EMPLOYABILITY OF ENGLISH MAJORS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING:INTERNSHIP EVIDENCE FROM A VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT — Assessing graduate employability in English language programs remains challenging, particularly in relation to English language teaching-oriented work. This study examines how internship supervisors construct employability through written evaluations of English majors in educational contexts. Using qualitative content analysis and descriptive statistics, 76 supervisor reports were analyzed within the Appraisal framework, focusing on Attitude resources. Results show that Judgement dominates evaluative discourse, with supervisors emphasizing professional conduct, responsibility, and interpersonal skills over disciplinary knowledge. Appreciation highlights teaching performance, while Affect appears less frequently and mainly reinforces positive positioning. Criticism is typically indirect, framing employability as developmental rather than fixed. The study demonstrates that employability in English language teaching is perceived as the ability to apply knowledge through reliable and adaptive instructional practice. It further suggests integrating practical experience, professional skill development, and opportunities for independent pedagogical decision-making into English language curricula. Internship evaluations is ultimately a reliable source of evidence, offering insight into how workplace readiness is negotiated from the supervisors' perspectives.

Keywords— Appraisal, employability, English majors, evaluative language, teaching-oriented work

I. INTRODUCTION

Graduate employability is a growing priority in higher education, with universities expected to prepare students for long-term participation in rapidly shifting labour markets. The issue is especially pronounced in English language programs, where graduates move into varied sectors that value communication, adaptability, and interpersonal competence. As a result, employability in English-related fields is viewed as a multidimensional construct involving knowledge, professional conduct, workplace readiness, and flexible responsiveness to organizational demands. Rather than simply reflecting job attainment, employability is perceived as a combination of skills, knowledge, and personal attributes that enable graduates to function effectively in changing workplace contexts [1]. Expanding this view, employability results from the interaction of multiple forms of capital, including human, social, and psychological resources [2]. For English-majored graduates, this complexity is especially noticeable, as their language proficiency allows entry into a wide range of sectors, from education to business and services, where adaptability and communication are often prioritized over disciplinary specialization [3], [4].

In Vietnam, English language teaching has become a common employment route for English-majored graduates, even for those without formal pedagogical training [3], [5]. The rapid expansion of private language education has created strong demand for instructional work, allowing many graduates to enter teaching roles immediately. Yet this trend exposes a mismatch between university curricula, which emphasize theoretical linguistics, and workplace expectations for practical teaching skills, adaptability, communication, and professionalism [3], [4]. Consequently, many students struggle when moving from academic study into real teaching contexts. Although internships support the transition from study to practice, prior research has mainly examined student satisfaction, perceived readiness, or employment outcomes [5], [6]. Much less is known about how supervisors construct employability in written internship assessments, despite their direct observation of students' teaching behaviour and workplace interaction. Existing Appraisal studies focus on teacher feedback or academic supervision [14]-[17], leaving internship evaluation discourse and its role in shaping employability expectations largely unexplored.

Internship evaluation reports offer a valuable but under-explored source of evidence in this regard. As authentic records of workplace performance, they capture supervisors' judgments of students' competence, behavior, and adaptability in authentic contexts [7], [8]. Moreover, insights from Appraisal theory suggest that such evaluations are not neutral but are linguistically constructed through patterns of Attitude, including Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation [9]. Although Appraisal has been applied to educational feedback, its use in analyzing internship discourse remains insufficient, particularly in relation to employability construction.

This study addresses these gaps by analyzing how internship supervisors construct the employability of English-majored students through written evaluations. Drawing on Appraisal theory, it examines Attitude

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resources to understand how readiness, professional conduct, instructional competence, and adaptability are evaluated in real teaching contexts. In doing so, the study connects employability research with discourse analysis to illuminate how institutions communicate expectations of workplace competence.

Specifically, it identifies the distribution of Attitude resources and interprets how these patterns reflect perceptions of workplace readiness. By linking employability, internship evidence, and discourse analysis, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how professional competence is evaluated in practice. Accordingly, it is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How are Attitude resources distributed in supervisors' written evaluations?

RQ2. What do these patterns reveal about students' employability in English education?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. EMPLOYABILITY OF ENGLISH-MAJORED GRADUATES

Employability in higher education is understood not only as immediate job placement but also as a graduate's ability to use knowledge, skills, and attitudes within varied and changing workplaces. Employability is defined as a set of achievements (skills, understandings, and personal attributes), whose value depends on both individual capability and socio-economic conditions [1]. Tomlinson's (2017) Graduate Capital Model extends this view, showing that employability is formed by the interaction of human, social, cultural, psychological, and identity capital [2]. Success therefore depends on both disciplinary expertise and interpreting workplace expectations, building networks, and presenting a credible professional identity. For English majors, this multidimensional feature is particularly relevant. Language qualifications rarely lead to a single career path; while some graduates pursue teaching or translation, many of them enter business, tourism, administration, and international service sectors where adaptability and communication skills are more decisive than subject specialization [3], [4]. Yorke (2006) similarly notes that employers often prioritize "graduateness" and soft skills over disciplinary knowledge [1]. In Vietnam, English proficiency is considered a core employability asset embedded within career portfolios [10], as English helps graduates to move beyond specialized training into fields such as public relations or corporate communication [11]. However, Vietnamese English programs remain theory-heavy, while employers appreciate practical experience and workplace adaptability [3], [4]. Moreover, universities can only prepare graduates to continue learning in employment [1]. Thus, enhancing employability requires curriculum reform and stronger integration between higher education and authentic workplace learning.

B. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING EMPLOYMENT OF ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS

The transition of English-majored graduates into educational employment in Vietnam indicates a persistent conflict between language training and the practical demands of teaching-oriented work. Unlike students in English Teaching Pedagogy, those in English Studies or Linguistics are generally trained as language users rather than as pre-service teachers. However, they frequently enter educational settings such as language centers, tutoring services, and other instructional environments because English teaching has become one of the most commonly recruited occupations for all English-major graduates [3], [5]. This pattern reveals that non-pedagogical graduates may possess linguistic competence but lack pedagogical specialization, making them employable generalists rather than professionally prepared educators. Although employment outcomes are relatively positive, as most graduates employed immediately after graduation reported satisfaction with workplace conditions [6], entry into teaching does not necessarily mean willingness for instructional practice. Many non-pedagogical English majors undertake part-time teaching during internships and after graduation precisely because practicum experiences help them determine whether teaching is a feasible career path [5]. Nevertheless, this short transition often produces low self-efficacy, especially when students encounter classroom demands for which university study has offered little preparation. Even teaching-track graduates reported insufficient exposure to difficult classroom situations, including learner behavior, parental interaction, and the practical use of market-based coursebooks [6]. This gap is reinforced by curriculum design. Specifically, theoretical courses continue to dominate English programs, while internships occupy only a marginal share of total credits, limiting authentic professional exposure [4]. As a result, although some universities have introduced service-learning, teaching assistant clubs, and internships in educational institutions, practical preparation remains inconsistent. All things considered, employability in English education relies less on formal specialization and more on how curricula connect linguistic knowledge with practical teaching experience.

C. INTERNSHIP AS EMPLOYABILITY EVIDENCE

Internships have gradually become a reliable source of employability evidence because they generate situated judgments about how students perform under authentic working conditions. Valid internship measurement is essential for evidence-based employability policy, as curriculum reform and institutional decisions require dependable indicators of what students actually achieve in professional contexts [7]. Although internship reports

are usually included within academic assessment procedures, their value lies in documenting workplace-based performance through concrete tasks, graded reflection, and supervisory input rather than merely recording student participation. This assumption is particularly important because internship learning is contextually distinct from ordinary coursework, and applying general job-performance scales risks obscuring how employability develops during temporary placements [7]. A notable strength of internship evidence is that supervisor comments capture dimensions of professional readiness that are difficult to assess in classrooms. Supervisor evaluation helps interns identify mistakes, interpret workplace expectations, and judge whether they are performing effectively within interpersonal environments [8]. Furthermore, supervisors tend to be mentors, commenting not only on task completion but also on teamwork, initiative, and the ability to understand organizational complexity [12]. Such feedback becomes valuable because supervisors notice if interns wait for instructions, adapt socially, or take responsibility with unfamiliar tasks, which drives employability beyond technical skills. More importantly, direct observation and staged supervisor ratings provide an objective view of readiness, while comparisons with self-assessments expose gaps in confidence, competence, and conduct [13]. Internship reports thus serve not just as paperwork, but as concise records of how employability is enacted and judged in real workplaces.

D. APPRAISAL IN EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE

Appraisal theory, developed by Martin and White (2005) within Systemic Functional Linguistics, provides a systematic account of how language encodes evaluation, stance, and interpersonal positioning through three interrelated systems: Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement [9]. Among these dimensions, Attitude has received the greatest attention in educational discourse because it captures how speakers and writers evaluate emotions (Affect), human behavior (Judgment), and products or performances (Appreciation). In feedback contexts, Appraisal resources do not merely express evaluation; they also regulate authority, negotiate interpersonal distance, and shape how learners interpret academic expectations. Prior studies show that Appraisal patterns vary considerably across educational genres and interactional settings. For example, in doctoral supervision, feedback was dominated by Appreciation, mainly negative evaluations of textual adequacy, while Affect appeared only in oral exchanges, indicating that face-to-face interaction fosters more personal evaluative positioning [14]. Meanwhile, in distance education, assessment summaries showed a high proportion of positive Judgment toward students' writing, highlighting feedback's dual role as instructional interaction and rapport building [15]. In oral presentation feedback, Engagement resources were more frequent than Attitude, indicating that lecturers often evaluate indirectly through questions, alignment, and dialogic positioning rather than explicit praise or criticism [16]. Notably, Appraisal choices vary by register, as student reflections are attitude-driven, while academic feedback discussions emphasize engagement and epistemic caution [17]. Previous studies confirm that Appraisal is highly sensitive to genre, medium, and pedagogical purpose. However, despite substantial work on teacher feedback and institutional commentary, evaluative discourse in internship assessment remains under-explored, particularly where supervisor comments may reveal employability through judgments of professional conduct, readiness, and workplace performance.

E. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study's conceptual framework integrates employability theory and Appraisal theory. Employability theory defines workplace readiness as a constellation of professional skills, adaptability, interpersonal competence, and behavioral attributes [1], [2], whereas Appraisal theory elucidates how such qualities are linguistically evaluated through Attitude resources, particularly Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation [9]. On this basis, supervisors' written internship comments are examined as institutional evaluative discourse through which employability is interpreted and negotiated within English language teaching contexts. Using the Appraisal system, the analysis highlights Attitude resources (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation), while also attending to polarity (positive/ negative) and realization (inscribed/ invoked). In this way, evaluative language is examined not merely as feedback, but as linguistic evidence of how supervisors construct employability in English language teaching, particularly in relation to professional conduct, communication skills, instructional competence, adaptability, and pedagogical judgement.

The employability dimensions represented in the framework, including professional conduct, communication, adaptive teaching, instructional competence, and independent pedagogical judgement, were derived from recurring workplace expectations identified in previous employability and internship studies [3]-[8], [10]-[13]. These constructs reflect how English-majored students' workplace readiness is commonly evaluated in educational settings, particularly through responsibility, interactional ability, teaching performance, adaptability, and professional autonomy. In the present study, these dimensions are not fixed variables, but interpretive categories constructed through supervisors' evaluative language. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework.



Figure 1. *The study's conceptual framework*

III. METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used qualitative content analysis, supported by descriptive statistics, to explore how internship supervisors construct the employability of English majors in education settings. Because the data consisted of written evaluative comments, qualitative analysis was central. The comments were interpreted through the Appraisal framework, focusing on Attitude categories such as Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. Descriptive statistics were then applied to calculate the frequency and percentage of coded items, making it possible to identify and compare recurring evaluative patterns across the corpus of supervisor reports.

B. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The study was conducted at a public university in Vietnam offering English-major programs oriented toward language studies and professional communication. Although students were not formally enrolled in teacher education programs, many pursued internship placements in English language teaching environments because educational work represents one of the most accessible employment pathways for English-majored graduates in Vietnam. As part of the internship requirement, students were assigned to educational institutions where they participated in instructional support activities under workplace supervision.

The internship placements were situated in three main types of English language teaching contexts: language centers, schools, and private tutoring institutions. Language centers mainly provided communicative English courses for children, teenagers, and adult learners in flexible classroom settings. School placements included primary and secondary educational environments following structured curricular requirements and formal classroom management procedures. Private tutoring institutions typically involved individualized or small-group instruction emphasizing learner-specific goals such as examination preparation, communication skills, or remedial support. Across these contexts, students commonly worked as teaching assistants, tutors, or classroom support staff, allowing supervisors to evaluate both instructional performance and professional workplace behavior in authentic educational settings.

The internship course was designed to help English-majored students apply academic knowledge in authentic professional environments and develop workplace-related competencies relevant to English language teaching. Expected learning outcomes included professional communication, instructional support skills, classroom adaptability, teamwork, responsibility, and the ability to respond appropriately to workplace expectations. In addition to gaining practical experience, students were expected to demonstrate professional conduct, maintain effective interaction with learners and colleagues, and gradually develop independent instructional awareness in real educational settings.

C. DATA SOURCE

The data source comprised 76 internship evaluation forms completed by workplace supervisors across two academic semesters (semester 3 of 2024–2025, and semester 1 of 2025–2026). These forms were collected from internship placements in English language teaching settings, including language centers (46 forms), primary and secondary schools (8 forms), and private tutoring institutions (22 forms). Across these placements, students mainly worked as teaching assistants, tutors, or classroom support personnel under the supervision of workplace mentors responsible for evaluating instructional performance and professional conduct. The forms assessed multiple dimensions of performance, such as work quality, communication, learning ability, initiative, adaptability, creativity, personal qualities, reliability, punctuality, teamwork, and organizational integration. For this study, only supervisors' written comments were analyzed because they provide direct evaluative language through which workplace competence and employability are constructed. Most supervisors' written comments were produced in Vietnamese. For reporting purposes, all illustrative extracts presented in this article were translated into English by the researchers but still preserving their original evaluative meanings.

D. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The internship evaluation form adopted by the faculty operated as the primary workplace assessment document for the internship course. Supervisors were required to assess students across multiple performance dimensions - work quality, communication, punctuality, responsibility, initiative, adaptability, teamwork, and overall professional conduct - and to supplement these ratings with open-ended written comments outlining students'

strengths, limitations, and workplace readiness. These written evaluative comments formed the principal dataset for the present study, as they provided authentic workplace-based judgements of employability within English language teaching contexts. Because the evaluation form emphasized workplace behavior and professional performance categories, it also shaped the types of evaluative meanings supervisors were likely to foreground in their written comments.

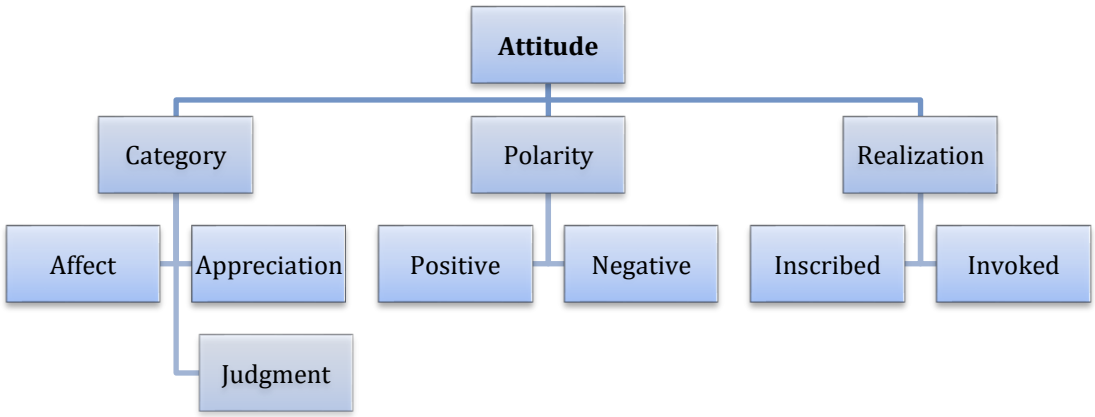


Figure 2. *The analytical framework of Attitude coding in this study*

To analyze the evaluative language within these comments, the study employed an analytic coding framework derived from the Appraisal system, focusing on three coding dimensions: Attitude type, polarity, and realization. Attitude type classified each evaluative unit as Affect, Judgement, or Appreciation; polarity identified whether the evaluation was positive or negative; and realization distinguished between inscribed meanings expressed explicitly and invoked meanings inferred contextually. Figure 2 presents the coding dimensions in this study.

To improve traceability and analytical transparency, each supervisor comment was assigned an anonymized extract code indicating the placement type and extract number. For example, LC referred to language centers, SC to school contexts, and PT to private tutoring placements. To clarify how the coding framework was applied, an example table is provided below. It demonstrates how evaluative expressions were segmented and assigned to Appraisal categories, then interpreted in relation to employability. Each extract was coded for Attitude type, polarity, and realization, and linked to the employability meaning in the supervisor's comment. This process ensured transparency and illustrated how linguistic choices were translated into indicators of workplace competence and readiness.

Table 1. *Example coding table*

Code	Extract	Attitude	Polarity	Realization
LC04	*"Consistently completes teaching tasks responsibly"*	Judgement	Positive	Inscribed
PT09	*"Adjusts explanations flexibly according to learner needs"*	Judgement/ Appreciation	Positive	Invoked
SC02	*"Lesson organization is clear and appropriate for learners"*	Appreciation	Positive	Inscribed

The coding framework and example coding procedures were used consistently throughout the analysis to support analytical transparency and reduce interpretive ambiguity.

E. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection was conducted in an organized sequence to ensure both relevance and ethical integrity. First, 76 internship evaluation forms were retrieved from the faculty archive after institutional approval had been obtained for academic research use. All personal identifiers, including student names, internship locations, and supervisor-specific references, were removed before analysis to protect confidentiality. Only evaluation forms from English language teaching placements were selected, including language centers, schools, and tutoring institutions where students worked mainly as teaching assistants or tutors. Supervisors' written comments were subsequently extracted and converted into a text corpus, as these comments provide authentic evaluative discourse reflecting workplace-based judgments of student performance and professional willingness.

Data analysis was carried out in five stages. First, all comments were read repeatedly to achieve familiarity with evaluative patterns. Second, each evaluative clause or phrase was segmented as one coding unit; for example, *"enthusiastic"* and *"communicates well"* were treated separately when occurring in the same sentence. Third, each unit was coded according to Attitude type (Affect, Judgement, Appreciation), polarity (positive or negative), and realization (inscribed or invoked). As the evaluation comments were originally written in Vietnamese, coding was conducted on the source texts to retain contextual and evaluative nuance. English translations were produced afterward, with care taken to preserve the interpersonal and evaluative force required for Appraisal analysis. Fourth, frequency counts and percentages were calculated to identify dominant evaluative patterns. Finally, these patterns were interpreted in relation to employability dimensions. To enhance dependability and coding consistency, both researchers independently coded the original Vietnamese corpus using the same analytic framework and coding criteria. Later, they compared the coding results, discussed discrepancies, and refined category assignments until consensus was reached. This procedure strengthened coding consistency and reduced subjective bias in the analysis of evaluative language.

F. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Multiple procedures were implemented to enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis. Credibility was reinforced through iterative close reading and systematic coding guided by clearly specified Appraisal categories and coding dimensions, undertaken on the original Vietnamese comments to preserve contextual and evaluative precision. Dependability was supported through researcher triangulation: both researchers independently coded the dataset, compared coding decisions, and resolved disagreements through sustained discussion, thereby improving consistency and reducing interpretive bias. Confirmability was strengthened by maintaining a transparent coding procedure linking evaluative expressions to Attitude categories, polarity, realization, and employability interpretations. Representative extracts were retained throughout the analytic process, and example coding tables and illustrative excerpts are included to demonstrate how evaluative meanings were interpreted within the Appraisal framework.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. FINDINGS

Extracts presented in the findings are translated from the original Vietnamese supervisor comments and are identified using anonymized placement codes to ensure confidentiality and analytical traceability.

1. DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDE CATEGORIES

The discourse analysis of 76 written evaluations shows that Judgement was the most frequent Attitude category, indicating that supervisors primarily assessed students through professional conduct, responsibility, and interpersonal behavior rather than through emotional expression or technical output. Most comments highlighted social esteem, especially in relation to dependability, cooperation, and workplace discipline. Common evaluative patterns emphasized professional reliability and interpersonal conduct. For example, one supervisor noted that the student "consistently completes assigned teaching tasks responsibly and cooperates effectively with senior teachers" (LC12), while another described a student as "dependable in managing classroom support activities and punctual in all tutoring sessions" (PT07). A school supervisor similarly commented that the intern "maintains polite and professional communication with both learners and colleagues" (SC03). These evaluations did not merely describe isolated behavior; they consistently positioned employability in terms of trustworthiness and the ability to operate within institutional routines. In several cases, Judgement also extended to decision-making capacity, as shown in *"demonstrates sound judgment when handling routine classroom issues"*, where the lexical choice explicitly linked conduct with emerging professional judgement.

Appreciation occurred less frequently and mainly targeted the quality of teaching-related performance, especially lesson preparation, instructional clarity, and task organization. Supervisors evaluated pedagogical output through expressions such as *"the student prepares lesson materials carefully and organizes classroom activities in a way that supports learner participation"* (LC09), *"the intern presents lesson content logically and explains grammar points clearly for learners at different proficiency levels"* (SC06), and *"the student uses visual materials effectively to explain grammar concepts and maintain learners' attention during class activities"* (LC15). In tutoring contexts, similar wording appeared in comments such as *"the tutor explains difficult English structures in a simple and accessible manner, helping learners feel more confident during lessons"* (PT11). Unlike Judgement, these evaluations focused on the effectiveness of completed work rather than on personal disposition. However, Appreciation often overlapped with employability because clarity, pacing, and material organization were repeatedly considered observable indicators of readiness for instructional work.

Affect was the least frequent category and *appeared* mainly through positive emotional orientation toward learners and workplace participation. Supervisors wrote *"the intern demonstrates strong enthusiasm during*

classroom activities and actively supports learners throughout practice sessions" (LC03), *"the student maintains a positive and cooperative attitude when interacting with colleagues, supervisors, and learners"* (SC04), and *"the intern quickly builds friendly rapport with young learners and encourages them to participate comfortably in classroom activities"* (LC14). In several comments, Affect supported Judgement by reinforcing a positive professional image; for example, *"the student patiently supports weaker learners during speaking activities and encourages them to participate actively in class discussions"* (LC21) simultaneously conveyed emotional disposition and socially valued teaching behavior. Negative Affect did not appear as an independent category. Instead, limitations were softened through qualified constructions attached to otherwise positive comments.

A notable pattern across the corpus was that negative meanings were usually invoked rather than directly inscribed, often introduced through concessive connectors such as *"but"*, *"even though"*, and *"although."* Comments, such as *"the intern shows strong enthusiasm and interacts positively with learners, but lesson pacing occasionally needs to be more controlled during longer activities"* (LC18), *"the student is polite and cooperative in assigned tasks, although greater proactiveness in lesson preparation would further improve performance"* (SC01), and *"he is responsible in completing routine teaching duties, although she sometimes hesitates when responding to unexpected classroom situations"* (LC19), showed that supervisors preferred mitigation when mentioning weaknesses. Whenever concerns were raised, the positive element generally preceded the limitation, suggesting that criticism was linguistically moderated within institutional evaluation practice. Direct negative Judgement, such as explicit labels of inadequacy, was rare across all placement types.

To sum up, Attitude distribution in the written forms is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Table 2. *Dominant Attitude distribution in supervisors' comments*

Attitude category	Relative frequency	Typical examples
Judgement	Highest	responsible, reliable, cooperative, proactive
Appreciation	Moderate	clear lesson preparation, logical presentation
Affect	Lowest	enthusiasm, patience, positive attitude

2. POSITIVE EMPLOYABILITY TRAITS AND IMPLICIT CONCERNS

The supervisors' feedback consistently constructed employability through four positive characteristics: responsibility (the most stable dimension), communication, adaptability, and learner support. Supervisors repeatedly emphasized punctuality, reliability, and task completion using explicit Judgement resources such as "the intern consistently arrives before scheduled teaching sessions, prepares classroom materials in advance, and completes assigned tutoring responsibilities without requiring additional reminders" (LC10), and "despite evening scheduling pressures, the tutor maintains reliable attendance and submits learner progress reports punctually after each session" (PT13). In several cases, responsibility was associated with initiative rather than routine compliance. One language-center supervisor wrote that the student *"often takes responsibility for class activities without being reminded"*, while another noted that he *"shows initiative in preparing extra teaching materials".* These comments suggested that supervisors valued not only obedience to assigned duties but also willingness to contribute beyond minimum expectations. In school settings, responsibility was similarly tied to procedural discipline, for example in the comment *"monitors homework completion rigorously and fairly".*

Communication was a second major employability trait, especially in teaching contexts where clarity of instruction directly affected learner engagement. Supervisors frequently evaluated this through both Judgement and Appreciation. Students were described as those who "communicates classroom instructions clearly and confidently, making learners follow activities effectively" (LC07), and "demonstrates confident classroom presence and maintains learner attention throughout teaching activities" (SC08). In private tutoring, one supervisor reported that *"during one-on-one tutoring sessions, the student explains difficult grammar and vocabulary concepts in a simple and accessible manner, allowing learners to ask questions comfortably and engage more actively with lesson content" (PT08)*, while another noted that "the tutor quickly establishes a supportive relationship with learners preparing for examinations, creating a relaxed atmosphere that encourages students to communicate openly about their learning difficulties" (PT15). These comments showed that communicative competence was interpreted less as formal linguistic accuracy and more as the ability to make content accessible to different learners. Even comments such as *"provides honest feedback on pronunciation issues"* indicated that communication included interpersonal directness in pedagogical interaction.

Adaptability was strongly underscored where teaching conditions varied. In language centers, supervisors noted that students *"adapt quickly to different teaching tasks"* and *"respond well to changing classroom situations"*. In tutoring contexts, adaptability appeared in more individualized forms, such as *"during tutoring sessions, the*

student adjusts lesson objectives flexibly according to learners' immediate feedback and modifies explanations when students appear confused or overwhelmed" (PT18). School-based comments added another layer, particularly classroom diversity, as reflected in this note *"the intern manages mixed-ability secondary classrooms confidently by adapting activities for both stronger and weaker learners while maintaining overall lesson participation"* (SC09). Such an evaluation suggested that flexibility was a practical indicator of employability because students were expected to adjust immediately to learner differences instead of following fixed teaching routines.

A further positive pattern involved learner support and relational sensitivity, often expressed through Affect combined with Judgement. Supervisors wrote that students *"support learners patiently during practice activities"*, *"build trust with learners and maintain an encouraging tone"*, and *"motivates reluctant learners through patient encouragement".* Particularly in tutoring comments, supportive behavior was closely related to learning outcomes, as in *"boosts shy students' speaking confidence rapidly"*. This showed that emotional responsiveness was recognized when it contributed directly to instructional effectiveness.

In addition to positive traits, concerns were recorded indirectly and usually softened through concessive structures. Several students were described as needing stronger autonomy; for example, one comment noted that *"the student follows teaching instructions carefully and completes assigned tasks effectively, but still requires more independent lesson planning and classroom decision-making"* (SC05). Teaching fluency also remained uneven in some comments. Supervisors noted that *"classroom control is uneven", "lesson transitions are sometimes slow"*, and *"sometimes struggles with very advanced grammar queries"*. In most cases, these limitations followed an initial positive evaluation, as in *"hardworking, though her teaching confidence remains developing"* or *"shows effort, but lesson transitions are sometimes slow"*. This pattern indicated that weaknesses were acknowledged without overturning the generally positive Judgement already established in the comment.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH-MAJOR CURRICULUM

From the written evaluations, supervisors generally valued professional behavior and classroom functionality more strongly than disciplinary knowledge, suggesting that workplace readiness in English education was judged primarily through observable teaching conduct. Across the corpus, comments rarely praised grammatical knowledge, linguistic theory, or academic content directly. Instead, supervisors emphasized how students used their knowledge in immediate instructional situations through expressions such as *"supports learners patiently during practice activities"*,

"the tutor carefully tracks learner progress across multiple tutoring sessions and adjusts subsequent activities according to individual improvement and recurring difficulties" (PT20), and *"the intern communicates smoothly with subject teachers regarding lesson schedules, classroom preparation, and follow-up activities, demonstrating professional coordination within the school environment"* (SC10). In several cases, language competence was mentioned, but it was framed operationally rather than academically, for example *"demonstrates solid language competence in class"* or *"explains complex topics simply in private lessons"*. This pattern indicated that language proficiency was valuable to supervisors when it was evident through teaching action, explanation, and learner interaction rather than as an abstract qualification.

A *second* pattern concerned variation across placement types. In language centers, comments frequently emphasized pacing, rapport, and responsiveness because students worked in dynamic classroom environments with young learners or short instructional cycles. Supervisors described students as those who *"respond well to changing classroom situations"*, *"build friendly rapport with young learners"*, and *"shows confidence when leading small-group work"*. However, these same settings also generated comments about pacing limitations, such as *"enthusiastic, but sometimes needs stronger lesson pacing"* and *"lesson transitions are sometimes slow"*, showing that fast classroom management remained a practical challenge.

In schools, supervisors gave greater attention to institutional discipline and formal instructional alignment. Comments such as *"aligns lessons well with national curriculum standards"*, *"maintains excellent discipline with energetic primary students"*, and *"monitors homework completion rigorously and fairly"* suggested that employability in schools depended not only on teaching delivery but also on the ability to function within established curricular and behavioral systems. Compared with language centers, these evaluations reflected stronger concern for procedural conformity and classroom authority.

Tutoring settings highlighted a different profile, where personalization and flexibility became significant. Supervisors wrote that students *"customizes sessions perfectly for each student's pace"*, *"adjusts goals based on real-time student feedback"*, and *"handles diverse goals from business to travel English"*. Because tutoring involved individualized learning goals, successful performance was evaluated through reaction to learner needs rather than through fixed lesson structures. In this context, adaptability appeared closely linked to employability because tutors were expected to modify content continuously according to learner progress.

A repeated concern across all settings involved incomplete professional independence, particularly in pedagogical judgement. Several comments showed that students performed assigned tasks effectively but still relied on external guidance when situations became less predictable. This problem was obvious in comments such as *"shows promise yet requires more exam strategy depth"*, *"needs deeper reflection on teaching practice"*, *"can follow instructions, but needs more independent planning"*, and *"although the intern completes assigned teaching tasks responsibly and responds positively to feedback, he still depends on close supervisory guidance when making independent instructional decisions during unfamiliar classroom situations"* (LC22). Though supervisors acknowledged strong effort, limitations existed when students had to make autonomous instructional decisions. It means that employability was not restricted to task completion; supervisors also expected increasing self-direction in pedagogical reasoning.

The corpus analysis revealed several curriculum-related evaluative priorities, as shown in Figure 3.

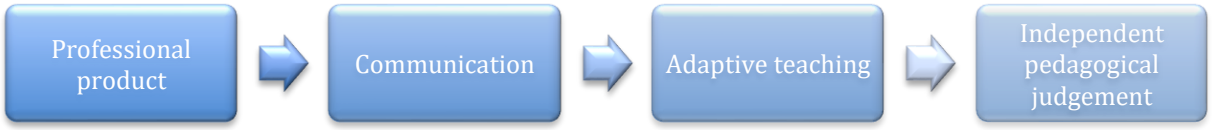


Figure 3. *Curriculum-related evaluative priorities identified in the corpus*

This sequence shows how readiness was built in evaluations. Professional conduct came first, since punctuality, responsibility, and cooperation formed the basis for positive judgment. Next were communication and adaptive teaching, seen as key instructional skills. Independent pedagogical judgment appeared least often and was where limitations were most noted, making it the least developed area in internship evaluations.

B. DISCUSSION

The study demonstrates that supervisors mainly assessed English-major interns through Judgement, focusing on responsibility, reliability, cooperation, and professional conduct. Employability in placements was therefore recognized first through dependable workplace behavior rather than disciplinary expertise. This issue reflects the viewpoints that employability involves applying achievements and personal attributes in varied contexts [1], and that graduate capital includes identity, adaptability, and psychological readiness alongside knowledge [2]. In Vietnam, this supports earlier observations that employers value practical behavior and adaptability more than academic specialization among English graduates [3], [4]. The emphasis on reliability and initiative highlights that employability is increasingly shaped by transferable professional behavior rather than language qualifications[10], [11].

It is important to interpret these evaluative patterns in relation to the internship course outcomes and the structure of the assessment instrument. The course emphasized workplace behavior, communication, adaptability, responsibility, and professional interaction, thereby encouraging supervisors to evaluate students on observable professional conduct rather than abstract disciplinary knowledge. The evaluation form included categories such as punctuality, teamwork, initiative, reliability, and organizational integration, which may have naturally foregrounded Judgement resources in written comments. Accordingly, the dominance of Judgement in the corpus reflects not only workplace realities but also the influence of institutional assessment design in shaping what becomes visible and evaluable as "employability" within internship discourse.

Language competence was rarely judged in abstract terms. Even when supervisors noted English ability, they did so through practical teaching actions such as clear explanation, lesson organization, or effective learner response. This outcome aligns with studies showing that English graduates often enter teaching because their language skills transfer across educational settings, even without pedagogical specialization [5], [6]. Thus, linguistic competence mattered only when transformed into observable instructional performance. For this reason, Appreciation was secondary to Judgement. In other words, teaching output was esteemed, but only after professional conduct was established. The imbalance also reflects the evaluative logic of the internship system. Supervisors were tasked with assessing workplace readiness and professional conduct, meaning instructional knowledge was judged indirectly through observable teaching performance. Disciplinary knowledge therefore surfaced only when enacted in classroom practice. This outcome indicates that the internship framework privileges applied professional functionality over theoretical expertise for English-major students entering teaching roles.

Compared with earlier Appraisal research, this corpus reveals a contextual difference. Doctoral writing feedback relied on Appreciation for textual adequacy [14], whereas here supervisors foregrounded Judgement because workplace assessment required trust in behavior before teaching quality. Positive Judgement in written feedback

previously served encouragement [15]; here it was occupational, tied to punctuality, initiative, and responsibility. Affect was limited, with emotional evaluation appearing mainly when linked to learner support, showing that enthusiasm and patience were valued only when they enhanced teaching effectiveness [16]. The structure of the evaluation form may likewise have limited the evaluative range available to supervisors. Because their comments were produced within an institutional reporting document, they were shaped by administrative expectations, fixed assessment categories, and professional accountability. It helps explain the emphasis on measurable workplace behaviors and moderated criticism rather than more expansive pedagogical reflection or explicit negative evaluation. Accordingly, the discourse analyzed in this study should be viewed not as spontaneous personal opinion but as an institutionally mediated evaluative practice. Moreover, supervisors expressed limitations cautiously, often softening criticism with concessive forms. This mitigated style reflects interpersonal caution [15], [17], balancing critique with positive positioning. In this corpus, such moderation suggests supervisors aimed to highlight developmental needs without undermining students' professional image.

Across placement settings, internships reinforced their role as credible evidence of employability [7], [8], [12], [13]. While expectations varied across language centers, schools, and tutoring environments, students often performed well in tasks but needed stronger independent pedagogical judgement. This shows that internships reveal how employability is negotiated under real workplace demands, especially in the transformation from guided performance to professional autonomy. The findings also show that employability is negotiated not only through workplace interaction but through institutional assessment systems that determine which forms of performance are recognized, rewarded, and documented. The internship evaluation form implicitly constructs employability as behavioral reliability, adaptability, and professional responsiveness, thereby privileging observable conduct over less visible forms of disciplinary or reflective competence. This raises important curriculum considerations regarding whether current internship assessment practices adequately capture the full complexity of professional development in English language teaching contexts.

V. CONCLUSION

This study explored how internship supervisors evaluate the employability of English majors in education through written evaluative language, using the Appraisal framework with a focus on Attitude resources. It clarified both the distribution of evaluations and the perceptions of workplace readiness illustrated in institutional discourse. Findings show that employability is constructed more by professional conduct than disciplinary knowledge. Judgement was the dominant evaluative resource, emphasizing responsibility, reliability, and interpersonal skills as major attributes in teaching contexts. Appreciation addressed instructional performance and Affect reflected positive learner dispositions, but both were secondary to expectations of trustworthiness and adaptability. Additionally, supervisors had a tendency to use mitigated criticism, suggesting employability appears developmental rather than unchanged. Overall, willingness for English language teaching work was defined less by language proficiency than by the ability to apply knowledge in context-responsive instructional practice.

These insights also highlight implications for curriculum design. First, programs should move beyond knowledge transmission to integrate practical teaching experience, professional behavior, and independent pedagogical decision-making. Second, internship discourse should be acknowledged as a valuable source of evidence, revealing how workplace expectations are communicated and negotiated. Pedagogically, English-major programs would benefit from providing earlier and more sustained exposure to teaching-related practice prior to internships. Given supervisors' emphasis on communication, adaptability, learner interaction, and professional responsibility, curricula should integrate experiential components such as microteaching, classroom simulations, peer teaching, and reflective activities. Furthermore, because many supervisors noted limitations in students' independent pedagogical judgement, programs should create opportunities for autonomous lesson planning, responsive decision-making, and justification of instructional choices. Furthermore, internship assessment should extend beyond behavioural indicators by incorporating reflective journals, teaching portfolios, or mentor-guided feedback that more fully capture pedagogical reasoning and professional growth.

The present study, however, is limited by the small corpus, single institutional context, and exclusive reliance on written comments. Future research could expand across institutions, track graduate outcomes longitudinally, or compare supervisor evaluations with student self-perceptions. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that employability is not a static attribute possessed by graduates, but a dynamic construct shaped and continually refined through workplace interactions. Thus, it is vital that higher education engage more closely with the realities of professional practice to better prepare students for the demands of their future careers.

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KHẢ NĂNG ĐÁP ỨNG VIỆC LÀM CỦA SINH VIÊN NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH TRONG LĨNH VỰC GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH: BẰNG CHỨNG THỰC TẬP TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC VIỆT NAM

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TÓM TẮT — Việc đánh giá khả năng đáp ứng việc làm của sinh viên tốt nghiệp các chương trình tiếng Anh vẫn còn nhiều thách thức, đặc biệt đối với các công việc định hướng giảng dạy tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu này khảo sát cách các cán bộ hướng dẫn thực tập kiến tạo khái niệm năng lực đáp ứng việc làm thông qua các bản đánh giá bằng văn bản về sinh viên ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh trong bối cảnh giáo dục. Bằng phương pháp phân tích nội dung định tính và thống kê mô tả, 76 báo cáo của cán bộ hướng dẫn được phân tích trong khung lý thuyết Đánh giá (Appraisal), tập trung vào các nguồn lực Thái độ (Attitude). Kết quả cho thấy Phán xét (Judgement) chiếm ưu thế trong diễn ngôn đánh giá, trong đó cán bộ hướng dẫn nhấn mạnh tác phong nghề nghiệp, tinh thần trách nhiệm và kỹ năng giao tiếp ứng xử hơn là kiến thức chuyên ngành. Thẩm định (Appreciation) làm nổi bật hiệu quả giảng dạy, trong khi Cảm xúc (Affect) xuất hiện ít hơn và chủ yếu củng cố định vị tích cực. Những lời phê bình thường mang tính gián tiếp, qua đó khung hóa khả năng đáp ứng việc làm như một quá trình phát triển chứ không phải một đặc điểm cố định. Nghiên cứu cho thấy rằng, trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy tiếng Anh, khả năng đáp ứng việc làm được nhìn nhận là năng lực vận dụng kiến thức thông qua thực hành giảng dạy đáng tin cậy và linh hoạt. Nghiên cứu cũng đề xuất tích hợp trải nghiệm thực tế, phát triển kỹ năng nghề nghiệp và tạo cơ hội để sinh viên tự đưa ra quyết định sư phạm vào chương trình đào tạo tiếng Anh. Các bản đánh giá thực tập là nguồn bằng chứng đáng tin cậy, giúp hiểu rõ cách thức mức độ sẵn sàng làm việc được thương lượng từ góc nhìn của cán bộ hướng dẫn.

Từ khóa— Đánh giá, khả năng đáp ứng việc làm, sinh viên ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh, ngôn ngữ đánh giá, công việc định hướng giảng dạy



Trần Ngọc Bảo Châu là thạc sĩ Lý luận & Phương của pháp dạy học tiếng Anh. Hiện cô là giảng viên khoa Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Cần Thơ, và là NCS ngành Giáo dục tại Đại học Wollongong, Úc. Lĩnh vực nghiên cứu quan tâm đó là Phương pháp dạy học, ngôn ngữ Anh, Kỹ năng nghề nghiệp của sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh, ...



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