English. In the same year, the program launched 10 new ESP sophomore English courses to replace the general classes. The new program included courses for liberal arts, management, medicine and science and engineering students. For each discipline, the program offers at least two courses. Management and Liberal arts students can enroll in Economics English and Business Management English. These are EAP courses. Or they can register for Careers English or Tourism and Hospitality English which are pre-service EOP courses. For science and engineering sophomore students, the program offers EAP courses on General Science, General Engineering, Hi-Tech industries, and Information Technology. Students of the medical college can attend Bio-technology and Bio-medicine, which are also EAP in nature (Tsou, 2009:78) At national universities , ESP is not a problem for two major reasons: first, these institutions can obtain funding to hire ESP teachers, and second, there is no conflict between the ESP teachers and the professors, as the latter are not interested in teaching ESP courses. In terms of expertise and perceived ESP teacher identity, both

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

language teachers' and subject teachers' are legitimized to teach ESP, equipping students with language competence and knowledge to participate in international discourses and practices. Therefore, a heated debate over "Who should teach ESP" has arrived at an ill time, when both both language and subject teachers have to fight over curriculum control to secure academic positions, due to Taiwan's recent student shortage.

Japan – For the language policy to promote an improvement in Japanese people's communicative ability in English was translated in 2002 into the "Strategic plan to cultivate 'Japanese with English abilities.

Japan Association of College English teachers organize ESP meeting every year. As the need for ESP in tertiary English education rises globally in tertiary education, a new English preprogram called "Technical English" was developed at a Japanese university of science and technology in Tokyo. This first university-wide compulsory ESP program at national universities in Japan was put in action in the academic year of 2012.<sup>†</sup> A closer examination of the academic genres selected by the whole science faculty for the new curriculum, such as academic presentations using ppt and posters, oral reports of academic articles and original research, abstracts, research papers, will be conducted in this study.

ESP program at Toyohashi University of Technology, this is a short-term exchange program with the Institute of Technology, Bandung, in Indonesia. Teachers make program's background and outlines, followed by a comparative analysis of students' comments before and after participating in the program. Issues and challenges are discussed, with the hope that the findings and implications will prove useful for improving ESP exchange programs further.<sup>‡</sup>

Different skills are taught for ESP students. For example, Summary writing is an essential skill for science and technology students. Students often need to read and understand scientific literature and then summarize the contents of the articles into a short paragraph. Summarizing the contents require extensive paraphrasing skills of the student. However, in the teaching of academic English in Japanese universities, it is not a skill that is given much importance. Teaching of summary writing to third-year undergraduate students in a technical English course at a Japanese university of science and engineering was successfully achieved.

Even in JACET (the Japan Association for College English Teachers) there are few specialists in ESP out of more than 2300 members. There is a small but significant movement, which is promoting ESP in Japan.

Mongolia-Research conducted from 2020-2024 and 3 public universities, 909 bachelor students, 104 master students and over 50 ESP teachers included in our survey. From the public universities we will focus on MNUE (Mongolian National University of Education), where we teach.

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<sup>†</sup> SHI Jie (English Department, UEC Tokyo), JACET ESP meeting, 2014

<sup>‡</sup> Yo In'nami is an Associate Professor of English at Shibaura Institute of Technology, JACET ESP meeting, 2012

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

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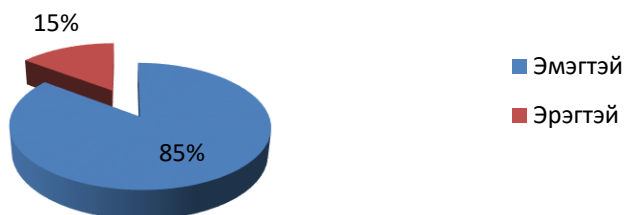


Figure 2. Gender of undergraduate students

For the gender of undergraduate students 85% of the students are female and 15% of the students are male, which means female students are being prepared to be future teachers at different subjects.

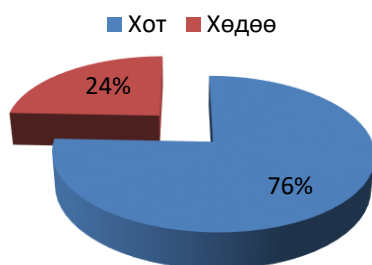


Figure 3. Citizenship of undergraduate students

For the teacher training university 76% of the students are from province and 24% from capital city, which means necessity of teacher's workplace is high in province than in the city.

Table 4. Research on ESP curriculum at MNUE

Subjects	Number of curriculum	Level of language	Year
School of Humanity: (history, Philosophy, Culture, Tourism)	4	Intermediate	2022-2023
Information technology, Math	2	Intermediate	2023
Art and design	1	Intermediate	2023
Literature	1	Intermediate	2023
Journalism	1	Intermediate	2024
Physics	1	Intermediate	2020
Physical culture	1	Intermediate	2020
EAP	2	Upper intermediate	2024
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>		

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

Table 5. Difficulties for the English teachers of MNUE

Low degree of General English knowledge	72%
Lack of ESP standard and curriculum from the government	60%
High amount of students in a class	52%
High percent of teaching hour	24%
To improve ESP books, textbooks and materials	20%

Table 6. Why ESP teaching is necessary for students

to gain necessary information and put into practice	24%
To gain education to meet worldwide standard	16%
To get a job	6%
To work in international organization	1%
To improve knowledge	1%

### ESP teacher's degree of education and employment years

Most of English teachers 75.8% at MNUE still studying at doctoral courses. Reason of this is lack of experienced supervisor and they have much of teaching hours than conducting any survey. 17.2% of the teacher's have master degree and 2% of them are doctor Ph.D or vise professor. 65.5% of ESP teachers employed over 16 years, which means experienced teachers; 24.2% of them employed 11-15 years, 10.3% employed 6-10 years.

Table 7. Research on books and handbooks of ESP at MNUE

Name of the books	Level of language			Number of handbooks
	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Upper-intermediate	
English for Social sciences and Humanities	2	2		4
English for Math and IT	1	2		3
English for art and design	-	1		1
Foreign language	1	2		4
English for literature	-	1		1
English for natural sciences	-	1		1
English for physical sciences	-	1		2
EAP	-	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

Table 8. Research on improvement of ESP training

№	Index	1	2	3	4	5
1	Curriculum content should meet social necessity	1	0	0	1	18
2	To process ESP	1	1	2	15	2
3	To improve ESP books and handbooks	4	10	5	1	1
4	To make ESP as a compulsory subject	9	4	7	1	21
5	To renovate ESP teaching method and to improve information communicative technology	8	4	4	2	3

In Mongolian job market, there is an increasing demand for talents who not only possess all the necessary expertise, but also a good command of English. Therefore, the need for training compound talents has become increasingly prominent. For MNUE students, program named “Teacher with English abilities” has been implemented by the 70% of government scholarship to promote future teacher and develop the nation. This program at MNUE usually studying procedure as follows: the freshmen or sophomore, who has intermediate degree of English are entitled to applying for admission to above mentioned program with duration of two years. Students take advantage of winter holidays to pursue the above program. There are four compulsory courses in each semester within two years, with practical courses completed in the winter and summer vacations.

*Mongolian National University of Defense-* For the books and textbooks ALC (American Language course) or military English books have been used for over 20 years not only for University of Defense students, but also for all military units and branches. These books are delivered to all collaborative countries from DLI (Language Institute of Defense) within IMET (International Military Education and Training) program of USA. These books have 5 levels each consists of 5 sections and Military English is taught 3 credit hours for a semester.

Table 9. Research on books and handbooks of ESP at MNUD

Levels of the books	Level of Language	Points to be meet
1-6	Elementary	0-25
7-12	Pre-intermediate	25-50
13-18	intermediate	50-60
19-24	Upper-intermediate	60-70
25-34	Advanced	70-80

## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

From the study we can conclude that for the University of Defense ESP teaching policy to meet an international standard has been implemented.

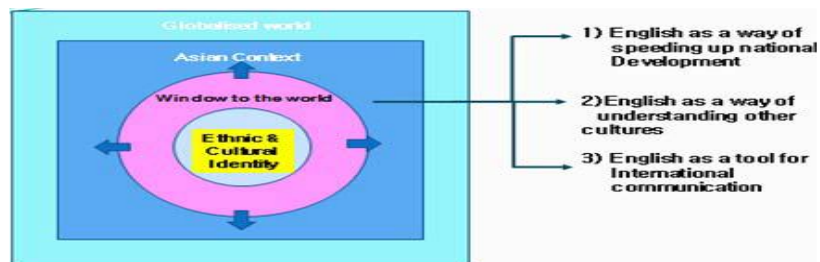
Mongolian National University of Medical Science- For the MNUMS from 2010 a little bit changed ESP teaching policy and in total 8 credit hours of English is taught for freshmen and sophomore. 4 credit hours are for General English in 5 levels from elementary to advanced level. Other 4 credit hours of ESP or English for medical science is taught for sophomore.

Table 10. Research on ESP curriculum of the Mongolian National University of Medical Science

Subjects	General English	Credit hours	ESP			
	Form of the subject	hours	Form of the subject	Cr hours	Form of the subject	Cr hours
Traditional medicine	Compulsory	2	Compulsory	2	Self – study	2
Bio medicine	Compulsory	2	Compulsory	2	Self – study	2
Social health	Compulsory	2	Compulsory	2	Self – study	2
Head& face medicine	Compulsory	2	Compulsory	2	Self – study	2
Treatment	Compulsory	2	Compulsory	2	Self – study	2
Nursery	Compulsory	2	Compulsory	2	Self – study	2

From the study we can conclude that at Mongolian National University of Medical Science ESP teaching policy is different from other universities in its form, 2 credit hours are compulsory and 2 credit hours of ESP are in the form self-study.

As a conclusion of this study , the essential role of English language education in Asian context can be summarized as Figure 1. (Chang, .B-M. 2011). **The roles of English language education in Asian context.** *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 15 (1), 191-206. )



## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the ESP course can be considered as the most practical and applicable subject for universities in Asia as the students want to become successful learners in their professional sphere while learning English. In China business English is highly recognized in society and there has been aroused a competition between subject teachers and ESP teachers, in Taiwan different kinds of ESP courses for sophomore, in Japan universities different ESP programs have been implemented. Mongolian ESP teachers work mastering both in linguistic and specialized areas, the ESP standard for Mongolian university academic programs, which theoretical and practical fundament has already been established firmly by the university ESP teachers initiation and efforts, should be formulated and brought into the wide implementation at the tertiary education. The process of transmitting from general English to ESP in public universities in Mongolia has a trend of rapid development. ESP teachers at public universities in Mongolia develop ESP curriculum based on the needs of students and also compile ESP textbooks based on the above curriculums. ESP teachers at public universities in Mongolia work as a team to develop a ESP curriculum based on the needs of students. After being approved by the sub-committee of the curriculum and then by the subcommittee of branch school, teachers are allowed to teach ESP. Some ESP teachers at public universities in Mongolia work together with teachers from professional departments to develop ESP curriculum, and in the future , there may be competition between English ESP teachers and professional teachers from professional departments.

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## Current development of ESP teaching policies in Asian countries and at public universities in Mongolia

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