

**A Comparative Study of English CV Writing Skills  
across Different Concentration at LP3I Polytechnic Padang**

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**Abstract**

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LP3I Polytechnic is known for its commitment to guarantee internship and employment opportunities for its students which the process starting in the fifth semester. To address this, ESP courses are offered across concentrations which consist of Computerized Business Management (CBM), Informatics Computer (IC) and Accounting Information System (AIS) to enhance their readiness for employment. One material that this course offered was writing CV. However, differences in English CV writing skills among concentrations indicate an emerging issue since this document is important in applying a job or internship. This study aims to compares these differences to inform improvements in ESP curriculum and pedagogy. This study was done by using qualitative comparative as research method. The data were collected through interview and document analysis. The findings show that accounting students have the best CVs among the concentrations. AIS students demonstrated stronger structure, language use, and design while CBM students have difficulties in CV grammar and organization and IC students are poorly organized CVs with numerous grammatical errors and insufficient reflection of their professional skills. Therefore, this study suggests workshops and giving personalized feedback to be given in order to improve students writing CV skill.

**Kata Kunci:**

*CV, Menulis, ESP,  
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**Abstrak**

Politeknik LP3I dikenal atas komitmennya dalam menjamin kesempatan magang dan kerja bagi mahasiswanya, di mana proses ini dimulai pada semester kelima. Untuk mendukung hal tersebut, mata kuliah English for Specific Purposes (ESP) diberikan di seluruh konsentrasi, yang terdiri dari Komputer Bisnis Manajemen (KBM), Informatika Komputer (IK), dan Sistem Informasi Akuntansi (SIA), guna meningkatkan kesiapan mahasiswa dalam menghadapi dunia kerja. Salah satu materi yang diajarkan dalam mata kuliah ini

adalah penulisan CV. Namun, perbedaan kemampuan menulis CV berbahasa Inggris di antara berbagai konsentrasi menunjukkan adanya isu yang muncul, mengingat dokumen ini sangat penting dalam proses melamar pekerjaan maupun magang. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan perbedaan tersebut guna memberikan masukan bagi pengembangan kurikulum dan pedagogi ESP. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif komparatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan analisis dokumen. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa dari konsentrasi SIA memiliki CV terbaik dibandingkan konsentrasi lainnya. Mahasiswa SIA menunjukkan struktur, penggunaan bahasa, dan desain yang lebih baik, sementara mahasiswa KBM mengalami kesulitan dalam tata bahasa dan organisasi CV, dan mahasiswa IK menunjukkan CV yang tidak terstruktur, mengandung banyak kesalahan tata bahasa, serta kurang merefleksikan keterampilan profesional mereka. Perbedaan ini dikaitkan dengan variasi penekanan pengajaran dalam mata kuliah ESP. Studi ini merekomendasikan Adanya pelatihan dan umpan balik secara personal dalam penulisan CV sangat penting untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam membuat CV.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the modern global job market, the ability to communicate professionally in English has become essential, especially for fresh graduates aiming to enter competitive industries. One key document that serves as a gateway to employment is the Curriculum Vitae (CV). A well-written English CV presents not only a candidate's qualifications and experience but also showcases their communication skills, attention to detail, and professionalism. As companies increasingly seek candidates with global competencies, mastery in CV writing in English is no longer optional, it is vital.

For vocational students, this need is even more urgent. Institutions like LP3I Polytechnic Padang which is guaranteed their students to have job before graduate. this job placement program process begins in the fifth semester. To address this, the curriculum is designed to prepare since the very beginning of the students' journey at Polytechnic LP3I Padang. It also includes their appearance, academic including

soft skill and hard skill. One way that LP3I offers to help student preparation to apply for internships or employment is English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses that aim to provide students with English skills relevant to their major fields. These courses often include modules on writing business emails, preparing job interview responses, crafting English CVs, and writing cover letter.

In fact, LP3I Polytechnic Padang only has one major which is Informatics Management with three concentrations. It is included Computerized Business Management (CBM), Informatics Computer (IC), and Accounting Information System (AIS). During their learning process and after finished the ESP course, it found disparities in student skills in CV although in fact they are all coming from the same major. Therefore, this study wanted to compare this to find out what happened and why this can be happened. There may be inconsistencies in how CV writing is taught or emphasized. Some concentrations might offer more extensive training in CV writing, while others might only provide limited instruction, leading to disparities in student skills.

Furthermore, teaching approaches and resources can vary depending on the instructor or department. For instance, students in CBM may be encouraged to focus on leadership and communication skills in their CVs, while IC students might highlight technical competencies. These differences can affect not only what students write in their CVs, but also how effectively they organize and express their qualifications in English.

Several studies highlight the critical role of CV writing within vocational education, yet few explore how English CV skills vary across academic concentrations. Vu and Le's (2022) study, *"Understanding students' opportunities and challenges in a curriculum vitae writing process: Activity system as an analytical tool,"* examines the CV writing experiences of students, illuminating common obstacles in structure and language during CV development. Moreover, Lestari and Sihombing (2022) further demonstrate that using digital tools like Canva can improve creativity and readiness when vocational students design their CVs, although their focus remains on technical skills and design rather than writing content. This gap underscores the need for research that examines how students

from varied academic backgrounds (e.g., CBM, IC, AIS) perform in English CV writing and the instructional factors contributing to these differences.

Therefore, this study aims to compare the English CV writing skills of students across different concentration at LP3I Polytechnic Padang. By examining actual CVs written by students and analysing their organization, grammar, vocabulary, relevance, and formatting, the study will provide a clearer picture of how prepared students are for job placement. It will also consider how ESP instruction may differ between concentration and how that affects student outcomes.

### ***English for Specific Purpose in Vocational Education***

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) remains a fundamental range of English dialect instruction, especially in professional educate where understudies require job-specific communication abilities. Agreeing to Nunan (2021), ESP instruction must adjust closely with learners' scholarly or word related needs, particularly in settings where English could be a remote dialect and must serve real-world purposes. In polytechnic settings, ESP makes a difference understudies bridge classroom learning with the requests of the work advertise.

In Indonesia, professional colleges such as LP3I Polytechnic Padang utilize ESP to prepare understudies in utilitarian English related to their areas, such as trade, IT, Accounting Information System and bookkeeping. As emphasized by Indriani (2021), ESP programs in professional settings are anticipated to supply understudies with not as it were hypothetical dialect information but too commonsense composing aptitudes, counting formal emails, application letters, and CVs. Be that as it may, the viability of ESP regularly depends on how well it is contextualized for each concentration.

At LP3I Polytechnic Padang ESP is divided into 2, ESP I and ESP. These subjects would be taught in third semester and fourth semester. It proved that LP3I Polytechnic Padang is really supported the student in preparing them to be a professional students based on their areas.

### ***CV Writing***

Writing a Curriculum Vitae (CV) in English is a practical skill that reflects students' readiness for employment. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, this task presents multiple challenges—from grammar and vocabulary to layout and tone. As stated by Sutrisno and Anugerahwati (2021), many Indonesian students struggle with the formal language style and self-promotional tone required in English CVs, particularly when translating from Bahasa Indonesia.

Recent studies show that direct instruction in CV writing leads to significant improvements. Ningsih et al. (2022) found that students who received structured guidance on writing English CVs produced documents that were clearer, more professional, and more aligned with international standards. Their study recommends integrating CV writing into ESP syllabi across all concentrations to ensure equity in preparation.

In another study, Anggraini and Yunita (2020) explored the use of project-based learning in ESP classes focused on CV development. They found that having students create real CVs improved not only their writing skills but also their confidence and job readiness. These findings are particularly relevant to LP3I Polytechnic's fifth-semester job placement program, which requires students to submit English CVs as part of the application process.

In the Indonesian context, Putra (2020) found that polytechnic students often struggle with using appropriate language, organizing content logically, and avoiding literal translation from Bahasa Indonesia. These issues are further exacerbated if ESP instruction does not emphasize job-oriented writing tasks or if students are unfamiliar with the expectations of international employers.

### ***An effective English CV***

According to several scholars and professional communication experts, an effective English CV should meet the following criteria:

a. **Clear and Logical Structure**

A well-organized format is essential. As stated by Bhatia (2020), genre-specific writing, such as CVs, must follow expected conventions like chronological or

functional formats, with clearly labeled sections such as Personal Information, Objective, Education, Experience, and Skills.

b. Appropriate Language and Tone

CVs must use formal, concise, and objective language. According to Hyland (2022), learners in ESP contexts must be trained in using register-appropriate language that reflects professionalism and clarity.

c. Grammatical Accuracy

Language correctness reflects credibility. As noted by Evans & Morrison (2021), frequent grammar and spelling errors reduce the perceived competence of the writer, particularly in employment-related documents.

d. Content Relevance and Specificity

Effective CVs highlight relevant experiences and quantifiable achievements. Brown & Rice (2020) emphasize that modern CVs should focus not only on duties but also on measurable outcomes (e.g., "Increased user engagement by 30%").

e. Visual Clarity and Layout

A professional CV must be visually appealing but not overly designed. Seabrook (2023) recommends simple, clean layouts with consistent font size and spacing to enhance readability and professionalism.

f. Career-Focused Objectives

The inclusion of a clear career objective helps personalize the CV. According to Swales & Feak (2021), this section should briefly align the applicant's goals with the target role.

g. Tailoring to Job Requirements

Experts agree that CVs should be tailored to the specific job or industry. As Tomlinson (2020) notes, generic CVs are less effective than those adapted to match keywords and job expectations.

Therefore, these are the criterion of an effective CV in this research which includes clear and logical structure, appropriate language and tone, grammatical accuracy, content relevance and specificity, visual clarity and layout, career-focused objectives and tailoring to job requirements.

### ***Skill Disparities across concentration***

While ESP programs are often designed for specific fields, the implementation can vary widely across concentrations. A study by Wijayanto and Marlina (2021) revealed that students from business and accounting programs tend to receive more writing-focused instruction compared to students in technical or IT programs. As a result, writing proficiency which is including in professional documents like CVs which tends to be uneven across departments.

This disparity raises concerns in institutions like LP3I Polytechnic, where all students are expected to prepare for real-world job applications. When ESP instruction places unequal emphasis on writing tasks, students from some concentrations even concentrations or may enter the workforce less prepared. According to Rahmawati (2023), there is a need for curriculum alignment to ensure that all vocational students, regardless of their field, are trained in essential writing genres, especially those required in the recruitment process.

### ***Employability and Communication Skills***

Employability is a central concern for vocational education. The World Economic Forum (2023) emphasizes that communication which is particularly in English, is a top employability skill in the digital and global economy. Within this framework, the ability to write a clear and targeted CV is not just a formality; it is a strategic tool for career success.

In Indonesia, studies have increasingly highlighted the role of English in supporting employability. Sari and Dewi (2022) found that vocational students who could articulate their qualifications in English, especially through well-written CVs had a higher chance of being shortlisted for jobs, even in local companies. The study concluded that writing instruction in ESP should be considered a core employability skill rather than an add-on.

Another recent study by Pratama and Indrawati (2021) investigated how English CV writing impacts students' self-perception and confidence in job interviews. Their findings showed that students who practiced writing CVs as part



of their coursework were better able to articulate their experiences verbally and felt more empowered during recruitment activities.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative comparative research design. Based on Cresswell and Poth (2021) Qualitative comparative research design is used to explore similarities and differences across multiple cases or groups by using detailed, context-rich descriptions to understand how and why variations occur. Therefore, this study wanted to explore the differences in English CV writing skills across students from three concentrations are Computerized Business Management, Informatics Computer, and Accounting Information System at LP3I Polytechnic Padang. This approach was chosen to allow in-depth analysis of students' written outputs and to uncover the contextual factors that shape their performance. A total of 30 fourth-semester students (10 from each concentration) were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring participants had completed ESP courses and recently submitted CVs as part of their academic or internship application processes.

The primary data consisted of the students' English CVs and semi-structured interviews. CVs were analysed using a qualitative rubric based on international writing standards, focusing on aspects such as structure, grammar, vocabulary use, and overall professionalism. This document analysis was supported by interviews with two ESP lecturers and selected students from each concentration, aiming to gain insights into their learning experiences, instructional methods, and challenges faced in writing CVs. Interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia for accuracy and then transcribed and translated for analysis. Thematic analysis was used for interview data, while qualitative content analysis was applied to the CVs. These methods allowed the researcher to identify patterns, strengths, and differences in writing skills across the three concentrations.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, several strategies were implemented, including triangulation of data sources, member checking to validate interpretations with participants, and peer debriefing for additional perspective. Ethical considerations were also carefully addressed: participants provided



informed consent, their identities were kept anonymous, and all data were used strictly for academic purposes. This methodology provides a strong foundation for understanding the varying levels of English CV writing proficiency among students from different academic backgrounds and for informing future improvements in ESP instruction within vocational education contexts.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Finding***

Drawing from the results of in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving students at LP3I Polytechnic, several key findings have emerged concerning English CV writing within the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course.

a. Comparing the students' ability in writing CV based on the document

The document is analysed by the CV that being collected at the end of the course. The criterion of an effective CV includes clear and logical structure, appropriate language and tone, grammatical accuracy, content relevance and specificity, visual clarity and layout, career-focused objectives and tailoring to job requirements. Based on the documents, it found that Accounting Information System students had best CV among others. Accounting Information System students tend to have a better understanding of CV structure, often including complete sections such as Objective, Education, Experience, Skills, Achievement and References.

Meanwhile, the use of appropriate language and tone, Students from the Computerized Business Management, Informatics Computer, and Accounting Information System departments varied in their use of appropriate language and tone in English CVs. While some managed to maintain a professional and formal style, many used informal expressions, direct translations from Indonesian, and awkward phrasing that reduced clarity and professionalism. This highlights the need for focused instruction on formal language and tone suitable for professional documents.

In addition, the analysis revealed that grammatical accuracy remains a significant challenge for students across the Computerized Business Management, Informatics Computer, and Accounting Information System departments. Common grammatical errors included incorrect verb tenses, subject-verb agreement issues, misused prepositions, and incomplete sentence structures. For example, many students wrote phrases like “He work in office” or “I am graduated from LP3I”, indicating a lack of understanding of basic English grammar rules. Students from the Informatics Computer department particularly struggled with forming complete and grammatically correct sentences when describing their technical skills or experiences, often listing fragments rather than full sentences. In contrast, students from the Computerized Business Management program showed slightly better grammatical control, likely due to more frequent exposure to English in business-related coursework. However, even in this group, errors were still prevalent, especially in more complex sentence constructions. The findings suggest that while students may understand the basic structure of a CV, many lack the grammatical proficiency needed to convey their qualifications clearly and professionally in English.

Then, Students from the Computerized Business Management, Informatics Computer, and Accounting Information System departments demonstrated varying levels of relevance and specificity in the content of their English CVs. Many students included general or unrelated information, such as outdated academic achievements or vague personal qualities, rather than focusing on skills and experiences aligned with their respective fields. For instance, students from the Accounting Information System program often overlooked the inclusion of relevant software skills or accounting tasks from internships, while Informatics Computer students listed programming languages without providing context or evidence of practical application. Meanwhile, some students from the Computerized Business Management department showed better awareness by mentioning business-related tasks and communication skills; however, their descriptions often lacked measurable

details or specific outcomes. Overall, the findings indicate a widespread need for improved guidance on tailoring CV content to reflect job-specific qualifications and clearly demonstrate individual competencies

Moreover, Students from the Computerized Business Management, Informatics Computer, and Accounting Information System departments showed inconsistent visual clarity and layout in their CVs. Many used poor formatting, such as inconsistent fonts, misaligned sections, and cluttered content. Informatics Computer students often prioritized content over design, while Accounting Information System students frequently lacked clear section headings. Some Computerized Business Management students showed better organization, but overall, most CVs lacked professional layout standards, indicating a need for training in visual presentation.

Whereas, many students across the Computerized Business Management, Informatics Computer, and Accounting Information System departments struggled to write clear and career-focused objectives in their CVs. Objectives were often too vague, generic, or unrelated to their intended career paths. Instead of stating specific goals or how they could contribute to potential employers, students commonly wrote broad statements like “Looking for a challenging job” or “Want to develop my skills.” This lack of focus reduces the impact of the CV and suggests a need for guidance in crafting targeted, professional career objectives.

The last, most students from the Computerized Business Management, Informatics Computer, and Accounting Information System departments did not adequately tailor their CVs to specific job requirements. Their CVs often contained generic information that was not customized for the positions they sought, showing limited understanding of how to highlight relevant skills and experiences. This gap suggests the need for training on adapting CV content to match employer expectations and job descriptions.

b. Students' perception on their CV

Interviews with students revealed that Informatics Computer students generally viewed CV writing as a routine academic task rather than a vital career tool. It is proved by the subject statement:

*Iya mis, ini kan baru untuk tugas saja, nanti untuk yang digunain kerja beda lagi mis, jadi ini untuk pengisi aja dulu mis. Beberapa juga data nya hilang mis, jadi masih mencari-cari. (Research Subject, April 2025)*

From the statement above it means that at the time, they admitted they created their CVs just to fulfill class assignments, with little awareness of its real-world application. Besides, many expressed low confidence in their English skills, which made them hesitant to invest much effort in crafting detailed or well-structured CVs. Common challenges they faced included grammatical errors, difficulty organizing content clearly, and uncertainty about how to tailor their CVs to specific job requirements. Several students admitted to using generic templates without customizing them, reflecting a lack of motivation and awareness of the CV's importance for future employment. Although some recognized the need to improve their CVs for internship or job applications, many felt they had not received sufficient guidance or practical training from their courses. This attitude and skill gap suggest a need for more focused English communication support tailored to the Informatics Computer students' academic and professional contexts

Moreover, Accounting Information System students generally demonstrated a more positive and serious attitude toward CV writing compared to their peers. It can be known from the statement below:

*Kalo dari saya ms, materi pembuatan CV ini sangat bagus ms, semua hal sudah dijelaskan dari macam-macam CV, perbedaanya, komponen-komponennya pun sudah dijelaskan, bahkan cara membuat dan mengisi data informasi pun sudah diajarkan seperti pembuatan objective itu juga diajarkan, dikasih contoh. Cuma kadang kami mengalami masalah dalam merangkai kalimat, apalagi dalam Bahasa Inggris, jadi ini sedikit menjadi masalah mis. (Research Subject, April 2025)*

Many understood the importance of a well-prepared CV as a critical tool for securing internships and job opportunities in their field. They expressed higher confidence in their English skills, which encouraged them to pay closer structure, and content relevance. These students often took extra steps to tailor their CVs to specific job requirements and sought feedback to improve their documents. However, some still noted challenges in perfecting the professional tone, grammar and formatting. Overall, their proactive approach and recognition of the CV's value suggest that they are more motivated to produce effective CVs, reflecting the stronger integration of communication skills in their academic program.

Meanwhile, students in the Computerized Business Management program showed a moderate level of awareness about the importance of CV writing, often recognizing it as a useful tool for job applications but sometimes treating it as a routine task. Their confidence in writing CVs in English was mixed—some felt comfortable with basic structure and content, while others struggled with grammar and tailoring the CV to specific positions. Many relied on templates but made some effort to customize sections like skills and experience. It can be known from the statement below:

*Kalau menurut saya mata kuliah ini sangat membantu saya mis, karna saya belum memiliki pengalaman sama sekali bahkan tidak memiliki CV sebelumnya. Tapi saya mengalami masalah dalam menyusunnya mis, karena saya kurang pengalaman jadi isinya hanya sedikit saja, lalu untuk Menyusun atau merapikan semuanya kadang jadi kendala mis, karna kadang laptop yang kami gunakan kurang mendukung sehingga menimbulkan rasa malas. (Research Subject, April 2025)*

Although they received some guidance from their lecturers, several students expressed the need for more practical workshops and personalized feedback to improve their writing and formatting skills. Overall, Computerized Business Management students demonstrated willingness to improve but would benefit from targeted support to enhance both their technical skills and motivation.

### *Discussion*

The analysis of the collected English CVs and interview data revealed notable variations in the CV writing skills of students across the three concentrations at LP3I Polytechnic Padang. It revealed notable disparities in English CV writing skills across the three concentrations, with Accounting Information System students demonstrating the highest overall performance. Their CVs showed better structure, more relevant content, and stronger grammatical accuracy compared to their peers. This may be attributed to their frequent engagement with formal documentation and attention to detail required in accounting-related coursework. Students from the Computerized Business Management department followed, showing moderate proficiency in language use and layout but occasional weaknesses in tailoring content to job requirements. Meanwhile, Informatics Management students generally showed the lowest performance, particularly in grammatical accuracy, clarity of expression, and overall CV organization. These findings suggest that the development of CV writing skills is influenced by the specific academic and practical focus of each concentration, highlighting the need for customized support to address the unique challenges faced by each group.

Despite these differences, a common challenge across all concentrations was the use of self-promotional language—a feature that is typical in English CVs but often unfamiliar to Indonesian students. Many students hesitated to describe their accomplishments assertively, using passive or modest wording instead of strong action verbs like "led," "managed," or "coordinated." This aligns with Sutrisno and Anugerahwati's (2021) findings, which note that EFL learners often struggle with the cultural shift required for effective English CV writing. Another shared issue was the misuse of tenses and word forms, especially when describing past experiences. This suggests that although students received instruction in grammar, the transfer of that knowledge into practical writing tasks was inconsistent.

Interestingly, the motivation to write a strong CV was highest among Accounting Information System students, likely due to the perceived

competitiveness of their field and early exposure to career planning activities. In contrast, IT students often saw English CV writing as a formality to submit a task rather than a meaningful self-marketing tool. Computerized Business Management students were generally more aware of the need to present themselves well in writing but lacked access to specific feedback on their drafts. Students across all concentrations expressed a desire for more hands-on writing workshops and individualized feedback, rather than general ESP lectures.

Overall, providing access to writing templates, model CVs, and feedback sessions could help bridge the skill gap among students from different academic backgrounds. Moreover, encouraging students to treat CV writing as a form of professional self-expression—rather than a routine classroom task—could improve their engagement and performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined the English CV writing skills of students from three concentrations at LP3I Polytechnic Padang: Accounting Information System, Computerized Business Management, and Informatics Management. The findings showed that Accounting Information System students performed the best overall, demonstrating better structure, relevant content, and grammatical accuracy. Students from Computerized Business Management showed moderate performance, with strength in layout and basic structure but weaknesses in content tailoring and grammar. Informatics Management students showed the most difficulties across all aspects, including grammar, tone, content relevance, and visual clarity. One key issue that emerged was the lack of seriousness among some students, who viewed CV writing as just another classroom task rather than a practical tool for their future careers. This mindset led to minimal effort and generic content, reducing the overall quality of their submissions.

To address these challenges, some supporting programs outside of the class are needed such as workshops and giving personalized feedback will be more meaningful and practical. With the right guidance and a shift in perspective,



students can begin to see CV writing not as a task but as a valuable step toward their future careers.

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