END OF COURSE EVALUATION AMONG FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS OF HANOI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – A SURVEY REPORT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of an English course among first-year students at Hanoi Medical University (HMU) through an end-of-course survey. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a self-reported structured questionnaire, with a sample of 429 first-year students voluntarily participating. The evaluation focused on course objectives, teaching content, organization, and outcomes. Results indicated that students generally perceived the course positively, with strong satisfaction regarding lecturers' professionalism, teaching methods, and communication skills. Additionally, the course atmosphere, facilities, and distribution of learning materials were well received. Most students agreed that the course met their language needs and contributed to their knowledge improvement. These findings highlight the strengths of the current English curriculum while identifying areas for further enhancement.

Keywords: End of course evaluation, Hanoi Medical University, Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

End-of-course evaluation is an essential tool in higher education, providing valuable feedback on course effectiveness, teaching quality, and student learning experiences. [1]These evaluations help institutions assess the strengths and weaknesses of a course, ensuring continuous improvement in curriculum design, instructional methods, and overall student engagement. By systematically collecting student feedback, educators can make data-driven decisions to enhance learning outcomes and better align courses with academic and professional requirements.

In medical education, English proficiency plays a crucial role in professional success, as medical literature, research, and international collaboration primarily rely on English. Recognizing this necessity, Hanoi Medical University (HMU) offers English courses to first-year students to equip them with essential language skills for their academic and future professional careers. However, the effectiveness of these courses needs to be evaluated regularly to ensure they meet students' needs and expectations.

This study aims to assess the end-of-course evaluation among first-year students at HMU, focusing on key aspects such as course objectives, teaching content, organization, and overall impact on students' language skills. The findings of this research will provide insights into students' perceptions, helping educators and administrators refine course content and instructional strategies for future improvements.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Definition of End-of-Course Evaluations

End-of-course evaluations are a widely used method for assessing the effectiveness of educational programs. They serve three main purposes: 1) enhancing future course delivery,

2) offering students an opportunity to give feedback to academic administrators on current performance, and 3) providing valuable insights to future students about a particular course and instructor.[2]

End-of-Course Evaluations in Language Education

Language courses, especially English for Specific Purposes (ESP), require tailored evaluation processes to determine their effectiveness in meeting students' academic and professional needs. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) describe ESP as a learner-centered approach that prioritizes students' specific linguistic requirements. [3]Given the increasing role of English in medical education and research, it is crucial to assess whether English courses in medical universities provide students with the necessary language skills to succeed in their academic and future professional careers. Research on ESP course evaluation emphasizes the importance of assessing multiple aspects, including course objectives, teaching materials, instructor effectiveness, and students' perceived learning outcomes. Brown (2017) argues that course evaluations should go beyond measuring student satisfaction to evaluate learning gains and the practical application of acquired knowledge in real-world settings.[4]

End-of-Course Evaluations in Vietnamese Higher Education

In Vietnam, course evaluations have gained increasing attention as universities strive to improve their educational programs. Studies on Vietnamese higher education indicate that while student feedback is commonly collected, its impact on curriculum development varies. [5]A study by Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao (2017) found that English lecturers have attempted to implement active learning activities in ESP classes; however, their efforts have not been fully effective in meeting students' academic and occupational needs. [6]This highlights the need for continuous course evaluation to ensure alignment with students' needs and institutional goals. Given these insights, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of research by assessing the effectiveness of an English course at Hanoi Medical University. By analyzing student perceptions, course structure, and learning outcomes, the findings will provide valuable recommendations for improving ESP instruction in Vietnamese medical education.

METHODOLOGY
Study Design and Setting

This study conducted a cross-sectional survey using a self-administered structured questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of English courses among first-year students. The survey was conducted in November and December, 2024 at Hanoi Medical University (HMU). The university is located in Northern Vietnam, one of the leading universities in the country, and a leading medical education institution among eight medical universities in Vietnam. HMU, which is an important source of high-quality health workers for the whole country, trains general practitioner and specialist doctors, traditional Vietnamese medicine doctors, nurses, medical technicians and public health workers at both the undergraduate and graduate level. For many years, HMU has been a focal point for creating and disseminating innovations in medical education and medical research.

Participants and Sampling

Subjects surveyed were first-year students in Hanoi Medical University. The sampling frame for students was derived from a list of all first-year students attending the 2024-2025 academic year, except for some students who were allowed not to attend the English subject classes thanks to their standardized international certificates such as IELTS, TOEFL or equivalents.

Measurements

The students' gender, high school location and English certificates were measured by close-ended questions with different response choices and students were asked to choose one option. The evaluation of the English course including 1) the objectives 2) lecturers, 3) the course organization 4) how the course meets students' needs and wants was measured on a 5-point semantic scale (from *strongly disagree to strongly agree*).

Research Ethics and Data Collection

Attending students were informed of the survey objectives and invited to participate in this survey voluntarily. Both male and female students were anonymously surveyed, filling out the survey on their own. Due to the uncontroversial nature of this study, there was no requirement for a formal approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of HMU. In the end, 429 students completed the survey.

Statistical Analysis

Data was entered using EXCEL, and then transferred into STATA 10.0 for analysis. After cleaning the data, descriptive statistics were calculated for analysis.

RESULTS

The table 1 shows 429 participants' characteristics, with a higher proportion of females (64.8%) compared to males (35.2%). In terms of high school location, the largest group of participants (38.7%) attended high school in rural areas, followed by those from downtown areas (35.7%) and big cities (25.6%). This distribution suggests that a significant portion of the sample comes from non-urban backgrounds. Additionally, the vast majority of participants (98.4%) did not possess an English certificate, with only 1.6% reporting certification. This indicates a low level of formal English proficiency certification within the sample.

Table 1: Characteristic of participants

Variables (n=429)		n (%)
Gender	Male	151 (35.2)
	Female	278 (64.8)
High school location	Rural area	166 (38.7)
	Downtown area	153 (35,7)
	Big cities	110 (25.6)
English certificates	Yes	7 (1.6)
	No	421 (98.4)

The figure 1 illustrates the students opinons about the course objectives.The survey results indicate that the majority of respondents positively perceive the course objectives and program alignment. For the statement "Course objectives are clearly defined," 174 participants agreed, and 171 strongly agreed, while only a small fraction (7 strongly disagreed, 8 disagreed, and 69 were neutral) expressed reservations. Similarly, for "The course program is appropriate to objectives," 182 agreed, and 165 strongly agreed, with minimal disagreement (7 strongly disagreed, 7 disagreed, and 68 remained neutral). These findings suggest that the course is well-structured, with clearly defined objectives that align effectively with the program content, as perceived by the majority of respondents.
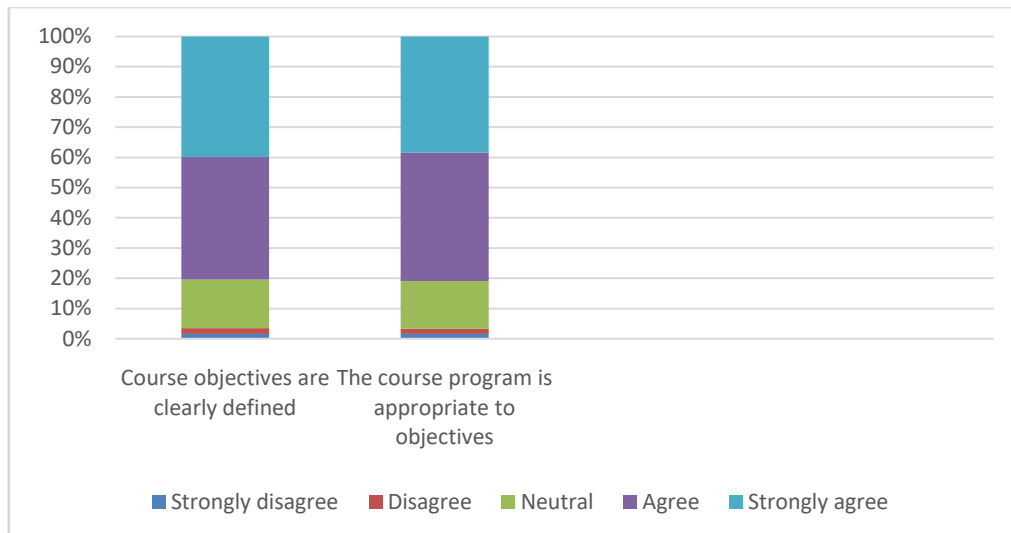
Figure 1: Students' opinions about course objectives

Figure 2 shows students' strong positive perception of the lecturers' professionalism, communication skills, teaching methods, and enthusiasm in addressing student inquiries. For the statement of "Lecturers have high professional qualifications," 158 agreed and 206 strongly agreed, with minimal disagreement (7 strongly disagreed, 3 disagreed, and 55 remained neutral). Similarly, "Lecturers have clear and vivid communication skills" received 161 agreements and 205 strong agreements, showing high satisfaction. The statement "Lecturers have appropriate teaching methods" was supported by 170 agreements and 193 strong agreements, while "Lecturers enthusiastically answer students' questions" garnered 157 agreements and 209 strong agreements. These results indicate that the majority of respondents appreciate the lecturers' expertise, effective communication, and engagement with students.
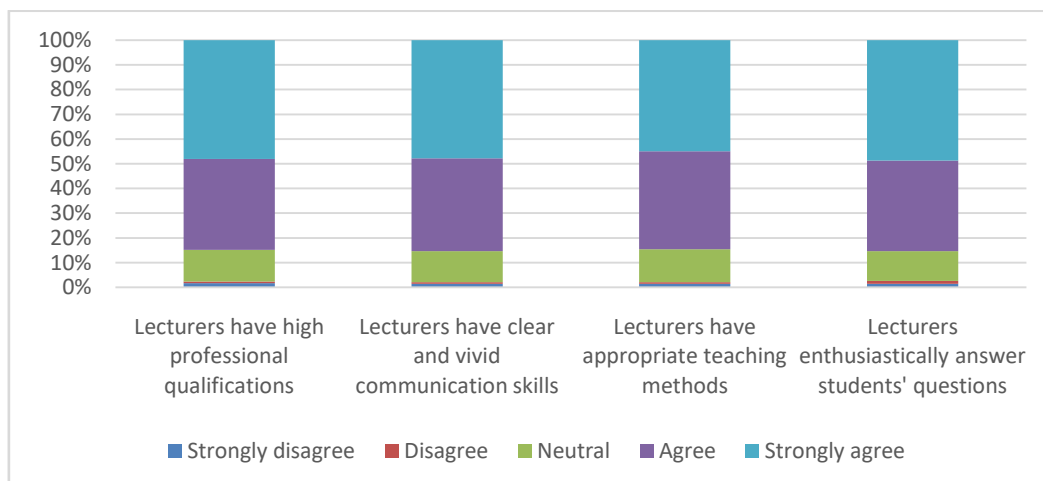

Figure 2: Students' opinions about lecturers

Figure 3 indicate a generally positive perception of the course atmosphere, facilities, and learning material distribution. For "The course atmosphere is fun and open," 183 respondents agreed, and 176 strongly agreed, while only a small number (7 strongly disagreed, 4 disagreed, and 59 were neutral) had reservations. Similarly, "Facilities and teaching aids are appropriate and fully equipped" received 173 agreements and 185 strong agreements, with minimal disagreement (6 strongly disagreed, 4 disagreed, and 61 neutral). Lastly, "Learning

materials are distributed promptly and completely" was supported by 167 agreements and 193 strong agreements, showing a high level of satisfaction. These findings suggest that the course environment, resources, and material distribution are well-received by the majority of participants.
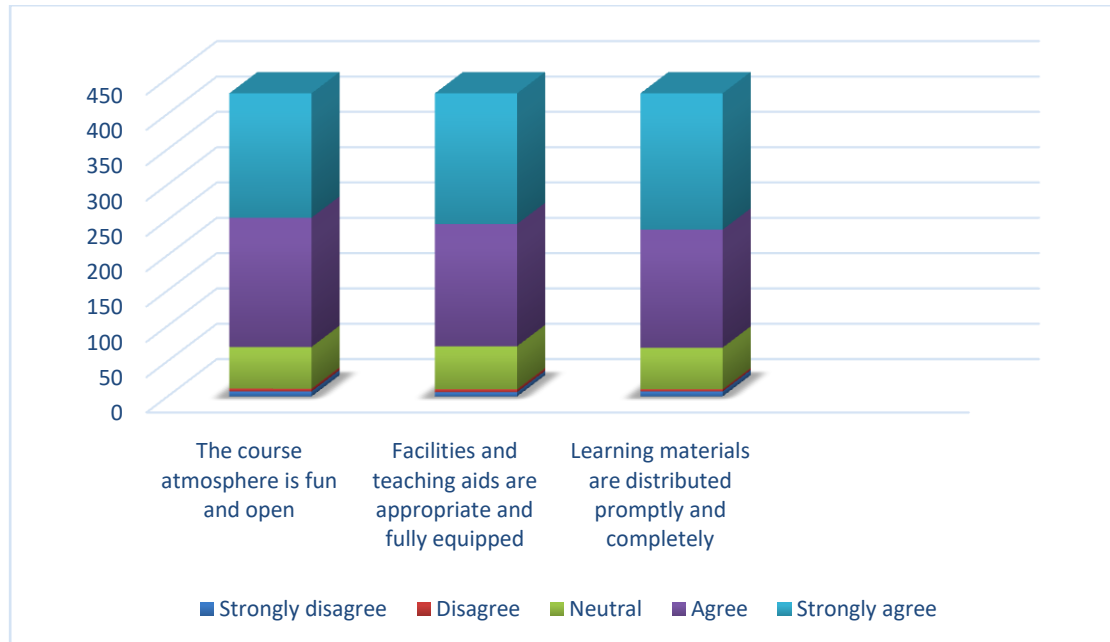

Figure 3: Students' opinions about course organization

Moreover, in figure 4, it can be seen that this course meets well with students needs and wants. The survey results indicate a generally positive perception of the course's effectiveness in meeting language needs and providing new knowledge. For the statement "The course meets your language needs," 186 participants agreed, and 157 strongly agreed, while only a small number (7 strongly disagreed, 9 disagreed, and 70 remained neutral) expressed reservations. Similarly, for "You have gained a lot of new knowledge from the course," 175 agreed, and 151 strongly agreed, with minimal disagreement (8 strongly disagreed, 8 disagreed, and 87 were neutral). These results suggest that most participants found the course beneficial in both improving their language skills and expanding their knowledge.
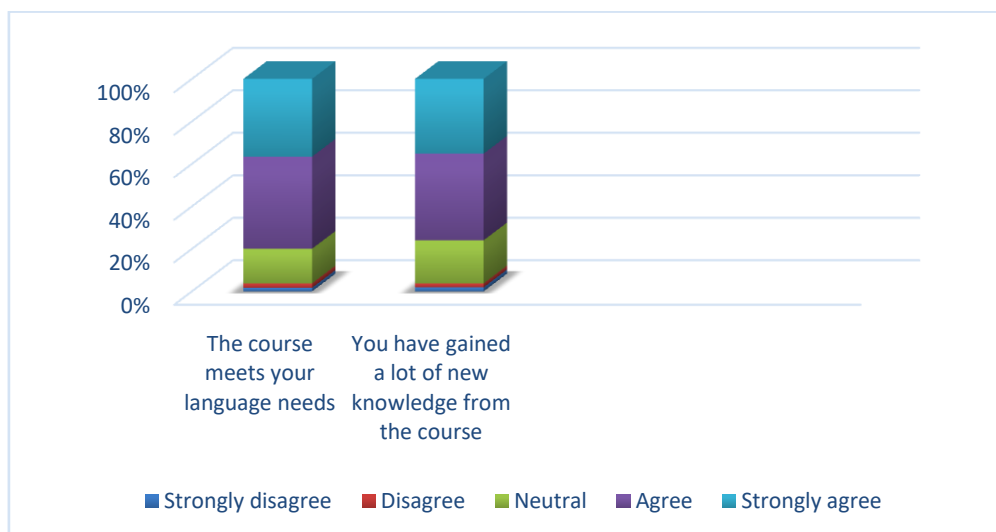

Figure 4: How the course meets students' needs and wants

LIMITATIONS

While this study provides valuable insights into the end-of-course evaluation among first-year students at Hanoi Medical University, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relied on self-reported data collected through a structured questionnaire. While this method provides useful subjective insights, it may be influenced by response bias, as students might provide socially desirable answers or may not fully recall their learning experiences accurately. Future studies could complement survey findings with additional qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of student perceptions. Second, the study was conducted at a single institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other medical universities in Vietnam or other higher education institutions offering English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. A comparative study across multiple universities could provide a broader perspective on the effectiveness of similar courses in different educational settings. Third, the survey was conducted at the end of the course, capturing immediate reflections rather than long-term impacts. It remains unclear how well students retain and apply the language skills gained from the course in their academic and professional careers. Future research could include longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effectiveness of English training in medical education.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a meaningful evaluation of the English course at Hanoi Medical University, offering recommendations for curriculum improvement and enhanced learning experiences for medical students.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides valuable insights into the end-of-course evaluation of the English program among first-year students at Hanoi Medical University. The findings indicate that students generally perceive the course positively, particularly in terms of its clearly defined objectives, the professionalism and teaching effectiveness of lecturers, and the overall organization of the course. Additionally, students reported that the course contributed to their language development and academic preparedness, aligning with the goal of enhancing English proficiency in a medical education setting. However, the study also highlights areas for improvement, including the need for more interactive teaching strategies, increased integration of medical-specific English content, and enhanced digital learning resources. Addressing these aspects will ensure that the course continues to meet students' academic and professional needs effectively. Furthermore, implementing mid-course evaluations and providing more personalized learning support can enhance student engagement and satisfaction.

Despite certain limitations, such as reliance on self-reported data and the study's cross-sectional design, these findings offer practical recommendations for refining English instruction in medical education. Future research should explore longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of English courses on students' professional competencies. By continuously improving course design and instructional methods, Hanoi Medical University can further enhance the learning experience and better equip students with the language skills necessary for their medical careers.

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