

## The Issues of ESP Instruction for University Level in Indonesia

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### Abstract

English can be due to demand of Indonesian in the field of business, technology, education, and research. The implementation of ESP has revealed some factors, such as students, teachers, and ESP materials that have significant influences on the quality of teaching and learning ESP. These factors require serious attention from stakeholders and ESP practitioners to improve the quality of ESP instruction. The government language policy might emphasize the curricula of formal schools and teachers training for ESP instruction. The quality of teacher of ESP is high contributing to accommodate the teaching and learning ESP course. Besides that, the materials of ESP should be formulated by practitioners of ESP who had knowledge of ESP instruction and the aim of ESP might concern on the improvements in students' proficiency in English. Thus, the students are being better in academic and professional in the work domain.

**Keywords** : Implementation, ESP instruction, the students, the teachers, the material development

### Abstrak

Bahasa Inggris dapat disebabkan oleh permintaan bahasa Indonesia di bidang bisnis, teknologi, pendidikan, dan penelitian. Pelaksanaan ESP telah mengungkapkan beberapa faktor, seperti siswa, guru, dan materi ESP yang memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap kualitas pembelajaran dan pembelajaran ESP. Faktor-faktor ini memerlukan perhatian serius dari para pemangku kepentingan dan praktisi ESP untuk meningkatkan kualitas instruksi ESP. Kebijakan bahasa pemerintah mungkin menekankan kurikulum sekolah formal dan pelatihan guru untuk instruksi ESP. Kualitas guru ESP berkontribusi tinggi untuk mengakomodasi pengajaran dan pembelajaran mata pelajaran ESP. Selain itu, materi ESP harus dirumuskan oleh praktisi ESP yang memiliki pengetahuan tentang instruksi ESP dan tujuan dari ESP mungkin berkaitan dengan peningkatan kemampuan siswa dalam bahasa Inggris. Dengan demikian, para siswa menjadi lebih baik di bidang akademik dan profesional dalam domain kerja.

**Kata kunci** : Implementasi, instruksi ESP, siswa, guru, pengembangan materi

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, English has been considered as the medium for scientific and scholarly communication in the modern world of technology. English determined by the demands of many institutions and companies in Indonesian where English as a lingua franca that used for any particular purposes, such as obtaining the promotion of professional development, passing the national examination, getting scholarships, and fulfilling one of the requirements of applying for a job.

Furthermore, being a successful profession, the citizen must possess English for a certain subject area. It plays an increasingly important role in the development of the global market and international relations. In academic, the use of English to learn subject area knowledge is increased, especially English for specific purposes, such as English for business, English for technology, etc. Thus, teaching ESP is major priority in the academic world (Liaghat & Latif, 2013), especially at university level.

Many educational institutions offer the program of ESP courses to meet student's future career need in the global trend. This is in accordance with the Government policy on Education that emphasizes the goal of teaching English at tertiary school level requires to improve the students' ability to use English for academic and professional purposes. It is proven by Kusni (2013), the aim of ESP courses is to equip the learners with a certain English proficiency level for a situation where the language is going to be used, particularly in the workplace. Thus, the learning objectives of English subject in the interdisciplinary course are encouraged the students to be specialized English in particular fields.

In fact, the students are not aware of the importance of English that is one of factors affecting their English competence has been insufficient. Indonesian government has been offering English as one of compulsory subjects in formal education that is taught from elementary school to University. However, the students' English competence were still low and unsatisfied to response to the great demands by some institutions and companies. Thus, the implementation of ESP in Indonesia is still ineffective and do not meet the society needs. For those reasons above, this research focuses on the current issues on implementing ESP course in Indonesia on the basis of analyzing the studies based on actual situation of implementation ESP instruction in university level.

## 2. Interpretation

### A. *ESP Instruction*

ESP reveals the students' learning context and their language required (Hutchinson and Waters, 1989). The particular language in a real situation should be taught to support their future career or to comprehend English discourse related to their area of speciality and occupations.

ESP is a recognizable activity of English Language Teaching with some specific characteristics. Dudley-Evans & St. Johns (1998) mentioned two series of characteristics. First, the absolute characteristics of ESP: "ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of the learner; ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves; c. the language (grammar, register, and lexis), discourse and genres related to certain activities are the main focus for ESP" (Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, 1998, p. 4 ).

Second, variable characteristics of ESP are mentioned as follows a. "ESP is designed for particular disciplines; b. ESP and general English might have a different methodology; c. ESP is suitably designed for secondary level, university level or in a professional work environment; d. ESP is mostly constructed for the advanced level but it can be used for beginners if some basic knowledge of the language system is instructed (Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, 1998, p. 4-5).

It is obvious that the absolute characteristics are specific to ESP concerning the students' particular needs. Needs analysis is a cornerstone to develop ESP instruction. According to Dudley-Evans & St John (1998), the needs analysis means identifying things in relation to the determination of the goals and objectives, content, materials, teaching activities, and assessment to follow. In educational settings, Browns (2005) explains the process by first finding out the learning needs of the students which are later translated to learning objectives that will work as the source of all decisions about the course such as activities, materials, or tests

### B. *English in Indonesian Context*

English in Indonesia is the first foreign language to be taught from primary school to university, both public and private. Ideally, with the long process, English can be mastered by the students who can use and do with the language for communicative purposes. In fact, learning English had the problems for the students that can be occurred. The reasons are that the teachers infrequently speak English as the instructional language in teaching and learning process; that materials used the existing books which have been inappropriate the students' needs. make the students feel bored and lazy, especially in the beginning to learn English, students are introduced with tenses and grammar in order to lead the students are awkward and frustrated in producing the language; the methods used are less effective and apply the monotonous strategies. The students are instructed to follow the model based on the textbook and then do the written test and no discussion or feedback from the teacher. Therefore, the students have weaknesses of English competence for ESP course. It is found in Poedjiastutie's study, she claimed that the students in the first semester become shocked when the introduction of ESP meet (Poedjiastutie, 2017).

### C. *Students for learning ESP*

The students' proficiency level as contribution to the students' readiness. The students' proficiency level impacted on these factors as follows:

#### 1) Residential area

The residential area affected students' English proficiency. The language proficiency of students in big cities is better than those from the suburbs. Furthermore, the awareness of the importance of English mostly happens in big cities where the companies and government institution needs English as a tool of communication to exchange the ideas or information to foreigners. By offering the highly demanded, the students are motivated to learn English because they know English is for a particular context.

In contrast, in small cities, the use of English as a communication is low. English is infrequently practice and concerned on grammar and tenses. Consequently, teaching English at the secondary school level remains weak and inadequate which resulted in the students' low English ability. It is in line with Poedjiastutie's study, she found that the majority of students at UMM from remote and some small cities express a negative experience of English teaching due to its grammar teaching focus. Thus, the students were the unenjoyable moment in their learning, their motivation decreased, and this will affect their English learning outcomes in the long run (2017, p.343).

#### 2) Heterogenous

The difference in the students' language proficiency has an effect on ESP instruction. However, the big class where the students had the diversity of competence level as barriers for ESP teachers in a teaching-learning process that is the challenge of ESP teachers how to develop their professionalism in ESP teaching and improvement of ESP teaching quality. It is rare to find a homogeneous group of learners in one class. In other words, learners are different in terms of experience in the workplace with language proficiency, cognitive abilities, etc. Poedjiastutie (2017) found that the teacher found the students' mixed ability in the classroom level had appeared the impact of ESP administration. The teacher has to deal with a great range in the students' level of English competence. She said that the introduction to ESP in the first semester might the students' shock and more difficult to grow. This results in the fact that students are ashamed and passive when they take ESP courses. This situation has a significant impact on learning motivation of individual students in particular and learning environment of the class.

In short, the learning expectations need to be adjusted with students' English proficiency levels. In other words, students need to be placed in ESP classes according to their level of proficiency or the level of English as required by the institution (Marwan (2009). However, to classify the students' specific characteristics of learners is not easy in applying for many university institutions. According to Poedjiastutie (2017), students are very

diverse in terms of their needs, motivations, their school experiences, their English achievements, and their priority in life.

On the other hand, the big size is a barrier for the teacher in implementing the ESP course. it is not ideal to train the class effectively. Most the classes of schools and universities had more than 30-40 participants who had involved in ESP course. With this condition, the teachers of ESP gives more practice and monotonous strategies which could lead to the students' lack of learning interest. Normally, class size in this situation is only around 20 students or less in every class (Kelvin cited in Marwan, 2009). Furthermore, he claimed that a class size can be considered relatively fine for accommodating the effective delivery of ESP.

#### 3) Lack of vocabulary

Vocabulary for ESP course is categorized for pedagogical purposes into high-frequency words, academic vocabulary, technical vocabulary, and low-frequency words (Widodo, 2015). In fact, students have no knowledge of English etymology, so they can not understand the meaning of a sentence when they do not know the meaning of a word or a few words in it. Paniya (2008) in her research claimed that due to the inadequacy, the ESP instruction in Indonesia has been limited to the specialized lexicon and sentence structures and this ignored the learners' interest. As a result, this dependence limits the flexibility and imagination of learners and many learners give up when they can not remember and use ESP for their work.

#### 4) Inadequate Language Skills: Reading, listening, speaking and writing skills

In reading skill, the students had low ability in comprehending the texts. The reasons are that there is a limited exploration of reading English textbooks, scientific articles, journals and unfamiliar terminology in their disciplines. The teachers concerned about the grammar in reading class to lead the students to be able in producing the grammatically correct sentences when answering the questions. Based on her observation, the students were disinterested (Poedjiastutie, 2017)

In writing skill, the students faced problems related to vocabulary, organizing ideas, grammar, and spelling. In writing for ESP is the barrier for the students to organize ideas logically and connect them together in their writings. They need to write for different purposes in a wide variety context and for different audiences. He added before writing students must have a knowledge of the topic so that they can have a control over their ideas and can organize and process new information (Marco, 2003).

In speaking and listening skills, the students' lack of exposure to these skills, they spend most of their time learning concerning on grammar. Even in communication or speaking classes, many teachers still try to focus more on accuracy than fluency (Poedjiastutie, 2017). As a result, the development of the students' communicative competence might not achieve.

In short, ESP students need to be able to use and understand the language which occurs in the types of texts used in their disciplines. Therefore, materials for ESP should enable the learners to see how the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) can be used effectively in appropriate contexts (McDonough and Shaw, 2003).

#### 5) Motivation

The success of ESP can not isolate from motivation. Based on Marwan's study (2009), he found that the students were not motivated to study English because it was not their main intentions in this vocational institutions and they were not unaware of the importance of English for their professional life, so their teacher had barriers to transfer knowledge to these students. Moreover, there are some factors contributing to increase and stimulate the students' motivation. First, it concerns the objective of the course which must be authentic to meet the needs of students so that they are motivated and their achievement is supported. In line with Dornyei (2001), he argues that having the clear objectives of the materials will support the students to increase their motivation. Second, the teacher also has a significant influence on the students' motivation (Marwan, 2009). They should need to create a fun atmosphere in the process of ESP teaching and learning and make efforts to help improve students' motivation their subject matter teaching.

#### D. The ESP Teachers

##### 1) The quality of ESP teachers

Almost ESP teachers/lecturers in Indonesia graduated from the English Department and less competence and experience in teaching ESP course because their educational background not related to the specialized subject of ESP (Kusni, 2013). However, teachers/lecturers should be trained at least once a year in producing the qualified teachers and adequate teachers of ESP. According to Kusni (2013), the government and some institutions had lack of awareness in producing and preparing ESP teachers/lectures for vocational school and universities and rarely invite them to get training, workshop, seminar or other organizations in-service development. Similarly, Ali's study (2015) was conducted in a small-scale research. He found that ESP Teacher Education Model in Indonesia had serious issues in its pedagogical implementation. He said that some of them possessed English teaching qualifications, but they were mostly inexperienced and new. Consequently, they have insufficient ESP knowledge. This is, of course, affects their teaching capacity.

However, the quality of ESP teachers in Indonesia still is still low because they lack competences, knowledge, and some kind of training. Wasimin (2011 cited in Ali, 2015), states that the low quality of Indonesian education based on some experts' analysis is caused by the lack of Indonesian English teachers' competences and participation. Based on the statistical data, from 32 teachers in these schools, there is only

18% who has pedagogical competences and professionalism. From the educational background, it is recorded that there are 28 teachers (87, 5%) bachelors and 4 teachers (12, 5%) are English magister. It is in line with Kusumaningputri (2010), she said that ESP teachers, especially in Jember, are an inexperienced and junior teacher. They have less knowledge about the real ESP characteristics which is relatively dissimilar to EGP teaching practice. Consequently it directly affects the material, learning goals, and methodology applied in ESP class and finally, ESP learning is far from the expectation (p.3).

As results, the ESP teaching methodology had inadequate preparation, had lack of qualified ESP teachers and had not much opportunities to get involved in any activity professional development. Dealing with these problems, there are some solutions to this situation some methods might be useful are: 1) surveys of the history and present state of ESP in your own or other countries; 2) the ESP teachers collaborate in development of ESP; 3) exchanging the information about ESP through the form of publication; 4) involving the provision that focuses on ESP. Such provision can take a variety of forms: workshops, seminars, short courses, and ESP teacher training etc.

Furthermore, ESP teacher requires three things: (1) a positive attitude towards the ESP content, (2) a knowledge of the fundamental principles of the subject area, (3) an awareness of how much they probably already know (Hutchinson & Waters, 1989). Furthermore, making the methodology more attractive and enjoyable can be a valuable weapon in countering demands for subject-specific ESP.

#### E. Materials for ESP Course

##### 1) General English (GE) for ESPcourse

Generally, the ESP teacher still teaches general English in some institutions and schools which is required in the implementation of ESP. Similarly, the objective of ESP course in some universities and schools is still like General English. Based on Poedjiastuties's study (2017), she said that most ESP teachers actually focus on general English because of the low English proficiency of the majority freshman at UMM. Moreover, in implementing the ESP course, the students are able to use English sufficiently at a general level. In fact, the students at the target university are not at this level. In line with her study, Kusni (2013) stated that many majors non-English are intended to develop the students' mastery of grammar, basic English skills (reading, writing, listening) which the content is general English subject and sometimes the teacher teach TOEFL for ESP course, it is to use as a part of the assessment of reading test.

Furthermore, GE and ESP are not separate, but rather to complement each other (Poedijastutie, 2017). In addition, according to Yu and Xiao (2013), designing an ESP course also require a considerable amount of GE along with an integrated functional and technical language for the target situation. However, the General

English is concerned with communication for daily interaction. It should be learned to transfer the information about social aspects where those not only used the technical language but also non-technical language.

#### 2) The quality of ESP materials

According to Widodo (2015, p.20), in teacher training and teacher professional development in Indonesia, many English teachers working with vocational students use English textbook prescribed by policy makers without analyzing it critically of whether they suit students' needs. Furthermore, the textbooks for the ESP course developed without considering the students' needs (Widodo, 2015). (Hutchinson & Waters (1989) claimed that choosing ESP materials refers to the goals and objectives derived from needs analysis would improve the students' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster.

However, such learning materials which are really suitable for the needs of the students are not always available (Harsono, 2007). This condition the teacher should be creative in developing the materials for ESP course that is appropriate for the student's needs by identifying what the students need. By identifying needs, it is necessary to set the objective of the ESP course, as a result, the teachers can design their own materials for achieving the objectives that are worthy to the needs (Harsono, 2007).

In this case, ESP materials is often developed by the ESP teachers whose are still lack of specialized knowledge of certain subjects area, such as economics, physical sciences, etc, because most of the teacher for ESP course is graduated from the English department and they are not allowed to take part in refresher courses on methods and knowledge of teaching ESP. It is to have an impact in contributing to the quality of ESP materials. It is supported by Widodo (2015) claimed that ESP teachers do not have vested interest in designing or developing ESP materials because of time constraints, lack of institutional support, insufficient resources, no professional training in language materials development, no national curriculum promotion, and no organization or team of teacher development of language materials development.

#### 3) The use of available textbook for ESP course

The teachers of ESP implement the available book taken from outsider which is not relevant to the context of Indonesia demands, the target needs, and the competence level of students. The use of existing books in delivering materials makes the students feel bored and lazy, especially the students of the first semester who is beginning to learn English, most students are introduced with tenses and grammar in order to lead the students to feel awkward and frustrated during learning ESP (Kusni, 2013). In line with Kusni, Poedjiastutie's study showed that the students' lack of readiness for the ESP course is mainly due to teachers' poor teaching ability and particularly their inappropriate choice of materials. In

this case, the ESP teachers used teaching materials almost coincident with those used by the English Department for teaching general English. This is contradicting with principles of developing ESP materials claimed that materials should assist to prepare the students to function outside in the classroom, such as in their real life or future career. However, teachers usually use any textbook available to teach their students without evaluation of the textbook whether it works and or not. However, evaluation can result in the most effective textbooks which can be used in the classroom. (Harsono, 2007).

According to Zoonhorian (2015), the goals of the books published for ESP assist the students to study their specific academic reference materials and textbooks to get familiar with scientific and technological advances in their field of study. The practitioners claimed that textbook for ESP might have weaknesses as follows: existing materials are not satisfactory, the English teachers usually teach their students by using available textbooks; there is a mismatch between the course contents and the required skills and materials of the learners at the workplace; the material design and teacher qualifications are problematic; there is no study skill included and the discourse genre is not appropriate for using language authentically; variety is absent for exercise, tasks, activities, and drills (Zoonhorian, 2015).

#### 4) Limited resources for ESP course

Some of the universities might not provide the facilities to accommodate effective teaching and learning ESP. It is supported by Marwan (2009). Based on the results of his study, the institution had inadequate the facilities to access the teaching materials by using the internet which its connectivity was not reliable and very slow. Similarly, The library resources were not insufficient to provide the textbooks and printed journals which can be used as references for ESP course. He also found that the language lab was not well-maintained and maximized to support their teaching especially, listening and speaking skills. Thus, the students are not adaptability to explore their skills. This condition does not support the teachers and the students for carrying out quality teaching.

### 3. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study focus on the difficulties of students, teachers of ESP and ESP materials having an impact on teaching and learning ESP in Indonesia. The are some factors of the students' difficulties that influence the students' English proficiency, such as residential area, heterogeneous, big size of ESP course, limited vocabulary knowledge, insufficient language skills, and the students' lack of motivation, and ineffective ESP materials. Related to the discussion above, the suggestion is presented. First, the students should increase their general proficiency in English for teaching to prepare their readiness for ESP course, as a result, the classroom activities in ESP courses will be motivated

and they can follow ESP instruction. Second, the teachers of ESP might be active in involving the international or national conference for exchanging the information about the issues of ESP, joining the training for preparation of teaching ESP, and starting to develop the ESP course book that is appropriate with the students' need for their specialist field to support their professional future career. In addition, the teacher should aware of their students' weaknesses, necessities and wants and then analyze what the students' needs. It is to assist the ESP teachers to set the objectives for particular students. In regard to this objective, hopefully, the students could increase their language competence and performance. It is proven by Basturkmen (2006), he stated that need analysis may affect a learner's motivation since they can clearly see the consequence of what is being taught to them. It is assumed that selecting materials to refer to the goals and objectives derived from need analysis would improve the students' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster. The teacher also should consider General English as supplementary materials to implement for the ESP course. It is supported by Poedjiastutie (2017, p. 344), "ESP cannot be completely separated from GE because many work fields do not use technical English, practically, the communication is gradually using non-technical English". In addition, the facilities such as journals, language lab, internet, library are the main concern for the institutions to create the classroom instruction for ESP more exciting and intellectually stimulating. It is line with Marwan (2009, p. 9), he claimed that "the facilities should also be provided so that it can be effectively used to accommodate the teaching and learning of ESP course". Similarly, Tarnopolsky's study (2013), it is found that technology as one of the facilities should be considered to use is a great potential effect for improving and accelerating the developments of four language skills in ESP course for professional communication. It is the effective way to assist the teachers to elaborate the materials through the access of internet. By these results, it is a consideration for the researchers is expected to investigate the further information of ESP issues and conduct the study reveals ESP to get deep information of the effective implementation of ESP.

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