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Institutional Role Overload and TOEIC Instruction in Aviation Training: A Qualitative Case Study at API Banyuwangi

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study explores how instructors at Akademi Penerbang Indonesia (API) Banyuwangi perceive and manage institutional role overload while delivering TOEIC preparation alongside technical and administrative duties. **Methods**: A qualitative case study involved six dual-role instructors. Data comprised semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations of eight TOEIC sessions over four weeks and were analyzed thematically. **Findings**: Five connected themes were identified: role accumulation, instructional deprioritization, survivalist pedagogy, cognitive depletion, and professional identity ambiguity. Across the interview and observation data, dual-role demands were associated with reactive planning, test-focused lessons, shorter feedback, and uncertainty about language-teacher identity. These findings describe perceived and observed constraints rather than causal effects. **Research Implications**: The case supports consideration of protected instructional time, workload redistribution, formal ESP development, and stronger institutional recognition of TOEIC teaching. Implications for operational communication or aviation safety remain prospective because student proficiency and safety outcomes were not measured. **Originality**: The study applies role theory to the organization of ESP teaching in a vocational aviation institution and shows how dual-role arrangements appear to shape pedagogical choices. The single-site findings are analytically transferable but are not intended for statistical generalization.

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INTRODUCTION

Clear English communication is an established safety concern in international aviation. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Language Proficiency Requirements apply to pilots, air traffic controllers, and aeronautical station operators involved in international operations and set Level 4 as the minimum operational level for speaking and understanding English. ICAO Doc 9835 provides implementation guidance for these safety-critical language provisions (ICAO, 2010; Tajima, 2004). These operational requirements should not be treated as equivalent to a general workplace-English test.

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) serves a different assessment purpose. The TOEIC Listening and Reading test measures English-language listening and reading skills for workplace contexts (Educational Testing Service [ETS], n.d.). In the case examined here, API Banyuwangi uses TOEIC as an institutional benchmark within cadet English preparation. The available manuscript evidence does not establish that TOEIC itself is an Indonesian licensing requirement; accordingly, this study treats it as a local educational benchmark rather than a substitute for an ICAO-recognized aviation English proficiency assessment.

This distinction is important for interpreting instructional quality. Aviation English includes domain-specific phraseology, plain-language communication, and operational speaking and listening demands, whereas the TOEIC Listening and Reading test focuses on receptive workplace English (Estival et al., 2016; ICAO, 2010). TOEIC preparation may support general workplace-language development, but it cannot by itself demonstrate operational communicative readiness. The present study therefore examines the organization and practice of TOEIC instruction without claiming to evaluate compliance with ICAO language proficiency requirements.

At API Banyuwangi, the instructors included in this case taught TOEIC while also serving as flight instructors, ground trainers with supervisory duties, or administrative personnel. Teaching was added to their existing responsibilities, creating a relevant setting for examining how institutional role allocation is experienced in day-to-day instruction. Prior ESP and aviation English scholarship has established the importance of needs analysis, domain specificity, and relevant pedagogy (Belcher, 2006; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Estival et al., 2016), but it offers less case-based evidence about how dual-role staffing arrangements constrain instructors' preparation, feedback, and professional identification.

Role theory provides the primary interpretive lens. Role conflict occurs when responsibilities carry incompatible expectations, while role overload describes conditions in which cumulative demands exceed the time or resources available for satisfactory performance (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). In this study, these concepts are used as sensitizing ideas for interpreting participants' accounts and observed practices; their presence and effects are not assumed in advance or tested as causal variables.

Burnout research offers a related but bounded perspective. Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional accomplishment describe dimensions of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Because this qualitative study did not administer a burnout instrument or make a clinical assessment, it does not claim that participants met the full burnout construct. Instead, reported fatigue, shorter feedback, and difficulty switching roles are interpreted more cautiously as signs of cognitive and emotional depletion that may be associated with sustained workload (Li et al., 2025; Magtalas & Eduvala, 2024).

The ESP perspective adds a professional-identity dimension. Effective specialized language teaching requires engagement with both disciplinary practices and language pedagogy (Belcher, 2006; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). Aviation professionals who are asked to teach TOEIC without formal language-teaching preparation may possess strong domain knowledge while remaining uncertain about their legitimacy and methods as language educators. Such identity positioning can influence planning, feedback, and willingness to pursue sustained pedagogical development (Barkhuizen, 2017).

Against this background, the study examines how dual-role instructors experience and enact TOEIC teaching within one bounded vocational aviation institution. Its contribution is not a claim that institutional role overload has been absent from all prior research, but a context-specific account of the relationships among role allocation, time pressure, pedagogical adaptation, and professional identity in this case.

The study addresses three research questions: (1) How do dual-role instructors at API Banyuwangi describe managing their technical or administrative responsibilities alongside TOEIC teaching? (2) What instructional practices and constraints are evident across the interview and classroom-observation data? (3) How do instructors describe their professional identity and institutional support needs as TOEIC instructors?.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative case-study design to examine how dual-role instructors at API Banyuwangi experienced and enacted competing responsibilities. The bounded case focused on meaning, professional experience, and classroom practice rather than population effects or numerical measurement. It supports contextual description and interpretation of relationships among working conditions and instructional decisions, but it does not establish causal effects of workload on teaching or student outcomes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). The case boundary was the TOEIC instructional environment at API Banyuwangi, specifically instruction delivered by personnel who simultaneously held technical, supervisory, operational, or administrative roles. The unit of analysis was the dual-role teaching arrangement as represented in instructors' accounts and observed classroom practice.

Research Site

API Banyuwangi is a state vocational aviation training institution in Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia, operating under the Indonesian Ministry of Transportation. Its curriculum combines flight training, ground instruction, aviation safety, and language preparation. Within the case setting, TOEIC was used as a formal institutional benchmark in cadet English preparation. The site was selected because TOEIC teaching was delivered in a small faculty environment where instructors commonly combined teaching with other institutional responsibilities. The study does not treat TOEIC as equivalent to the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements or claim that TOEIC is, by itself, a national licensing test.

Participants

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to obtain information-rich accounts relevant to the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Inclusion required active involvement in TOEIC teaching during the study and at least one additional institutional role, such as flight instruction, ground training, operations supervision, or administrative work. These criteria aligned participation directly with the phenomenon under investigation. Six instructors participated: three technical flight instructors, two ground trainers with supervisory duties, and one

administrative coordinator who also taught TOEIC. Their institutional teaching experience ranged from three to eleven years, and each had participated in TOEIC preparation for at least two academic cycles. None had formal training in language teaching or ESP; their approaches had developed through experience and self-directed learning. Background information was collected before the interviews. Because role-specific labels could increase identifiability in a small institution, the results use de-identified interview excerpts and aggregate descriptions.
Sample adequacy was considered in relation to the narrow case boundary, the direct relevance of all six participants to the inclusion criteria, coverage of three dual-role categories, and the convergence of interview and observation evidence. The study does not claim universal saturation; rather, the dataset was sufficient to develop a coherent within-case account while preserving the limits of a six-participant, single-site design.

Data Collection

Data were collected over four weeks through semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations. Interviews were the primary source; each lasted 45-70 minutes, took place privately on campus, and was audio-recorded with consent. The study record documents verbatim transcription and de-identification before coding, but it does not specify the calendar dates, interview language, or any translation procedure. The interview guide addressed four areas: (1) daily and weekly responsibilities; (2) management of time and attention across roles, particularly TOEIC teaching; (3) emotional and professional experiences; and (4) identity as a language instructor in an aviation setting. Follow-up prompts sought recent examples and support needs. The semi-structured format allowed elaboration while keeping coverage aligned with the research questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Non-participant observation covered eight complete TOEIC sessions during the same period. The records are identified as OS01-OS08. A common field-note protocol focused on lesson structure, instructor responsiveness, feedback, interruptions, schedule changes, and instructional pace. Notes were written immediately after each session and compared with interview accounts. The OS codes identify records rather than calendar dates, which were not available.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis: familiarization, initial coding, candidate-theme development, theme review, definition and naming, and reporting. Analysis was recursive, with repeated movement between transcripts, field notes, codes, and candidate themes. The analysis was primarily inductive, with role theory, burnout, and ESP professional identity used as sensitizing frameworks. Semantic, data-near codes were applied to relevant transcript passages and observation entries, compared across sources, and grouped into candidate themes. During research-team review, overlapping codes were merged, theme boundaries were checked against supporting and divergent material, and differences were resolved through discussion and return to the data. No inter-rater coefficient was calculated because the analysis was reflexive and interpretive. The five final themes are reported below. The code-to-theme record grouped schedule switching, added duties, and unfinished operational work under structural role overload; reactive preparation and postponed planning under instructional deprioritization; test-format drilling and limited authentic communication under survivalist pedagogy; shorter feedback and role switching under cognitive depletion; and aviation-first identity and limited pedagogical confidence under professional identity ambiguity. Three retained verbatim excerpts were assigned evidence-item codes IE01-IE03. IE codes identify excerpt records rather than participants because reliable participant-excerpt linkage was not retained.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was supported by comparison of interview and observation evidence and by member checking: summaries of preliminary findings were shared with three participants, whose responses informed refinement of the analysis. Transferability is supported through description of the site, participant roles, case boundaries, and procedures, enabling readers to judge relevance to other settings. The findings remain bounded to one institution and are not presented as statistically representative of aviation training institutions. Dependability was supported by records of code and theme development. Confirmability was addressed by linking interpretations to coded interview excerpts, the OS01-OS08 observation set, and the evidence matrix. Source-level comparison was possible, but participant-level quotation provenance could not be reconstructed reliably. Several authors were affiliated with API Banyuwangi, providing contextual access but also creating the possibility of insider assumptions. Reflexive control therefore relied on explicit case boundaries, de-identification, comparison of interview and observation data, return to the source material during theme review, research-team discussion, and participant feedback on preliminary summaries. These procedures reduce, but do not eliminate, interpretive influence.

Ethical Considerations

Participants received information about the study purpose, methods, data use, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained before data collection. Recordings

and transcripts were stored securely with access limited to the research team. Identifying details were removed before analysis, and reporting was aggregated where role labels could reveal individuals. API Banyuwangi granted institutional permission before data collection. The retained study record does not document review by an independent ethics committee or an approval number; accordingly, this manuscript does not claim external ethical clearance.

RESULTS

Semi-structured interviews and the OS01-OS08 classroom observation records were analyzed together. The five themes below summarize recurring patterns within this single case. Three preserved verbatim excerpts are labeled IE01-IE03. These are evidence-item codes rather than participant codes because reliable participant-excerpt linkage was not retained. The narrative presents the main empirical pattern for each theme, while Table 1 provides compact evidence references and interpretive boundaries. Figure 1 shows the relationships between the initial codes and the five themes.

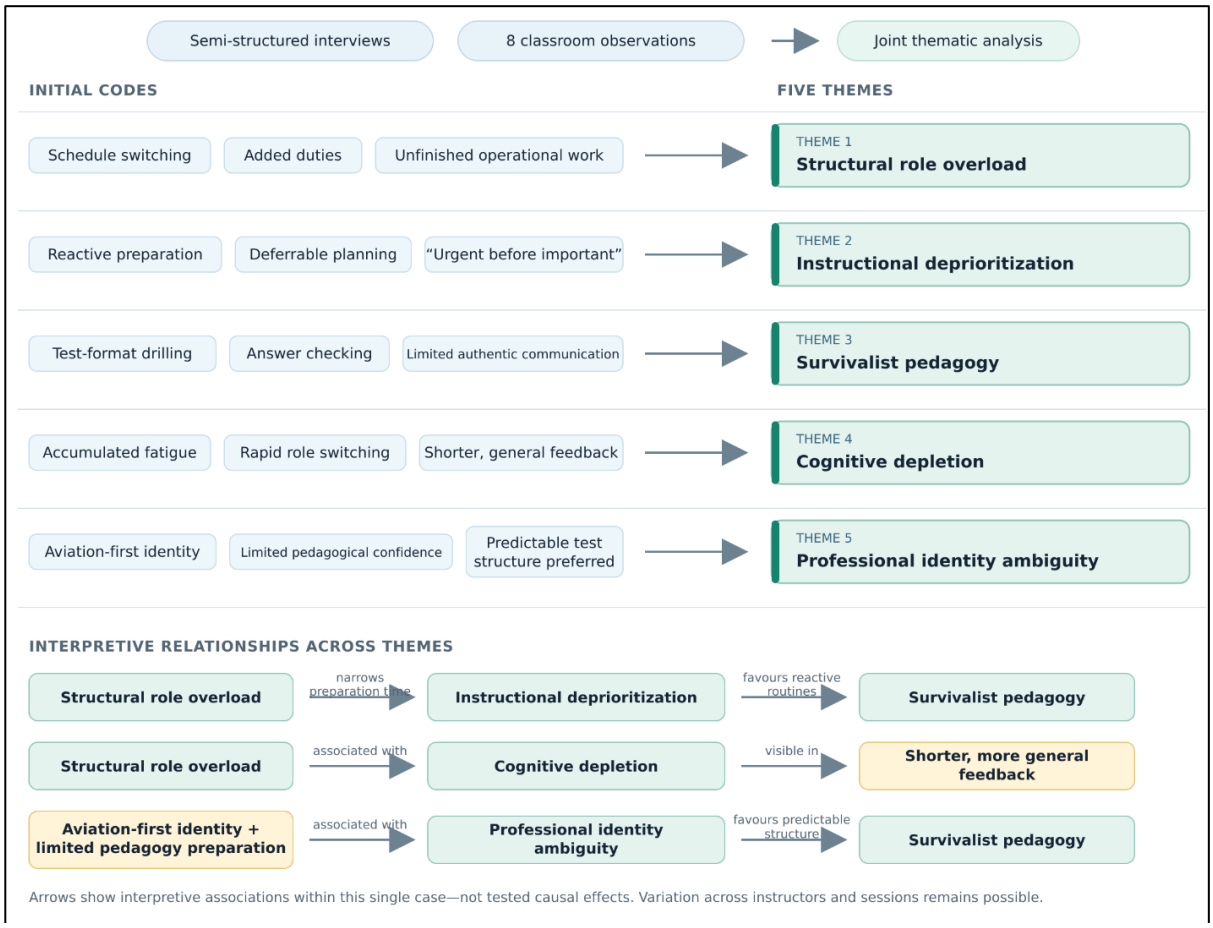


Figure 1. Coding Pathway and Interpretive Relationships Among the Five Themes

Role Accumulation as a Structural Condition

Participants described being assigned TOEIC teaching alongside technical, supervisory, operational, or administrative responsibilities, without a corresponding reduction in their other duties. Their accounts frame role accumulation as an institutional arrangement rather than a set of isolated personal choices. Interview accounts described weekly schedules moving across pre-flight briefings, regulatory documentation, technical instruction, and TOEIC classes. These accounts support an interpretation of structural role overload: multiple role demands competed for the same preparation time and attention. The OS01-OS08 observation set was consistent with these accounts. It contained instances of instructors arriving directly from other duties with technical or administrative materials, as well as lessons interrupted by operational calls or documentation tasks. These records show blurred practical boundaries between roles; they do not establish that every session or instructor was affected to the same extent.

Instructional Deprioritization under Time Pressure

Participants described TOEIC preparation as more flexible than scheduled technical or compliance work. Preparation was often reactive, occurring the night before a class or during short breaks. Within this case, the

pattern is interpreted as instructional deprioritization under competing demands rather than a lack of commitment. Participants associated technical duties with fixed schedules, deadlines, and visible accountability, whereas TOEIC planning was perceived as more deferrable. One preserved excerpt summarized the pattern as "handling the urgent before the important" (IE01). Across the OS01-OS08 set, some TOEIC sessions were recorded as starting late, being shortened, or being adjusted at short notice.

Survivalist Pedagogy

Participants described simplifying TOEIC lessons when time and attention were constrained. Lessons emphasized question types, test format, and time management more often than extended communication practice, vocabulary development, or listening strategy work. The term survivalist pedagogy captures this reported adaptation to workload conditions; it is not used as a judgment of instructor ability. Participants recognized limits in test-focused instruction. One preserved excerpt described it as "teaching students how to read the test, not the situation" (IE02). Across the OS01-OS08 set, practice questions, answer checking, and brief explanations were prominent, while extended listening, aviation scenarios, and other non-test communication activities were less evident.

Cognitive Depletion as an Instructional Constraint

Participants reported mental fatigue accumulating across the week and difficulty maintaining focus after technical or administrative work. The theme cognitive depletion summarizes these accounts. It indicates perceived reduction in available attention and emotional resources; it does not constitute a clinical diagnosis or a complete measure of burnout. Interview summaries and the OS01-OS08 records converged around feedback practices. During periods described as demanding, feedback was sometimes shorter and more general, often limited to correct-or-incorrect judgments with less explanation. This pattern was associated with the observed workload context, but the study cannot isolate workload from other possible influences on feedback. Participants also described the transition between technical instruction and language teaching as mentally demanding. Technical work emphasized procedures and precision, whereas language instruction required sustained attention to learner responses, communication, and nuance. Participants reported that little transition time was available before some TOEIC sessions.

Professional Identity Ambiguity Between Aviation Expert and Language Teacher

Most participants identified primarily as aviation professionals and described TOEIC teaching as secondary to their main professional role. The analysis interprets this positioning as professional identity ambiguity rather than an absence of professional commitment. Participants reported limited confidence in language pedagogy because none had formal language-teaching or ESP preparation. They relied on experience and self-developed methods, which provided practical routines but did not always support confidence in instructional choices. Dual-identity tension refers here to holding a teaching responsibility that is not fully integrated into one's primary professional identity. The data suggest an association between this tension and uncertainty about vocabulary instruction, listening development, and detailed feedback; they do not demonstrate a causal reduction in motivation. Participants linked limited pedagogical confidence with cautious instructional choices, particularly in vocabulary teaching, listening-skill development, and elaborated feedback. These accounts help explain why predictable test-format activities were perceived as easier to manage.

Test-focused teaching offered a clear structure under limited preparation time, whereas open-ended communicative activities were described as less predictable and more demanding to facilitate. One preserved excerpt characterized language teaching as "a job I do, but not a profession I belong to" (IE03). This statement illustrates professional distance within the case, but it is not treated as representative of every participant. The dataset did not include a single-role instructor comparison group, and the retained record did not support participant-level attribution of the three excerpts. Consequently, the results identify convergent within-case patterns while retaining the possibility of variation across instructors and sessions and of alternative explanations.

Table 1. Theme Code Evidence Matrix

Theme	Indicative Codes	Evidence References	Interpretive Boundary
Structural Role Overload	Schedule Switching; Added Duties; Unfinished Operational Work	Interview summaries; OS01-OS08 observation set	The pattern varied across instructors and sessions.
Instructional Deprioritization	Reactive Preparation; Deferrable Planning; Urgent-Before-Important	IE01; OS01-OS08 observation set	Deprioritization is interpreted under competing demands, not as lack of commitment.
Survivalist Pedagogy	Test-Format Drilling; Answer Checking;	IE02; OS01-OS08 observation set	The term describes an adaptation and is not a judgment of instructor ability.

Theme	Indicative Codes	Evidence References	Interpretive Boundary
Cognitive Depletion	Limited Authentic Communication Accumulated Fatigue; Role Switching; Shorter Feedback	Interview summaries; OS01-OS08 observation set	The theme is not a burnout diagnosis or evidence of a causal effect.
Professional Identity Ambiguity	Aviation-First Identity; Limited Pedagogical Confidence; Test-Focused Structure	IE03; interview summaries; OS01-OS08 observation set	IE03 is illustrative and is not treated as representative of all participants.

Note. IE01-IE03 label verbatim excerpts preserved in the analytic record; OS01-OS08 label the eight observation records. IE codes are evidence-item identifiers, not participant codes, because reliable participant-excerpt linkage was not retained. No new quotations were reconstructed.

DISCUSSION

Role Arrangements and Instructional Prioritization

The findings indicate that dual-role work at API Banyuwangi was experienced as a structural arrangement in which technical, supervisory, administrative, and language-teaching responsibilities competed for the same time and attention. Role theory helps explain this pattern without requiring a causal claim: incompatible expectations and cumulative demands can create role conflict and overload when one role is added without corresponding resources or role clarification (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). In this case, participants perceived technical and compliance tasks as less deferrable than TOEIC planning, and observations documented practical spillover between roles.

This interpretation is consistent with evidence that teacher workload is associated with burnout and work performance, while remaining sensitive to design differences across studies (Li et al., 2025; Magtalas & Eduvala, 2024). The current case does not show that workload alone produced every instructional pattern. Curriculum design, student readiness, available materials, teaching experience, and individual preferences were not independently measured and remain plausible alternative influences.

Pedagogical Adaptation and Cognitive Demands

The shift toward practice questions, answer checking, and brief explanations can be understood as a context-responsive adaptation. Teacher cognition research emphasizes that classroom practice is shaped by the interaction between knowledge, beliefs, and working conditions (Borg, 2006). Under limited preparation time, predictable test-format activities offered a manageable structure. However, ESP pedagogy also requires attention to target needs, disciplinary practices, and opportunities to use language meaningfully (Belcher, 2006; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Nation & Macalister, 2010). The tension in this case is therefore between short-term instructional manageability and broader language-learning goals, not between caring and uncaring instructors.

Reported fatigue and shorter feedback resemble aspects of emotional exhaustion, but the study did not measure all three dimensions of burnout and should not label participants as burned out (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Cognitive depletion is used more narrowly to describe participants' accounts of reduced focus, difficult role switching, and less elaborated feedback. The convergence of interviews and observations strengthens this interpretation, while the absence of experimental controls prevents causal attribution.

Professional Identity and Theoretical Contribution

Participants' primary identification as aviation professionals helps explain why TOEIC teaching was sometimes experienced as an additional duty rather than an integrated profession. ESP instructors often work at the boundary between language pedagogy and disciplinary expertise, and professional identity develops through participation, recognition, reflection, and supported learning (Barkhuizen, 2017; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). At API Banyuwangi, strong aviation expertise coexisted with limited formal preparation in language teaching, producing uncertainty about pedagogical decisions rather than a lack of domain commitment.

Comparable studies in aviation training show related but not identical constraints. Demirdöken's (2021) qualitative study of five Aviation English teachers at a Turkish tertiary institution linked low self-efficacy and limited contextual knowledge with gaps in ESP experience and professional development. Interviews with three teachers across Malaysian aviation schools likewise identified excessive workload, limited materials, varied learner proficiency, and a need for Aviation English training and industry collaboration (Mahmood et al., 2023). A later Malaysian study reported that teachers invested substantial effort in learning aviation content while still facing limited resources and institutional support (Mahmood et al., 2025). These comparisons support the relevance of institutional resources and professional development across aviation settings. The API Banyuwangi case differs because its participants entered TOEIC teaching from aviation, supervisory, or administrative roles and reported limited preparation in language pedagogy. The expertise gap can therefore run in either direction:

language teachers may lack aviation knowledge, while aviation specialists may lack language-teaching preparation.

The study's theoretical contribution is a within-case interpretive pathway. Institutional role accumulation was reported alongside reduced preparation time; constrained preparation was associated with reactive prioritization and test-focused routines; sustained role switching was associated with perceived cognitive depletion; and limited recognition or preparation for the language-teaching role was associated with professional identity ambiguity. These relationships organize the case evidence, but they do not form a verified causal sequence or a tested model. Their value lies in identifying propositions that can be examined in future multi-site or mixed-method research.

Practical and Aviation-Relevant Implications

The most directly supported institutional responses are protected preparation time, explicit workload redistribution, formal ESP-oriented professional development, mentoring, and recognition of TOEIC teaching within role descriptions and evaluation systems. Recruiting dedicated ESP personnel may be considered where feasible, but the evidence does not establish that role separation is the only effective solution. Professional development should connect assessment literacy, listening and reading pedagogy, feedback, and relevant aviation contexts while allowing instructors time to plan, observe peers, and reflect (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Aviation safety is a contextual implication rather than an outcome of this study. ICAO's Language Proficiency Requirements concern operational speaking and understanding for specified aviation personnel, whereas TOEIC Listening and Reading assesses receptive workplace-English skills (ETS, n.d.; ICAO, 2010). Because the study did not measure student TOEIC scores, operational communicative competence, communication incidents, or safety indicators, it cannot conclude that the observed practices caused a safety deficit. The relevant implication is prospective: institutions should avoid treating TOEIC performance as evidence of ICAO operational proficiency and should evaluate communicative outcomes directly where those outcomes are part of the training objective (Estival et al., 2016; Tajima, 2004).

Limitations

This study is limited by its single-site case design, six participants, and the absence of a single-role comparison group. The small institutional setting may also increase social-desirability concerns and the risk that role descriptions could identify participants. Although the three preserved excerpts and eight observation records were assigned reporting codes, the retained record did not support reliable participant-excerpt linkage or claim-level mapping to individual observation sessions. Classroom observation may also have influenced instructor behavior. The study did not measure student learning, TOEIC performance, operational communication, or aviation safety outcomes. Future research should examine multiple aviation-training sites, preserve auditable links among participant codes, quotations, claims, and observation-session records, and compare dual-role and language-specialist arrangements. Quantitative workload measures, student proficiency data, and mixed-method or longitudinal designs could test whether the interpretive relationships identified here are associated with instructional quality and communicative outcomes. Further research should also distinguish TOEIC achievement from ICAO-aligned operational language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This single-institution qualitative case study found that six dual-role instructors experienced TOEIC teaching alongside technical, supervisory, operational, or administrative duties as competing for preparation time and attention. Interviews and eight classroom observations were interpreted through five connected themes: structural role overload, instructional deprioritization, survivalist pedagogy, cognitive depletion, and professional identity ambiguity. Within this case, participants reported reactive preparation, fatigue, difficult role switching, and limited confidence in language pedagogy, while observations showed test-focused routines, interruptions, and sometimes shorter feedback. These findings are contextual and interpretive. They do not establish that role overload caused the observed practices or affected students' TOEIC achievement, operational communication, or aviation-safety outcomes. For API Banyuwangi, the findings support consideration of protected preparation time, workload review, ESP-oriented professional development, mentoring, and formal recognition of TOEIC teaching. The relevance of these measures to other aviation-training institutions should be assessed through further multi-site research with auditable source coding and direct measures of learning and communication outcomes.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors reviewed and approved the final version. Role-specific contribution details were not reassigned because the initials in the source statement did not correspond to the listed authors and no verified CRediT record was provided.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Claude (Anthropic) and ChatGPT (OpenAI) were used for limited language editing, revision support, and formatting. The authors remain responsible for the study design, source data, analysis, interpretation, reference verification, and final manuscript.

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