Tourism English training at the tertiary level in Jordan: Reality and expectations from a university context

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims at assessing the possible mismatch of Tourism English skills between the training offered at a university and the skills (tasks) required in the tourism sector in Jordan. To do this, the study uses a combination of two evaluation models to first evaluate the effectiveness of Tourism English (TE) training offered at the university, and then investigate needs and perceptions which might help improve the existing program and plan for a TE course syllabus, accordingly. Interviews were used among 42 stakeholders, representing current Tourism students, graduates, instructors, and local Tourism employers. The results revealed significant gaps between needs and expectations and the training provided. The participants' suggestions as regards the graduates' TE needs and field employability were analyzed, attempting to describe what a TE course syllabus should look like in terms of goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment.

1. Introduction

English has become the driving force for major developments in almost all life domains including business, technology, healthcare, national and international tourism, and even personal contact among people from all over the world (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 2003; Warschauer, 2000). This has resulted in a huge demand for English, especially in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) contexts where there is a compelling need for the kind of knowledge, ability, and specialized skills of English, which enable any country to go with contemporary developments for its economic stability and growth.

The tourism sector is said to be one of the largest job-generating fields around the globe, providing one in every ten jobs in the planet and accounting for 313 million jobs, approximately 10% of the world's total employment (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2018). Besides creating jobs, the field is seen to drive exports and generate prosperity across the world as a result of globalization, the spread of English as an international language, the advent of technology, and the movement of people and goods (Pakir, 1999; Warschauer, 2000; World Travel&Tourism Council, March 2018). Due to the economy-embracing status given to this sector, governments have been competing to develop the level of services offered to tourists through providing linguistically-able workforce who are equipped with communication, information technology (IT) and professional skills. Needless to say, this necessitates each country to strive for providing quality training at university and college level to appropriately prepare students for their future careers in Tourism. Of course, within such training, priority is given to English skills development, in general, and Tourism English (henceforth, TE) skills, in particular, with the latter being described as highly needed as it reflects the professional functions conducted in tourism and mirrors the communication-based nature of the whole tourism industry.

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Jordan is an example of those developing countries which always gives higher importance to tourism due to its touristic nature. The country has become a destination for international tourists whose numbers had exceeded 4.2 million by the end of 2017 with a growth of nearly 18% in the country's revenues (Ministry of Tourism & Antique [MOTA], 2018; Morris, 2018). According to the tourists' statistics, tourists were largely from Europe, the USA, Canada and India (Ministry of Tourism and Antique, 2018). Given this, it appears that most tourists visiting Jordan are either native English speakers or speakers of English as a second language. This makes English as a means of international communication a pressing need. In this respect, AlDohon (2014) states, "Because of the current position of the English language as the main language used in international communication, it becomes essential for Jordanian personnel who are constantly dealing with multicultural tourists in the workplace." (p. 56). Obviously, successful communication with tourists in English would add to their satisfaction and ensure more tourist arrivals to the country. It is to this end, learning English as used in Tourism (i.e., Tourism English TE) is an imperative as far as Tourism development is a priority of the government in Jordan.

Although English is taught and learned as a foreign language and is not used in everyday communication in Jordan, it is still the main instrument whereby the tourism profession is carried out and the urgently-demanded language by tourism graduates, employers and tourists alike (AlDohon, 2014; AlKhatib, 2005). The literature clearly addressed this fact by attesting that employers and graduates highly require English as the language internationally used by tourists visiting the country. It also emphasized the importance of English for specific purposes (ESP) training as a seemingly neglected issue in tertiary education; more specifically, when related to curriculum and syllabus design innovations (AlBakrawi, 2013; Bataineh & Ayasreh, 2004).

Within this context, taking tourism as an example of an important domain for economic growth, and Jordan as an EFL country where specialized skills and knowledge of English are urgently needed, the present study aims to address issues of curriculum and syllabus design and the teaching of Tourism English at the tertiary level in Jordan to investigate to what extent the tourism students are prepared to real life contexts as regards the use of English.

1.1. Teaching Tourism English in the educational system in Jordan

With its Middle-eastern strategic position, Jordan lies on a threshold of history and on a crossroad of many ancient civilizations which were inhabited in the area throughout centuries. It is a place where tourism is considered a major source of its economic income as it embraces a lot of astonishing historical wonders which attract tourists from all over the world. As such, the government always seeks to provide the tourism sector with the right workplace facilities and qualified staff to develop the levels of services offered to international tourists.

Despite the economic importance given to this sector, English has not been well-considered in the tourism-related educational system yet. This is evident in the course plans of most tourism departments at Jordanian universities, where little attention to English is given (AlBakrawi, 2005, 2013; AlDohon, 2014; AlKhatib, 2005).

In the Jordanian educational system, it is apparent that teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) or even for specific purposes (ESP) is a challenging task. The country has revived interest in teaching English as a necessary part of the early stages of teaching process since 2000 (AlJaafreh, 2008; Bataineh & Ayasreh, 2004; Council of Higher Education (CHE), 2000). Nonetheless, the language does not seem to be exploited enough as a productive tool to enhance the educational level in different scientific, technical and vocational institutions.

Put differently, despite the accelerating communicative needs for vocational English in fields like tourism, business, health, banking and finance, the educational system appears to lack such specialized ESP teaching and training especially at the tertiary level (AlBakrawi, 2013, 2005; AlKhatib, 2005; Freihat & Al-Makhzoomi, 2012). As regards tourism and hotel service, for example, both have been suggested to be the two major sectors where ESP should be integrated as they embody the main source of the country's economy and represent those domains in which English is highly needed (AlBakrawi, 2005, 2013; AlDohon, 2014; AlKhatib, 2005). Therefore, direct attention to English teaching and training in these rich labor markets is an imperative in the whole related educational system.

The teaching of ESP requires offering ESP courses that familiarize students with the jargon used in their fields of study and in their after-graduation work (AlBakrawi, 2013; AlDohon, 2014; AlJaafreh, 2008; Freihat & Al-Makhzoomi, 2012). Moreover, the application of ESP approaches into ELT in Jordanian vocational education is still a newborn field. This is quite indicative in fields like curriculum development and syllabus design where it is uncommon to have those ESP syllabuses that highly prompt communication within specialized occupations and fields of study (AlBakrawi, 2013; Bani-Khaled, 2012). Such an issue has been clearly addressed in AlBakrawi's (2013) study when he described the production and implementation of ESP as an "unprecedented attempt" in the country (p. 14).

This unprecedented attempt refers to the scarcity of ESP-related educational innovations (e.g. curriculum and syllabus design) that mediate both theory into practice and study into work. This scarcity may be worse when dealing with tertiary education, clearly because students at this level are claimed to be closer to practice as they are being trained for their future technical jobs. As a result, it could negatively affect the overall preparation of linguistically well-trained workforce.

Tourism-English as one main necessity in the tourism sector is a good example for this scarcity of curriculum and syllabus innovations due to the big gap noticed between what is needed and what is actually performed. In light of this, the current study seeks to take an innovative step to bridge such a gap and intervene in a local university context where TE is urgently demanded. This context is represented by MU University (for anonymity), one of the leading state universities in Jordan.

1.2. Overview of the MU tourism department

The Department of Tourism and Archaeology at MU offers Bachelor's and Master's degrees; however, only Bachelor's students are the focus of this study. A student is granted the BA degree upon the completion of 132 credit hours (approximately 44 courses). All the courses within the curriculum offered are taught in Arabic, except six courses which represent two course types; namely, General-English (GE) and Specialty courses, thus suggestively representing the English language program that provides TE training. The GE courses comprised three courses (*English 101, English 102*, and *English 099)*, and these are taught 3 h a week to all university students by English language instructors from the Language Center, a division under the English Department at the addressed university. Since GE courses are highly general in content and do not emphasize a specific field of study, they might offer little help to develop students' English language proficiency either in GE or in ESP (AlJaafreh, 2008). Therefore, they are "insufficient to fulfill the students' language requirements and, thus, inadequate to substitute for ESP courses" (Bataineh & Ayasreh, 2004, p. 10).

The other three courses are Specialty courses (*Communication Skills, English Terminology in Archaeology and Tourism*, and *Tourism Management*), and each is of three credit hours to be taught during a semester three contact hours per week. Compared to the GE courses, the Specialty courses are taught by the subject-matter instructors at the Tourism Department, and who might not be as good at English as English instructors, or who might differ from English instructors as they teach content in English, not the language itself.

Although the GE and Specialty courses are not considered proper ESP courses; they appear to be the only source of ESP training provided to students in their tourism-related study and future work. Hence, it would be worth investigating how effective or ineffective these courses are to provide sufficient TE training, prepare students for TE communication, and thus meet needs and expectations.

2. Literature review

The related literature accommodates a good number of research studies conducted in various contexts to identify the learning needs of English language in the tourism field. Coskun (2009), for example, studied the second-grade tourism students' level in a Turkish vocational school and their needs. The researcher collected data by using a needs analysis and an oral interview. According to the findings, "the level of English in the classroom is A2 according to Common European Framework standards, and listening-speaking skills are perceived as the most needed skills at work" (p. 1).

Researchers in Thailand seem to be prolific in terms of needs analysis studies. Meemark (2002) and Romaya (2009) investigated the English needs of the Tourist Police (TP) in Bangkok, Thailand. In both studies, oral skills (speaking and listening) were identified by TP participants as the most difficult aspect when they communicate with foreigners in English. In Romaya's (2009) study, on the other hand, foreign tourists mentioned that the TP officers were intelligible enough when using English, despite some barriers in communication due to pronunciation, inadequate vocabulary, and grammatical misuse. Conducted in Thailand again, Tangniam's (2006) study aimed to address the needs of Thai Airways ground staff for English language and their perceptions towards the English training courses offered. The participants had positive views of the English training courses as they enabled them to communicate more easily with passengers. Significantly, the participants rated the oral skills exceptionally needed. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that course designers should be more attentive to these skills when designing English training courses. Finally, Prachanant (2012) surveyed the needs, functions, and problems of 40 employees working in the tourism sector in Thailand as regards their English language use. The findings obtained via a questionnaire revealed that speaking was the urgently required skill, followed by listening, reading and writing. The most important functions needed in Tourism communication were "giving information, providing services, and offering help", whereas the commonly encountered English use problems involved "inability to use appropriate words and expressions, inadequate vocabulary, and lack of grammar knowledge" (p. 117).

One more example is given from Croatia, where Bobanovic and Grzinic (2011) sought through using a questionnaire to investigate students' and employees' perceptions of the significance of English language skills in the tourism field. Both oral and written communication skills were rated high, but with a higher priority given to the oral skills.

Several needs analysis studies were conducted in the Jordanian context, as well. Zughoul and Hussein (1985), for example, researched the extent of English language use at a university, as well as students' perceptions of English language needs and abilities. Freihat and Al-Makhzoomi (2012) explored 20 Jordanian freshman students' needs studying nursing at a university, whereas Bataineh and Ayasreh (2004) investigated 326 university students' needs for Business English courses, trying at the same time to find out the impact of using English language as a medium of instruction on students' academic achievement, and the probably resultant difficulties from this instruction.

Regarding TE-related needs analysis studies, we can count a few in chronological order. AlBakrawi (2005), for example, planned a computerized ESP program for hotel students, which was reported to have a measurable effect on the English language proficiency of the students participating in the study. Similarly, AlKhatib (2005) used a questionnaire, interviews, and analysis of authentic workplace documents to investigate the English communication needs and attitudes of 30 workers serving in the field of banking and finance in Jordan. According to the findings, the employees' attitudes towards English were found to greatly influence their "perceptions of their needs, wants and lacks" (p. 175).

In another study, AlBakrawi (2013) administered a questionnaire to 146 students, 27 school teachers and 24 hotel employees to identify the English language needs of the hotel stream students. The findings revealed that students had "some real special English language needs and interests", which, if addressed, would motivate the students to learn and "build their self-confidence" (p. 49). Importantly, the researcher suggested that course designers greatly consider ESP needs analysis results when designing ESP programs, curricula and syllabi.

Finally, AlDohon's (2014) study aimed to find out the English language needs, functions and problems of 46 tourist police working in several worksites in Jordan. Similar to previous studies (for example, AlBakrawi, 2013; Meemark, 2002; Romaya, 2009), the findings were mostly related to oral language skills, too.

The body of literature reviewed displayed a good range of research conducted on ESP needs in different contexts with an emphasis on problems, skills and communicative functions needed for study and work purposes. Most surveyed the learning needs, and language skills and functions wanted, but a few could manage to use the results to plan for an ESP program/course syllabus in response to these needs. It is even fewer that contextual research could reflect the gap between what is needed and what is actually performed as regards English language use in the tourism field in Jordan from the perspective of all involved, not only at the academic level (i.e., Tourism students and instructors) but also at the professional level to include graduates and local employers whose views are seldom discussed in academic research focusing on needs analysis and ESP curriculum design (AlKhatib, 2005). More importantly, one can hardly ever find a research study that can review an existing ESP program or syllabus, investigate needs, and allow for stakeholders' participation in stating how a curriculum can be improved or how a syllabus can be planned in terms of goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and assessment and student performance. It is proposed that such research, when conducted, would contribute to the literature on contextual ESP program evaluation and syllabus design, especially when it is built on solid theoretical models and when it invites all stakeholders, including those rarely-mentioned in the tourism field (i.e., graduates and employers) to participate in the decision-making processes (e.g., evaluation and syllabus planning).

As the situation of TE in Jordan may appear the same in most vocational contexts, the present study, however, is part of an extensive case study conducted in a particular university context called MU (for anonymity) at two stages; namely, 'evaluation of program effectiveness', and 'needs analysis for a TE syllabus'. At the former stage, the study aims to evaluate the language program to investigate the English language needs and problems of Tourism students at MU. The latter stage; however, seeks to identify the need for a TE syllabus as an improvement to the existing curriculum as perceived by all of the above-mentioned stakeholders.

This study is part of a wider project where a huge amount of data was gathered via multiple means (e.g., document analysis, surveys, and interviews) and where other data are still being analyzed. Therefore, we thought that reporting the findings of the interviews would best give a clearer picture of needs within the evaluation and syllabus design perspectives; consequently, provide answers to the following questions.

How do the Tourism students, graduates, English/Tourism instructors of MU University and local Tourism employers in Jordan perceive the effectiveness of TE training provided by the English language program offered at the university's Tourism Department, in terms of Stufflebeam's (1971) four CIPP domains: 'aims and objectives', 'content and materials', 'conduct/teaching-learning process', and 'assessment and student performance'?

What needs are reported by those stakeholders, which, when stated, can help to develop a new Tourism English course syllabus in terms of Nation and Macalister's (2010) syllabus design criteria: 'goals', 'content and sequencing', 'format and presentation', and 'monitoring and assessment'?

2.1. Theoretical framework

As informed by the above-mentioned questions, it has become reasonable that the study intends to use a combination of two models; namely, Stufflebeam's (1971) CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product), and Nation and Macalister's (2010) model to account for its two steps. The CIPP is found suitable for a comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum as it clearly explains how a curriculum or a program could be judged as effective/ineffective in terms of aims and objectives, content and materials, conduct/teaching-learning process, and assessment and student performance. Although it provides judgments, it does not seem innovative enough to offer solutions to improve a curriculum or plan a course syllabus in terms of its structure based on needs. It is just then Nation and Macalister's (2010) model has been utilized to research needs and offer an inventory for stating opinions as regards syllabus structure. It is suggested that this combination will furnish the grounds for the study's framework and contribute to the literature on theoretically-modeled and practically-oriented evaluation and syllabus design. An illustration of this framework is given in Fig. 1.

For the first research question, we utilized Stufflebeam's (1971) CIPP model to evaluate the existing program at MU and categorized our findings according to this model. For the second question, we thought Nation and Macalister's (2010) model would be more appropriate especially when we describe the needs to design a new syllabus in terms of goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment, all of which should be shaped according to the principles that reflect our teaching and learning philosophy.

In brief, the CIPP is a comprehensive evaluation model whose corresponding letters in the acronym constitute the model's core parts (i.e., Context, Input, Process, and Product), all of which are viewed as stages of evaluation. **Context** evaluation aims to describe the context of the program in terms of determining the needs, goals, and objectives of the program and assessing the effectiveness of these goals and objectives to attend to the specified needs. **Input** evaluation seeks to provide a description of the program inputs and resources, whereas **Process** evaluation aims to examine how the program is being implemented as perceived by those who are using it or being affected by it. **Product** evaluation provides a detailed description of the general and specific outcomes of the program with the aim to assess its effectiveness and quality in relation to the previous evaluation stages.

Despite being a comprehensive model to curriculum evaluation, Nation and Macalister's (2010) model was partially used in the study to address its second stage. Hence, the study deploys only those criteria that might best describe and make up a syllabus in terms of goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment.

According to the model, determining **goals** is the heart of making up a syllabus, and this shows how centering goals reflects the importance of having clear general goals for a course/curriculum. When goals are identified, three issues should be taken into
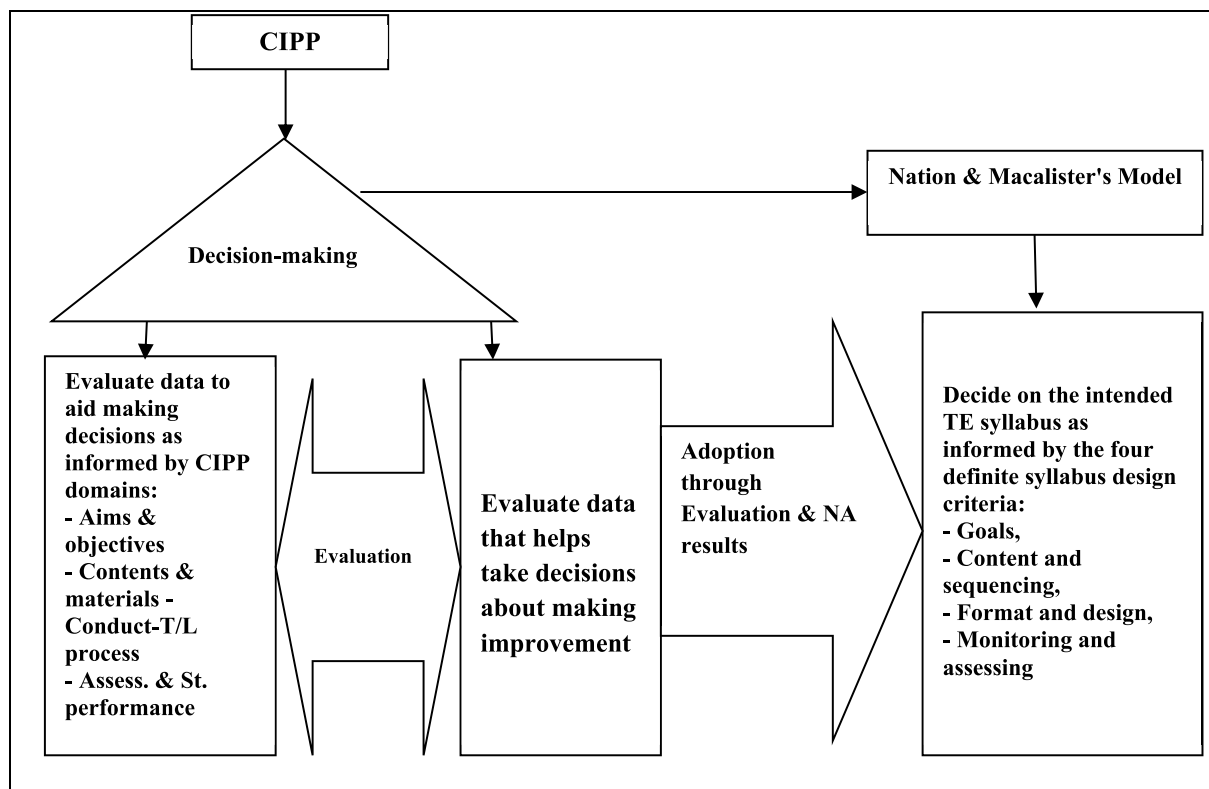
Fig. 1. The theoretical framework of the current study.

account as the syllabus is being made up. These issues surround the central goals in the model, and they are content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessing. **Content and sequencing** represent the items that are necessarily needed to learn in the course, the order in which they appear, in addition to using the ideas of content as a means to learn the items and not as an end (goal) in itself. **The format and presentation** part embodies the format of lessons or units within the syllabus. It also involves the techniques and the types of activities which are going to be used to assist learning. **Monitoring and assessment** represent the final part which includes observing learning, testing the results of learning and giving appropriate feedback to the learners about their progress.

The two models represent history and geography which describe the context and the problem of the study in order to pave the way for its methodology. They also represent an act-and-react approach to investigate a local context through evaluation and then adopt decisions about changes and improvements through needs analysis.

Combining the two models to evaluate and investigate syllabus needs in an ESP context such as Tourism in a particular setting such as Jordan, seems to be very rare in the literature. Therefore, it is hoped that the study will add insights to the literature on contextual needs-based ESP curriculum and syllabus design case studies.

3. The study

3.1. Participants

As mentioned earlier, the participants of the study comprised multiple stakeholders, including those from MU University (current Tourism students, graduates, and Tourism and English instructors) as well as local employers in the tourism field in Jordan. All were randomly chosen to take part in the study as data sources after showing agreement both in written (invitation letter) and orally when starting the interview.

Undergraduate students are suggested to be a better sample as they are high in numbers and have a fresh experience with the courses offered within the program (i.e., GE and Specialty courses). Although Students at the postgraduate level (i.e., Master's) can be included, they might not be as responsive as undergraduates to describe the educational setting or evaluate the effectiveness of the program; they might not have had the same experience of the curriculum as a result of being graduates of universities other than MU. Put simply, undergraduates are more familiar with the program and the curriculum; hence, they could best describe the situation as they are experiencing it.

Although all undergraduate students at the Tourism Department could have participated in the study, only senior (fourth-year) students were invited, assuming that they have already completed the English language program courses (i.e. GE and Specialty

courses), and thus they are considered more informed to share their experiences and views in relation to the research questions asked. These students were nine, four of whom agreed to be interviewed after completing the Student Survey (out of 61 students), whereas the other five were later reached through the Tourism Department's Facebook page.

The second group of the participants was comprised of eleven graduates (aged 22–25) who participated in the interviews. With the help of the Alumni Unit of MU, a list of graduates who graduated in the past two years was obtained (supposing that they were closer to and more familiar with the curriculum currently offered at the Tourism Department). Out of thirty-six graduates who filled the Graduate Questionnaire (which is beyond the scope of this study), only five graduates agreed to participate in the interviews at their available time, whereas the other six were again later reached through the Department's Facebook page. Around 45% of these graduates (five) were unemployed, while the other six (55%) were working at tourism-related jobs in the country.

The instructor participants included four instructors from the English Department and six instructors from the Tourism Department. They were randomly selected after showing an agreement to participate in the interviews during the first-time visit to their offices. They were of different academic ranks, i.e., Master's (3 English instructors and 1 Tourism instructor) and PhD (5 from Tourism Dept. and 2 from the English Dept.) and different teaching experiences at their respected departments (with 10 and 21 years as averages in the English and Tourism departments, respectively).

The last group of the participants was the employers who constituted travel agencies, national airline companies, archaeological museums, hotels and local archaeology directorates. These employers were all found as participating members in the MU's Job Search Gate, a unit of the Training, Consultation and Community Service Center at MU, which links the university with other tourism institutions in Jordan to help graduates with training and job opportunities. At first, a number of employers from the gate were invited to participate in the interviews as part of the study, and an invitation letter was sent to them by email. The letter clearly stated the study's main objectives and addressed how the employers' opinions would be valuable as research data used for academic purposes. Only 12 employers replied back agreeing to participate in the study, and who were then contacted to have appointments for the interviews. Six employers were approached in person by the first author, whereas the others were interviewed via Skype upon their own request. They were given more explanation about the study purpose and reassured that their views and responses would be kept confidential. The employers were also provided with some information about the program and the courses offered at the MU's Tourism Department so as to put them in context before starting the interviews. Table 1 gives reference to the total numbers of all participating groups.

The study presupposes that the selected participating groups are the most important sources to collect data and answer the study's two-stepped questions (evaluation and syllabus-based needs). Their opinions are suggested to reflect the gap between what is needed and what is actually done as regards TE skills training. As students and graduates are said to be more informed to evaluate the program, instructors and employers may better identify what exactly graduates need to know and be able to do with TE. All are able to state what they think a course syllabus should be (e.g., in terms of goals, content, teaching-learning process, and assessment). Employers could also give their opinions of whether TE training at MU is a success based on their experience with/views about the graduates' English proficiency and their assumingly related knowledge of the curriculum as being participating members in the *University's Job Search Gate*. In short, the participants' views will then give a detailed picture of what an ESP Tourism course syllabus should look like from the perspective of those in the field at the academic and professional levels. Table 2 gives a summary of the participants' profile with information about their designations and the interview channel each selected.

3.2. Instrument and data collection

As mentioned above, the participants were interviewed through two channels; namely, in-person and Skype interviews. In-person interviews were 30–45 min' long, and they were conducted according to a nine-day schedule between Jan. 7–15, 2016. The Skype interviews, however, were 45 min' long and were carried out in accordance with previously-arranged time with each participant group. The interviews were conducted at their available paces and time and in their mother tongue, i.e. Arabic, so as to provide a relaxing atmosphere to capture as much information as possible.

Informed by the two theoretical models used in the study, the interview questions were designed to serve the research purpose and give the participants the opportunity to first spell out their evaluations of the English language program offered at the Tourism Department, and then state their opinions as regards the need for designing a TE syllabus which will fulfill the needs of the Tourism students.

Table 1
Participants' total numbers and gender.

Participant	Gender		Total	%
	Male	Female		
Students	6	3	9	21.4%
Graduates	7	4	11	26.2%
English instructors	3	1	4	9.5%
Tourism instructors	5	1	6	14.3%
Employers	9	3	12	28.5%
Total	30	12	42	100%

Table 2
Participants' profile.

Current Students			Graduates		
	Code	Semester		Code	Job
In-person interviews	St. A	Last	**In-person interviews**	Grad. A	Works at an Archaeology museum
	St. B	Before-last		Grad. B	Tour guide
	St. C	Before-last		Grad. C	Unemployed
	St. D	Last		Grad. D	Unemployed
Skype Interview	St. E	Last		Grad. E	Travel agent at X travel agency
	St. F	Before-last	**Skype Interview**	Grad. F	School teacher
	St. G	Last		Grad. G	Unemployed
	St. H	Before-last		Grad. H	Receptionist at Y Hotel
	St. I	Last		Grad. I	Unemployed
				Grad. J	Unemployed
				Grad. K	Tour operator
Instructors			**Employers**		
	Code	Job		Code	Job
In-person interviews	Inst. A	Tourism Instructor	**In-person interviews**	Emp. A	Chief of Arch. Directorate
	Inst. B	Tourism Instructor		Emp. B	Chief of National Arch. Museum
	Inst. C	Tourism Instructor		Emp. C	Training manager at X Travel Agency
	Inst. D	Tourism Instructor		Emp. D	Training manager at Y Travel Agency
	Inst. E	English Instructor		Emp. E	Personnel manager at X Airlines Co.
	Inst. F	English Instructor		Emp. F	Personnel manager at Y Airlines Co.
	Inst. G	English Instructor	**Skype Interview**	Emp. G	Chief of staff manager at S Hotel
	Inst. H	Tourism Instructor		Emp. H	Chief of Arch. Directorate
Skype Interview	Inst. I	Tourism Instructor		Emp. I	Spa manager
	Inst. J	English Instructor		Emp. J	Event & conference organizer
				Emp. K	Hotel service Manager
				Emp. L	Chairman of P Travel & Tourism Institute

Each interview type was structured to include eight questions (six questions for only English instructors). In the Student and Graduate's Interviews, Questions 1–4 sought responses about program effectiveness, whereas the others focused on needs-based suggestions for a TE syllabus (see Appendices A-D). In the Employers' Interviews; on the other hand, the first three questions were evaluation-oriented, and the rest took a needs-based perceptive (see Appendices I and J). The instructors' interviews (English and Tourism) targeted evaluation in the first three questions, whereas the rest were needs-focused (see Appendices E-H).

Based on the current interview protocols followed in qualitative research (Patton, 2002), an interview guide was made for each participant group so as to ensure consistency between interviews and increase the reliability of the results. This guide was structured to include three main parts; namely, the opening, the body, and the closing comments. The opening intended to establish rapport with the participant and included an introductory interviewer-made script that demonstrated the interview purpose and duration and ensured confidentiality and informed consent. The body contained a set of open-ended questions arranged from simple to difficult so as to list the topics to be covered, aid recording answers, and consequently probe in-depth information as simply and systematically as possible. Such questions were mostly descriptive and structural in nature and aimed to elicit a large sample of utterances in the respondents' native language. They also targeted explanations under the two study steps (i.e., evaluation and need-based suggestions), and more specifically under the already determined criteria of the evaluation models which are used to govern the theoretical framework and guide the research questions. Finally, the closure involved a brief summary of the topics discussed in the interview before ending with additional comments and information about the next course of action to be taken.

With their consent, all the interviewees were recorded. Later, the recordings were translated into English by the first author whose mother tongue is Arabic, then transcribed, analyzed, and linguistically coded and interpreted into in-depth written units (Creswell, 2003; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Put simply, content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2003) was deployed to qualitatively evaluate and critically review what the participants said concerning the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the TE training provided by English language program offered and their perceptions of the suggested TE course syllabus.

As the analysis of the data was driven by the research questions and their underlying theoretical models, the study applied Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework where several steps were followed to make the data analysis process as explicit as possible. At first, the transcribed data corpus was reviewed, and notes were made as early impressions of the data. The data was then organized using open coding techniques (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) to reduce data into small chunks of meaning that apply to a research question or one of its underlying theoretical thematic criteria. The data was later grouped under these themes or subthemes to better check how supporting it was to the theme and capture what the participants were saying. As themes were defined, descriptive quotes were extracted from the written units, and each quote was coded by a definite participant (e.g., Graduate A) under a definite category or (sub)theme (e.g., Input of Format and presentation) that addresses a broader theme or a question. The quotes were supported by a narrative for the participants' perceptions and suggestions, and then major conclusions were drawn and tabulated in response to the research questions.

Table 3
Interview Analysis as informed by Stufflebeam's CIPP domains.

Course aims and objectives	- general in focus – general-English and terminological knowledge
	- little focus on ESP and less consideration of TE
	- courses separate professional knowledge and English skills
	- aims and objectives don't meet needs and expectations (English communication and use in GE or in TE)
Content & materials	- little tourism-related content in GE courses
	- Few opportunities for practice and communication using English in the Specialty courses.
	- no greater opportunities for skills focus, especially in Specialty courses.
	- materials don't help much to develop students' proficiency in TE.
	- materials and tasks are less engaging, and they are often irrelevant to communication in daily tourism.
Course Conduct Teaching/learning	- teacher-led classes (no various teaching techniques such as group/pair work or discussions, etc.)
	- the teaching methodology used doesn't help much to improve language skills.
	- grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation focus in the teaching/learning of GE courses
	- focus on vocabulary and lists of terms in the teaching/learning in specialty courses
	- little focus on communication in the teaching/learning of content in all courses.
	- no skills focus in the teaching/learning process
	- less chance for language use
	- less technology use in the delivery of courses
Assessment & student performance	- no skills focus in the course assessment
	- very few opportunities for assessing communicative interaction either in GE and or TE in all courses
	- traditional assessment techniques such as objective tests and quizzes multiple-choice, True/False, etc.)
	* grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation-focused tests and quizzes in GE courses
	* terminological knowledge-based tests (mostly objective in nature) in the Specialty courses

To sum, the evaluation-related results were analyzed under the CIPP's major categories and their four minor domains (i.e., 'aims and objectives', 'contents and materials', 'conduct/teaching-learning process', and 'assessment and student performance'). The needs-based results, however, were analyzed under Nation and Macalister's (2010) syllabus design criteria: 'goals', 'content and sequencing', 'format and presentation', and 'monitoring and assessment'.

4. Results

Due to the huge amount of data collected from the interviews with 42 participants from different groups, the researchers thought it would be more appropriate and reader-friendly to present the findings in terms of what can be concluded from the participants' responses as regards the two research questions. Hence, this section deals with drawing conclusions that are tabulated under the CIPP domains and Nation and Macalister's (2010) syllabus-based criteria to answer the first and the second question, respectively.

4.1. Perceptions of effectiveness within the CIPP domains

The TE training provided by the English language program offered at the Tourism Department of MU seemed less effective and relatively insufficient to respond to the graduates' needs and expectations as regards English language use in Tourism communication. This is presented in the participants' views of the program in relation to the CIPP evaluation stages (i.e., Context, Input, Process, Product) and its four definite domains; namely, aims and objectives, content and materials, conduct/teaching-learning process, and assessment and student performance. Such results can be summed up in relation to each CIPP domain in Table 3.

4.2. Perceptions of TE syllabus needs

This part reports the findings of the second research question. Simply put, the participants' perceptions in an answer to this question are presented with reference to Nation and Macalister's (2010) syllabus design criteria: 'goals', 'content and sequencing', 'format and presentation', and 'monitoring and assessment'.

In general, all of the participants had positive perceptions towards having a special syllabus that focuses on tourism communication. These perceptions made them deeply responsive to give their suggestions in relation to what the syllabus should look like in terms of the above-mentioned criteria.

4.2.1. Goals

The participants had similar views in relation to the main goals of the syllabus. Although they made many suggestions, the majority highly pinpointed a number of goals which can be addressed as the most commonly noted in their responses. Table 4 gives a simple review of these recommendations under this criterion.

4.2.2. Content and sequencing

This section gives way to the participants' suggestions as to what the intended TE syllabus should include and how it should be sequenced. Their views and recommendations were almost similar, and there seemed to be an overall agreement on some recommendations which are addressed and summed up in Table 5.

Table 4

The most commonly noted recommendations as regards the syllabus goals.

No	The syllabus should:
1	address students' needs and reflect local tourism and culture.
2	focus on improving students' English language abilities in Tourism communication and on preparing them for future employment.
3	reflect what is done through language in the tourism field.
4	enable students and graduates to use TE confidently in Tourism communication.
5	develop students' TE proficiency so that they can do better at their study and get a future job easily.

Table 5

Participants' recommendations as regards the syllabus content.

No	The syllabus content is expected to:
1	provide ample opportunity for practice and include materials, activities, and tasks, which can raise students' interests and develop their language communicative skills to perform study and work functions.
2	give way to communication in tourism, with a priority given to speaking followed by vocabulary use, listening, reading, and task-based writing. In other words, give greater attention to oral and communicative skills and seek to develop them.
3	differ from that offered in the GE courses and the way it was taught (interdisciplinary to include similar topics that were often taken as part of the curriculum's Specialty courses).
4	be a source of encouragement to students as it addresses their interests, needs and language level, and seek to develop their language abilities to be good TE users.
5	address study functions (summarizing, reporting, making oral presentations, doing projects, solving problems or tasks, acting out real-life tourism roles, expressing self and pre-existing knowledge, describing and practicing with classmates).
6	address work functions, especially those of tour-guiding and working in travel agencies and museums (talking to tourists, describing local culture, planning tours, making trip schedules, tour operating, making brochures, replying phones or e-mails, and making flight or hotel reservations).
7	address students' interests, needs, language difficulties, and the skills required in the tourism field.
8	present the local tourism industry and cultural heritage to others through using the English language.
9	discard the extensive use of grammar rules unless they serve specific communicative functions and particular tourism-related situations.
10	consider topics from the courses taught in the curriculum, be a source of motivation to students, and include various activities and tasks, which facilitate practicing language in different tourism contexts.
11	be sequenced from what seems familiar and interesting to students.
12	address tour-guiding and tour-operating professional activities and functions that a graduate should be able to do in English. * tour-guiding activities: communicate with and attract tourists, respond to visitors' inquiries, talk about heritage and civilizations, organize and lead excursions, escort new-coming visitors, offer sightseeing advice, translate and interpret, and prepare short reports. *tour-operating activities: creating tailor-made tours, organizing travel programs, arranging accommodation, transport and tourist activities, sales and marketing through phone and internet communication, providing services to clients, and explaining trip procedures and destinations.
13	emphasize communication skills with a strong focus on clients, IT skills, management and organizational skills, interpersonal and presentation skills, and team-working and leadership skills.

4.2.3. Format and presentation

This section presents the participants' views as regards how the content of the syllabus should be formatted in terms of lessons, units, and techniques and activities that are going to be used to assist learning. The participants' recommendations pinpointed different issues concerning format and presentation. A brief summary of the most commonly-addressed issues is given in Table 6.

4.2.4. Monitoring and assessment

This section reports the participants' suggestions about what the TE syllabus should consider in relation to class conduct/teaching-learning process, observing learning, testing the results of learning, and giving appropriate feedback.

Table 6

Participants' recommendations as regards format and presentation.

No	The syllabus should:
1	be taught by an experienced English instructor from the English Department.
2	be presented in terms of topics that integrate all language skills, but put more focus on communicative and oral skills.
3	give less attention to teaching grammar rules as they are useless to develop communication skills and facilitate mutual intelligibility between language users in the tourism field.
4	be presented in terms of units, each of which includes an engaging tourism topic which contains a set of materials and activities that increase fluency and facilitate both reception and production in tourism.
5	not be too much in terms of content presentation as this would help prevent students' boredom and allow sufficient time for learning.
6	match students' needs and the way they want to learn and be taught (e.g., through discussions, pair/group work, using audio-visual aids, observations, presentations, practicing and doing assignments or projects with others).
7	disregard grammar as a way to present content in favor of a skills-based syllabus that integrates motivating topics and tourism situations, and addresses the most urgent communicative functions practiced in Tourism workplaces.
8	presented to allow sufficient time for learning and teaching content (have a balance between the amount of content and time specified for learning).
9	be motivating in its layout to include videos, pictures, figures, schedules, and maps, all of which represent real-life local tourism.

Table 7
Participants' recommendations as regards monitoring and assessment.

No	The syllabus should:
1	make use of technology in the teaching/learning process to motivate students and facilitate their learning and practice.
2	allocate sufficient time for learning so that students can learn and then be assessed better.
3	include suitable teaching and assessment techniques from the two course types (GE and Specialty courses) to better assess and check students' progress in terms of language ability and knowledge (e.g., be away from a textbook that teaches only grammar and vocabulary lists just as in the GE courses and terminology knowledge as in the specialty courses).
4	teach content through a textbook that is enriched with other resources and supplementary materials that serve the purpose of teaching Tourism communication.
5	use various teaching techniques and assessment tools that are realistic to match students' interests and demonstrate their actual language level and communicative performance.
6	give ways to assessment tools that continuously check performance and progress such as quizzes, speaking tests, self-assessment checks, projects, presentations, assignments, progress tests and whole-semester work.
7	emphasize giving feedback on students' learning.
8	avoid using only one pattern in questions (e.g., objective Multiple choice or T/F statements) when assessing, but encourage different question types which could better assess knowledge, ability and skills, especially communicative and functional skills.
9	Draw on practical teaching methods and assessment tools that help address students' learning needs and demonstrate their actual language performance in Tourism communication.
10	have communication skills as the sole focus of both teaching and assessment.
11	teach and assess students based on some useful techniques such as cooperative projects and task-based writing, outdoor activities, skill-based tests, progress tests and quizzes, presentations, and individual performance over tasks.
12	integrate technology as a way to vary the way content is taught and learned.
13	benefit from technology to allow students to take part in the learning process and make adaptation to the syllabus (e.g., bring new themes or activities, make presentations, etc.) so that it might be enhanced for better use in future.

The participants were responsive in their comments on monitoring and assessment. Their suggestions seemed to have similar concerns. Table 7 presents the recommendations which were mostly highlighted by all participant groups.

5. Discussion

5.1. Evaluation perspective

The English language program offered at the Tourism Department at MU was perceived as less effective in considering Tourism graduates' needs of using English in the tourism field. This less effectiveness was proved to be due to two reasons as indicated by the findings from all participants. The first reason was the absence of special courses that teach TE as part of the program offered (AlBakrawi, 2013; AlDohon, 2014), whereas the second lied in the less consideration of both the English Department and the Tourism Department of ESP training as an integral part of the graduates' education and job preparation (AlBakrawi, 2013; AlDohon, 2014; AlKhatib, 2005). Similar findings were reported in AlJaafreh's (2008) study which evaluated the three GE courses offered at same university and found that those courses were not helpful enough to develop the students' and graduates' language skills and help them in their studies and future work.

Moreover, the courses within the program were of two mismatched types; namely GE courses and Specialty courses, both of which were taught in two separate departments and put more focus on language structures and vocabulary and on theoretical and terminological knowledge, respectively. Needless to say, they could barely focus on communication as a major part of academic and professional success in the tourism industry. They were also perceived to segregate professional knowledge from language skills. Therefore, efforts in the program were not a real success as far as the graduates' TE needs are concerned.

Interestingly, as noted by the participants, the mismatch between the two course types and the absence of special TE courses were said to leave the graduates' TE needs unmet, the course aims and objectives unachieved, the course content and materials lacking, the teaching/learning process unproductive, the program's design indefensible and ill-executed, and the efforts fruitless. All in all, this made the participants deeply responsive to evaluate the program (i.e., the above-mentioned GE and Specialty courses) as less helpful in developing its graduates' English language proficiency and communicative ability in Tourism communication. As there were not any special TE syllabuses, the respondents attested that the program appeared to lack sufficient content and skills focus, which are urgently demanded to fulfill academic and professional functions in Tourism. GE courses had general content, and Specialty courses had little focus on language development as they were meant to teach theoretical and terminological knowledge.

To conclude, as reported in earlier studies, Jordanian universities were seen as lacking enough special courses that teach ESP, in general (AlJaafreh, 2008; Bataineh & Ayasreh, 2004), or TE, in particular (AlBakrawi, 2013; AlDohon, 2014). The study proves this with TE as there were no ESP courses at MU, which focus on communication in other fields including Tourism. It also attests the findings of other studies (e.g., AlBakrawi, 2013; AlDohon, 2014; AlJaafreh, 2008; AlKhatib, 2005) which revealed Tourism graduates' low proficiency and inability to use English confidently to fulfill study and work purposes. Despite all of this, the participants had positive attitudes towards English as the language of Tourism and Archaeology and as a golden key that opens doors of both academic success and opportunities in the tourism field.

5.2. Needs analysis perspective

Due to the negative views about the program in terms of needs focus, design, and implementation, the participants suggested making improvements to the program in a way that enriches knowledge, develops language, and prepares graduates for Tourism employment. One of the major suggestions provided was offering a TE course syllabus that focuses on the skills and functions needed in Tourism workplaces. They described this course/syllabus as a practical solution for the problem at hand as it seeks to bridge the gap between the GE and the Specialty courses and aim to help Tourism students and graduates with the TE needed in their study and future career. As such, the study sought to give these participants the chance to state their recommendations as to how they needed the TE syllabus to be in terms of goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment.

At first, the study supports the literature reviewed on the status of the English language in the tourism field and how important the language is for Tourism students, graduates and employees to meet their needs and expectations. It goes in harmony with the literature (e.g., AlBakrawi, 2013; AlDohon, 2014; Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011; Coskun, 2009; Meemark, 2002; Prachanant, 2012; Romaya, 2009; Zughoul & Hussein, 1985) in its focus on the oral skills (speaking and listening) as the most urgently demanded skills in the tourism industry. Like the literature, the study strongly encourages students and graduates to master these skills to communicate effectively in English and thus do well in their study and future jobs in the best way possible.

As regards the functions they wanted the TE syllabus to focus on, they suggested those functions which were related to tour guiding and tour operating, which mostly represent providing services through a set of activities. These included talking to and attracting tourists, giving oral descriptions (e.g., to cultures, civilizations, people, food, trips, etc.), responding to visitors' inquiries, phone and email communication, making reservations, managing tours, organizing travel programs and accommodations, as well as explaining trip procedures and destinations.

The main goal of the syllabus was suggested to improve students' and graduates' TE proficiency to communicate confidently in different tourism contexts, and consequently, prepare them for their future jobs. In relation to content and sequencing, the participants recommended offering sufficient content that allows ample opportunity for language practice through various activities and tasks that facilitate communication in Tourism. Simplicity-difficulty was disregarded by the participants in favor of familiarity in sequencing the content of the suggested syllabus. This might be prone to the communicative nature of activities performed in Archaeology and Tourism.

All opinions over format and presentation were deemed to focus on topics, functions, vocabulary in context, and oral skills as the ultimate issues to be included in the syllabus. This indicates their preference of the integrated approach as the best way to present the syllabus content. All participants stressed that content presentation should account for students' learning styles and preferences, and thus meet their needs and expectations of better English language use in the field. Such a result attests what the literature (AlBakrawi, 2013; AlKhatib, 2005; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Prachanant, 2012; Richards, 2001; White, 1988) suggests as regards considering learners' needs, wants, lacks, and their learning styles, as the cornerstone of the syllabus and curriculum design process.

Communicative functions and oral skills constituted the major building blocks of the syllabus presentation. The study this way supports AlBakrawi (2013), AlDohon (2014), and Tangniam (2006) as they recommended addressing communicative functions and oral skills development when designing ESP syllabuses and courses.

All participants of the study seemed determined on cooperative learning through a set of activities such as pair-work, group work and project-based learning. They all considered cooperation as one main necessity to teach, learn and expose students to content in the suggested syllabus; a thing which is usually missed while learning in the GE and Specialty courses offered in the existing curriculum. Finally, they all valued using a variety of techniques to continuously assess the learning of content in terms of both knowledge and communication skills. As such, they recommended assessment tools such as speaking tests, presentations, skills-based tests, cooperative projects, assignments, quizzes, self-assessment check, oral performance check, as well as individual/group performance over tasks.

6. Major conclusions and implications

There was an overall consensus from the participants' part on the less effectiveness of the English language program (i.e., GE and Specialty courses) offered in the Tourism Department. It was agreed that the program did not meet students' and graduates' TE needs, nor did it develop their TE competence or prepare them as communicatively-able workforce. This urged all involved to suggest improving the program. Such improvement-driven consensus is indicated by the stakeholders' total positive attitudes towards offering and designing a new TE syllabus as a way to improve the curriculum in the addressed university, provided that this syllabus would enrich students' both professional knowledge and English skills training.

Perhaps I can say my needs were met when we talk about knowledge, but as regards skills and communication, I should say no, my needs were not met. If they had been, I mean, if I were good at English communication skills, I would not be without a job until now.

(Graduate C, p. 19, Lines 311–313)

I'm not the one who judges the whole program as effective or ineffective, but what I see from the graduates' level makes every employer ask what was wrong with the curriculum and the courses offered. You know, tourism is a communication-based industry, and communication is mostly run in English.

(Employer D, p. 262, Lines 457–460)

The separation of professional/theoretical knowledge from English language skills was quite noticeable; it was resulted from separating GE courses from the Specialty courses, as both were taught by two different departments. Put simply, the little cooperation between the English and Tourism departments led to the segregation of courses and consequently formed this separation. As such, all stakeholders stressed the need for interdisciplinarity between all courses offered (i.e., GE and Specialty courses), believing that this would make the departmental cooperation even stronger. Following this, it is suggested that the missions of both departments as regards developing students' TE competence and their job preparation be reviewed.

> I don't think the aims and objectives are really in match with the students' and graduates' needs of Tourism English. Developing students' skills in Tourism-English should be a must for these courses.
>
> (Tourism Instructor A, p.4, Lines 57–59)

The study revealed five gaps, all of which are related to each other: i) gap between the students and graduates' TE needs and expectations and the aims/objectives of the courses offered within the program, ii) gap between the students and graduates' positive attitudes towards English as the language of the tourism field and their study and future job expectations, iii) gap between what is needed and what is actually done as related to TE in the university context, iv) gap between the Tourism graduates' English proficiency and the employers' expectations, and v) gap/lack of communication between the tourism industry and education institutions. With the last gap/lack, it becomes difficult to provide practical and natural experience and practice space for graduates, regardless of the kind of teaching facilities, the environment or the course contents and supporting resources. Therefore, more direct and regular interaction with the tourism field is greatly required to understand graduates' and employees' needs, and thus provide a practical atmosphere for future development of TE teaching in the university context and other tourism education institutions in the country or worldwide.

It can be concluded that the study; although thin on methodology and local in focus, represents a problem with ESP that different related stakeholders anywhere, including those rarely-mentioned (Tourism graduates and employers) might be the best who could explain it and give a detailed description of what an ESP course syllabus should look like. It is implicated that the results of such research would be of great value as it will ring a warning bell to a real problem that directly needs to be considered by all decision-makers involved in improving the educational process in the ESP world, in general, and in Jordan or in the addressed university, in particular. It is hoped that the study's findings and suggestions would be useful for the program coordinators in making the needed improvements to the program offered in similar contexts inside and outside Jordan, believing that improvement comes from total participation and cooperation of all involved.

7. Directions for further research

This study is limited in its focus on the stakeholders' perceptions as regards the effectiveness of the English language program offered at MU University and on their improvement-based suggestions once the program is proved ineffective in meeting TE needs. Similar local studies are strongly encouraged either in TE or in ESP, in general, in the addressed university or other universities to identify ESP needs and adopt improvement-based actions or decisions through which needs can be met, goals achieved, expectations reached, and consequently study, work, and service level developed. It is also suggested that further research should investigate needs and attitudes towards the English language as used in different academic and professional contexts, report language and learning/teaching problems and difficulties, evaluate curricula and syllabuses from different viewpoints and multiple data sources, and innovate practical solutions accordingly (i.e. syllabus design, materials selection or adaptation, etc.) as much as possible.

Further research might also take the findings of this study with its stages (evaluation and needs analysis) as a blueprint to plan and implement the suggested syllabus in terms goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment. Consequently, materials can be appropriately selected, sequenced, presented, taught/learned, and assessed once implemented in the Tourism Department at MU University or in any other local universities in the country. Perceptions over the design, implementation and evaluation of the syllabus can also be addressed by then through a set of research techniques which include, in addition to those used in the study, observation, checklists, focus groups, teachers and students' logs and reflections from different experts in education and ESP, including syllabus designers, material writers, or evaluators.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2019.02.005.

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