

THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY ISLAMIC THOUGHT POLITICS STUDENTS IN ESP COURSE

Miftahul Jannah

Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, NTB, Indonesia

Email: miftahuljannah950@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aimed to describe the kinds of challenges and aspects that might cause the challenges which are encountered by the students of Islamic Thought of Politic in learning English in ESP courses. This is a descriptive quantitative study. There were thirty-five students who participated in the sample that were chosen through purposive sampling. The data were gathered through an online survey of the students in the major of Islamic Politics Taught. This study found four main challenges faced by the students in learning English, especially for the students in the major of Islamic Thought of Politic. The first big challenge was to rely on the Students' Perception of the ESP Course. Second, another obstacle was because of their English ability is still regarded as low. Third, most of them do not have additional English learning resources as supplementary material outside the classroom. The last, challenge was because of the insufficient curriculum for ESP for Universities. To overcome these challenges, universities, students, and stakeholders must work well together. The implementation of synergy can take the form of focusing firstly on the implementing of a good environment for the ESP course.

Keywords: *ESP, challenges, higher education, students of Islamic thought politic*

A. INTRODUCTION

In the Indonesian university curriculum, English has been a compulsory subject that must be taken by each student. In order to reach specific objectives, almost all universities in Indonesia have programmed English courses mostly in all majors through the course ESP (English for Specific Purpose). As mandated by the Ministry of Education to educate the nation life, education at the university serves to build capacities and mold a dignified national character and civilization (Presiden RI, 2012). Therefore, the courses of ESP introduced in higher education institutions become a solution to respond to the question of Global needs. The students must enroll in the ESP program in order to develop their professional communication abilities for their upcoming careers. (Triristina & Khabib, 2021. Toci. 2014). As Toci (2014), shows in his research that students' preferences and needs are mostly affected by their future careers.

In Islamic State University of Mataram, for non-English Department, ESP is programmed as MKDU (Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum). For each semester, it holds 2 credits which are only programmed in semester 1 and 2. It is programmed for all majors or study programs at UIN Mataram, including at the major of Islamic Thought of Politic which is under the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Study. The purpose of the course is encouraging students with a good skill of English, so the students of Islamic Thought Politic students are able to use English based on their fields of study.

Based on the vision and mission of the program study, after completing the study program, the students of Islamic Thought of Politic Department are expected to be the part of Islamic politic development both for practitioners and academicians which is

based on the value of Islam and religiosity. Therefore, the lessons and material distributed in each semester are designed to make them well prepared for those expectations. Thus, teachers and the faculty members should really design the material carefully (Ye. 2020).

However, reaching such goal is not always easy, especially in teaching English. A study conducted by Iswati and Triastuti (2021) found some challenges faced by the ESP teachers were; lacking of students' understanding regarding to their topic of study, the absence of ESP instruction training, insufficient appropriate need assessment, enormous classes, and homogenous students' English proficiency level. Moreover, another challenge is related to developing the material. As underlined by Medrea and Rus (2012) that the material of ESP has to build upon two main aspects; first, the students' needs must be the base for the material arrangement. Second, the process of material design must be based on certain and specific standards and procedures in the lesson design process in general. Consequently, the overall materials design process has to begin with the students and must have a purpose which is well prepared to fulfil the requirements of the students after completing their learning program in University. Benabed (2022) found on his study that although the stakeholders really support the existence of English teaching, there found a large gaps on the application in English teaching, such as the syllabus content which is lack of interesting meaningful material, teachers' lack of understanding as expected in ESP for supporting the learning process, the lack of continuous training, the lack of additional material available and students ability level of English proficiency diversity .

In addition, regarding to ESP course, teachers and the faculty members should correlate the students' field of study with the requirement English skill and material based on the needed skills should be focused for their success in the future especially in workplace (Medrea & Rus. 2012. Prabandari. Aji. & Yulia. (2016), the match between students' need to the material being taught contributes on students' learning motivation (Dja'far, Cahyono, & Bashtomi. 2016. Stern. 1983). Moreover, Menggo (2022) pointed that, on ESP class, students need to be provided by English materials which is promoting the 21st century education demands. As the world goes so dynamic, the revolution on learning material should always be updated (Khalid (2017). Therefore, the learning substance must be designed to meet the students' needs in their future which covers six themes; as global knowledge, finance, business, civics, health, technology, and the environment (Khalid. 2017. Menggo. 2022).

Principally, the inclusion of ESP in the curriculum of higher education is an attempt as a solution of the world's challenges. ESP course offers dual advantages; first is the students could acquire the ability to use English for academic and non-academic purposes in the context of their chosen specialties. (Dja'far, Cahyono, & Bashtomi. 2016. Toci. 2014), as ESP is programed when they enrol in academic courses related to their subject of study (Toci. 2014). The second benefit is for the preparation of the personnel (Prabandari, Aji & Yulia. 2016). As a global language, the skill of English is a necessity to apply for a global work. This is because many companies are being prepared being capable of competing globally, particularly in this current global enterprise era. Thus, ESP courses which were taken in higher education contribute in preparing them for the quest of the work.

However, those efforts can only be maximally achieved if the challenges on the application of ESP could be solved well (Medrea and Rus. 2012), or the challenges can at least be reduced. This research focuses on outlining the challenges faced by the students

in the major of Islamic Thought of Politic on learning English during their ESP classes. It is formulated in the research questions: what kinds of challenges and what aspects might cause the challenges encountered by the students Islamic Thought of Politic on learning English in the ESP course?

B. METHOD

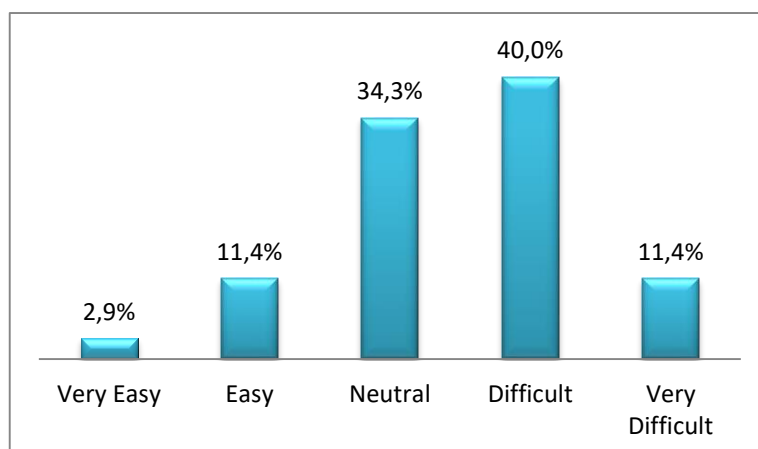
This is a descriptive quantitative research. The data were gathered through online survey. There were 3 classes in the major of Islamic Politic Taught, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Study, Islamic State University of Mataram. The students chosen as samples were who had accomplished ESP course within their first 2 semesters. By fully accomplished the ESP Program, it is assumed that they have already had their clear point of view related to their challenges and obstacles that they had faced in learning English through ESP Program. There were totally 35 students participated as the sample which were chosen through purposive sampling. The consideration was the level of students' achievement in English classes during the two semesters. 10 students were who had achieved the best score in each class, 10 students who were achieved medium level score, and 15 students who were achieved the low score. The categorization of the student's ability was to gather the information related to the students challenges during the ESP course held from the perspective of the three levels of students. The data gathered from the questionnaires then analysed based on Descriptive Statistic method purposed by Gall, Gall, & Borg (2003) in which the data were collected to find the percentage of each category then it is rewrite in the form of descriptive text to draw the conclusion.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data gathered from the research, there found some challenges that the students encounter in the ESP Course.

1. *Students Perception on ESP Course*

The Quest to reveal the students Challenges on Learning ESP during the semesters started from a question "how difficult they feel about English?" The result is shown in figure 1



STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE EASINESS OF ENGLISH

In line with this perception, other question was also asked to investigate their perception on English as they entering the new atmosphere of ESP in University. According to the survey, 85,4% of students could distinguish between learning English in a classroom setting and in a university setting. Only 25% of the students were able to adapt more quickly, while the rest did not significantly improve their ability to adapt. The anticipated adjustment they were supposed to make to do with accepting new English reading material, discussion, and vocabularies in their profession. It can be understood that it is particularly difficult for ESP students who are new to the university setting to focus on the objectives of the first two semesters. They must be well-adapted for both ESP learning adaptations, which differ from EGP, and university settings. According to Stern (1983), learning challenges are natural for new students because college learning may be unfamiliar to them.

Additionally, in order to better define the goal, awareness of goal achievement is crucial for holding the learning process as intended (Prima, Hartono, & Riyant. 2022). However, the data shows that only 16 out of the 35 students in the ESP program actually achieved its intended purpose; the remaining students simply followed it because it was a required course. The majority of students were unaware of how the ESP course differed from the EGP in terms of content. Triristina & Khabib (2021) noted that the assistance provided by lectures is quite important in this adaptation, particularly in the ESP course. Especially during the initial presentation stage, teacher should be very creative in delivering the ESP material to enhance and boost students' interest and motivation on the material being taught (Petkovska. V, 2015. Darvin & Norton. 2021).

Besides, based on the students' perception, another big aspect contributed on students' challenges in learning ESP is related to the difference of their first language (Bahasa Indonesia) to English, both on the structures and form. Out of 35 students, 10 students (28,6%) were really agree on the question asked "do you think English is so fat different from Bahasa Indonesia?" 16 students (46%) were just agree. While the rest, 9 students (26%), give their neutral answer. But no one of them answered disagrees. It shows that hat the differences between two languages created obstacles for them to easily comprehend the material given in the ESP course. Basically, the students still rely much on their mother tongue, Mirvan (2013) pointed that although it is clear that a learner's mental translations from L2 to L1 play a significant role in language development, many students mistake word meanings when they write in the foreign language because they employ words that are different from those in the source language.

According to David & Norton (2021) how students percept English could drives their motivation in the learning process. As Ushioda (as cited in David & Norton. 2021) noted that it directly influence the psychology and cognitive working area while learning another language that mother tongue (SL or FL). It then reconstructs how they perceive the process of their language learning, as said as "...aptitude, learner strategies, motivation, autonomy, anxiety and self-efficacy..." Moreover, it directly unaware control what is called "...how the thoughts, motives and their behaviours..." on L2 or FL language learning in which it effect the learning outcomes.

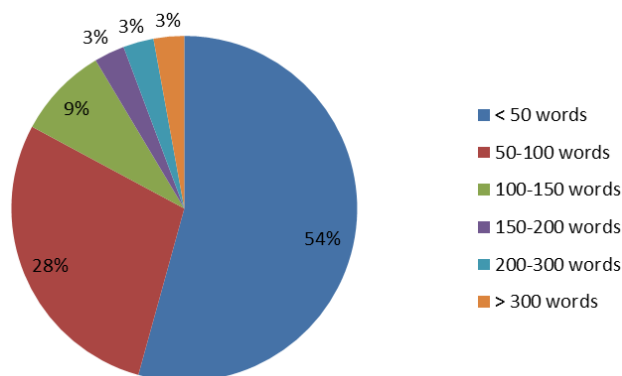
2. The Low Level of Students' Ability in English

The second challenge found in this study was related to the low level of students' ability in English. Chien (in Dja'far, Cahyono, and Bashtomi. 2016), in fact, one of the most crucial measures of learning is where the students start (ability), it could be the parameter to measure the success in learning.

THE RESULT OF GENERAL MEASUREMENT TEST

<i>Skill Measurement</i>	<i>Average Score</i>
Speaking	40,7
Listening	62,6
Writing	69
Reading	58,4
Total Average	57,7

This test was done at the early of the semester before they begin the ESP course. The test used English for General purpose. The result of the score shown that the total average of the sample score that the level of students ability in English was considered still low. However, it doesn't meet the requirement to join ESP course. According to Dudley-Evans (1997), the target students of ESP course are at least at intermediate or advanced levels. Since it is design for adult learner, could be at tertiary level or other special professional instruction, most ESP courses hope that the students are proficient in the language's fundamentals.



STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY

The students' Vocabulary Mastery is so limited. It contributed to the causes of the low level of students' ability in English. Figure 2 Shows that 54% of the students have only mastered less than 50 English vocabularies.

3. *Students Lack of Owning Additional English Learning Resources*

The third challenge that was revealed in this study was related to owing of adequate learning resources. It can be seen on the table.

STUDENTS' ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES IN ENGLISH

<i>Resources</i>	<i>Students owing</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Paper Books	5	14,3%
E-Book	15	43%
Listening material	0	0,0%
Dictionary book	8	22,9%
Electronic Dictionary	22	62,9%

The data on table shows that almost all students only have online dictionary which is installed in their smartphone as the learning resources in the class. Out of 35 samples, only 5 students have book in their home for additional ESP resources. Most of the students depend on the material and learning resources which were given by lecturer in the class. It must be admitted that, in fact, the commercial textbooks did not cater to students' needs (Stoller, Horn, Grabe, & Robinson, 2016) that differ greatly from EGP, especially for Islamic Thought Politic students. Additionally, the material availability is unbalanced. For instance, it's fairly simple to obtain commercial textbooks for some departments or study programs as it has large target market, such as for students of business, law, economics, agriculture, nursery, medicine, education, and others. Yet, for Islamic Thought Politic department, it is still difficult to find the suitable textbooks on the market. Moreover, other alternative variations of materials are also still rarely found.

Therefore, due to two factors, the question of material supply is crucial. Due to their heavy teaching loads and ignorance of ESP characteristics, most teachers firstly lack the time necessary to design lesson plans. Second, the presence of textbooks for students gives the idea that ESP learning is taken seriously and is not only done to make the curriculum more appealing. For educators, textbooks serve as a primary resource, a source of teaching encouragement and inspiration, and could be adapted as the actual curriculum (Garinger, 2002). The availability of content is a significant issue in Indonesia and, of course, in universities, particularly when the reading assignments given by teachers occasionally fail to represent the course's objectives. If it is unstopped, this could cause ESP courses to be highly undervalued by the students themselves due to the not taking it seriously. Further, since they do not really understand how to use these materials when they are in college or later when they are out of school or working, it might result in students' low motivation in learning.

Actually, as long to the advancement of technology, students could utilize the online media (Petkovska. 2015. Terauchi, Noguchi, & Tajino. 2019) such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, or other electronic platform to be the learning resources. The media actually could give a positive impact on the study process, it might boost students' cognitive opportunities, encourage their creative thinking, and help them build new digital communication abilities, as well as aid them in overcoming their future professional obstacles (Saienko, Semyda, & Akhmad. 2020). However, based on the

questionnaires, out of 35 students, 11 students frequently use the online media to learn English, the rest used their gadget for daily communication and just having fun.

4. *Insufficient Curriculum for ESP*

The fourth issue is related to the curriculum law no. 12 from 2012, which grants autonomy to higher institutions, is that campus autonomy is given complete control over curriculum development. The curriculum is a set of teaching guidelines used in education that are created in accordance with the department's, faculty's, and universities' goals and missions. The learning objectives in the curriculum are constructed in a way and in accordance with learner needs in order to produce graduates who are competent. Thus, no ESP instructional design has been completed for each department or study program since the majority of teachers are lack of comprehension on the vision and mission of certain study programs or institutions where ESP is being presented. Rarely are needs assessed, causing ESP's goals to be off-course. Kusumaningputri (2010) added that, it is unclear whether to accommodate EGP or ESP under the curriculum's ESP type regulation. The introduction of English language instruction at universities requires rapid action from policymakers. English has so far been taught to students as ESP, but the material is actually EGP. Thus, Latif (2019) address the importance to have a need analysis before designing the material and starting the classroom lesson.

Especially in Islamic education institution (as in UIN Mataram), the outcome students are expected to integrate the general knowledge they have in the class within Islamic value. As a consequence, the English teacher should do any effort in choosing appropriate material which must be integrated to the Islamic value (Latif. 2019). Besides as a medium to access broadly and globally literature, English material is Islamic institution is expected to be useful in understanding the culture and notion in Islamic study. It then become other challenges for teacher to develop difference material every semester for different students base.

E. CONCLUSION

One of the best ways to give students more relevant and meaningful learning is through ESP courses. As it bridges what students need and what they will learn in the classroom. However, in the implementation, there found lots of challenges that obstruct the achievement of those benefits. This research found four main challenges faced by the students in learning English, especially for the students in the major of Islamic Thought of Politic. The first big challenge relied on the Students' Perception of the ESP Course, most of them view English as a difficult subject to be learned, this perspective could be seen as they think English has different language structures compared to Bahasa Indonesia. Next, another obstacle was because of their English ability is still regarded as low. Based on the test, most of them received a low score on their first test of English. Besides, most of them are still regarded have very low English vocabulary mastery, that is less than 50 vocabulary. Moreover, most of them do not have additional English learning resources as supplementary material outside the classroom for independent English Learning. The last, challenge was because of the insufficient curriculum for ESP for Universities. For the benefit and advancement of diverse parties, universities, students, and stakeholders must work well together.

The implementation of synergy can take the form of focusing firstly on the creation of ESP materials or textbooks for diverse University departments or study programs. In a social study, teachers should three questions to their students; what students have learned, what students want to learn, and what students have to learn (Stoller, Horn, Grabe, & Robinson, 2016). AS Petkovska (2015) stressed that being a successful ESP instructor demands not just knowledge, merit, time, and dedication, but also a constant quest for the most effective motivating, inspirational, and creative methods for a given ESP class.

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