

## Abstract

This thesis reports on the investigation into the English language needs of undergraduate civil engineering students at the University of Macau. Though engineering students take two semesters of technical English classes, no needs analysis has been done to determine whether the skills taught in these classes match the English language needs as they are perceived by the students and engineering faculty.

The research adopts both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were analyzed by studying the perceived English needs of teachers, students, graduates and employers. Opinions were gathered on (1) the role of English in students' studies and future careers; (2) the English skills needed in civil engineering studies and the identification of the gap in perceived needs between faculty and students; (3) the adequacy of English training provided to engineering students; and (4) suggestions for the improvement of the English proficiency of the subject students based on the findings of the research data.

Results indicate that English is perceived as important for students' academic studies and their future careers. The initial English skills needed for civil engineering studies are reading and listening comprehension. English skills in the writing and speaking aspects become more significant at the later stage of studies. The two English courses for engineering students are believed to be important and the course components are effective. However, students and faculty perceive that they are inadequate to improve students' English proficiency. More English classes focusing on technical communication and report writing are desirable, especially in the students' final year of studies.