

The ESP Scenario in EFL Economics Courses

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Abstract. The term "ESP" refers to a method of teaching English for any possible goal. It addresses with determining the curriculum for a scenario where students are grouped as homogeneous and have a common set of requirements. Thus, the goal of this study is to investigate the state of ESP teaching and learning in a third-year graduate student class at the University of Murni Teguh, Department of Economics. The researcher makes an effort to determine whether the ESP method of teaching EFL is used in this particular class. In order to do this, a representative sample of 50 students was selected at random and joined by their ESP instructor, a specialist in the same department. Two study tools have been used to gather data: a structured interview with the teacher and a questionnaire for the students. Consequently, a quantitative and qualitative analysis has been conducted. The findings showed that students are taught in general English with little consideration for their academic and professional demands (once they are employed). Instead, there is a strong emphasis on learning economic concepts and translating brief texts into Arabic, the students' native tongue. The ESP teacher also mentioned how he sensed a need for particular "teacher training." The findings may help ESP teachers understand what is actually required in this particular situation. Therefore, depending on the needs of each specific subject, ESP approaches should be used to teach English.

Keywords: English for Specific Purpose, needs assessment, and education for teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

The English language is considered highly crucial in nearly every field of study, particularly in this globalized age where people communicate with each other across borders and over a multitude of media [1]. The need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is growing due to the globalization of trade and industry, as well as the ongoing rise in worldwide communication across a range of fields. This is particularly true in nations where English instructed as a second language [2], [3]. Over the last few decades, there has been notable progress in the development of ESP. This improvement makes it easier to teach and learn for EFL students because it focused on teaching English in a way that best suits their needs [4], [5]. Hence, it is proposed that the English language instruction for business students varies from that provided to engineering students [6]. Additionally, the English taught in educational institutions may not align with the English used in professional work environments. ESP is a component of the broader trend of teaching language for certain objectives. The literature provides relatively recent definitions of ESP, suggesting that its inception can be traced back to the 1960s. Since ESP does not rely on a specific language, teaching style, or set of instructional materials, Hutchinson and Waters characterize it as a methodology rather than a product [7]–[9]. They also emphasize that the core of ESP lies in the simple question, "Why is learning a foreign language necessary for this learner?" Therefore, ESP is "A technique of teaching languages where all choices about content and delivery are made with the learner's goals in mind. Though each of these definitions has merit, they are not without flaws. Numerous instructors who are not specialists in ESP adopt the ESP methodology [10]. In this method, their syllabi are developed by analyze the needs of the learners and drawing upon their own specialized knowledge of English for authentic communication, as defined by Hutchinson and Waters. As such, the boundary between GE courses and ESP courses is uncertain. Strevens' definition, referencing the content associated with the second absolute characteristic, corresponds with the prevalent notion among numerous educators that ESP is closely connected to the specific subject matter. Robinson's observation that homogeneous classes are an ESP trait could lead to the same outcome. Nonetheless, a large portion of ESP work is predicated on the notion of an ordinary language and set of abilities shared by all academic fields or spanning all aspects of corporate activity. The revolution in educational psychology accounted for the third cause for the emergence. Students were no more mere observers; instead, they possessed their own requirements and interests of their own that made them relevant to English courses. Focusing English language instruction on the interests and needs of the students will encourage them to actively participate in the teaching and learning process. Once the course material is pertinent to the students' particular field of study, this could be accomplished. For instance, economics students should receive tasks and materials regarding economics, just as biology students may receive them about biology, and so forth. As a result of these three forces, which pushed for greater specialization in language acquisition, English instruction for specific purposes has grown and developed.

In reality, the ESP teacher is expected to fulfill a number of extra tasks in addition to those of a General English teacher [11]. For this reason, referring to an ESP teacher as "a practitioner" is appropriate. These responsibilities might include everything from assisting and directing to analyzing needs, creating courses, modifying or creating materials, and assessing materials. This explains why teaching ESP is so challenging and complex. When teachers are invited to teach in an ESP situation, they frequently feel uncomfortable and unfamiliar [12]–[14]. As a result, the majority of them say that they feel like they require training to get beyond these obstacles.

Teachers of ESP could talk about the issue of prefabricated materials. Such materials are indeed hard to come by, and even those that are, are they truly appropriate for the recently forming learner groups? In certain cases, ESP practitioners are even mandated to develop and design materials that cater to the needs of the students. This might be very taxing, particularly for inexperienced ESP teachers. Consequently, using texts from the target environment in the classroom may be beneficial for both learning or teaching. It is important for ESP teachers to supply specialized texts to guarantee that real resources are used.

Managing one's understanding of the subject is another issue. In short, is subject matter comprehension of ESP materials required of the ESP teacher? In order to directly respond to this query, it is recommended that ESP teachers adopt the role of interested learners rather than subject matter experts [15]. In addition to encouraging student-teacher interaction and teachers to learn more about the subject, this could foster a genuine communication environment. [16] contend, taking into account the aforementioned challenges, that:

It is not possible for ESP teachers to go to psychology and linguistics for solutions to issues they may encounter. Instead, individuals must select and combine the solutions that best fit the specific situation from the variety of options available. It takes curiosity, an open mind, and some skepticism to do this. For ESP teachers to be capable of making the variety of decisions they are asked to make, they must equip themselves with a solid understanding of practical and theoretical advancements in ELT. In a sense, all ESP instructors are trailblazers who are influencing the ESP field.

To put it briefly, pre-service and in-service teacher training programs ought to address the challenges associated with teaching and learning ESP. Through workshops, seminars, specialized courses, etc.

In a scenario where English is offered as a part-time course, the significance of ESP may not be fully recognized. Regarding what ESP teaching and learning entails, neither teachers nor students are certain. This may occur due to a deficiency in teacher training, as many educators are not familiar with the responsibilities of an ESP teacher. This is typically the case with English in other departments when instruction in the language is necessary for certain goals. Thus, it is important to distinguish between teaching English for General Purposes (EGP) and teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). All pupils undoubtedly have some experience with EGP, making it a solid foundation for any ESP instruction.

There are numerous institutions covering a wide range of courses at Algerian universities. Indonesian language is the language used to teach most courses. English is meant to be a mandatory subject for both professional and academic purposes in most settings. This study investigates the status of English instruction in third-year economics classrooms, where the language is intended to be taught for particular purposes. Since attitudes and motivation are often the driving forces behind language acquisition, this study aims to ascertain students' views about learning English as well as whether they are actively involved in the process [16]. In terms of the teaching approach and material selection, this research also seeks to understand the role that educators perform as ESP teachers. The primary feature that sets ESP apart from other educational programs is that it is thought to have created its own methodology for some of its lessons, drawing on research from other academic fields in addition to applied linguistics.

II. METHODS

"Descriptive designs help to identify problems in a current practice with a view to improve outcomes," according to [17], [18]. A descriptive study aims to offer insights into various components by describing and examining real-life circumstances. In order a comprehensive overview of the status of ESP teaching and learning in LMD economics classrooms at the University of Murni Teguh in Medan during the academic year 2022–2023, the study in question chose to employ the descriptive technique [19]. The participants are 50 students who were selected at random to serve as a representative sample together with their teacher, an English teacher who also specializes in the subject. The informants have separate classrooms, although they are taught by the same ESP teacher. As a result, the findings from the representative sample may be indicative of the entire population.

A questionnaire was used to gather information from the 50 informants, and the ESP teacher was interviewed. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on both the educational and personal backgrounds of the students as well as the state of English teaching and learning. Additionally, its objective is to characterize the attitudes and motivations of the students participating in the ESP class. Additionally, the teacher was questioned to talk about his history and credentials, as well as his

experiences with the ESP course. This encompassed discussions on both his own experiences and those of the students, the educational materials employed, and the students' motivation and attitudes regarding the English course.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

50 students, 17 of whom are male and 33 of whom are female, between the ages of 19 and 26, make up the informants. Every student had dedicated at least eight years to learning English; Those who repeated a grade in middle or secondary school, as well as those who pursued multiple specializations in college, were able to study the language for an extended length of time. Thirty-eight students stated that they had spent ten years studying the language. Nine years had been spent studying English by nine students. Out of the students, only one had dedicated Five years to studying English, compared to two who had studied it for eight years. Regarding the length of time students spend studying English in college, forty pupils indicated that they had studied English at university, the same response given by the majority of students. Seven students reported having spent two years studying English in college. Only one student had studied English for five years, while two had four years of experience.

The majority of students (80%) who were asked about their motivation for learning English stated that they were enthusiastic about the subject. Students had varying responses when asked how studying English for specific goals (economics) could benefit them in their future careers. A few of them contended that studying English for Business Purposes will improve their ability to interact with coworkers in the future. They said that verbal or written communication is essential in the corporate environment. Some individuals expressed uncertainty about the advantages of learning English for Business Purposes in their upcoming roles. Despite the claim that English is the predominant business language, they contended that the majority of businesses and corporations in Medan continue to communicate and write in Indonesian or Mandarin. A few students said that they would be more likely to travel and do business overseas if they learned English. They reasoned that speaking English well would make it easier for them to communicate with English speakers, which would improve their chances of landing a job. Regarding the amount of time allocated for learning English, the majority of students (78%) expressed unhappiness with the schedule. Just 22% of students felt that the number of hours was sufficient. Students stated that the course material concentrated primarily on terms associated with their field of study. 78% expressed dissatisfaction with the ESP course's content. The language areas in which the students struggled were vocabulary (13%), grammar (21%), listening (23%), speaking (5%), reading (17%), and writing (21%). They decided that in order to address a variety of demands, the ESP course should cover a variety of language-related topics.

We also inquired about the informants' interactions with their teachers. Of them, 56% thought their teacher connected with them in a way that was satisfactory, 17% said they were occasionally satisfied, and 27% said they didn't enjoy it. According to the same pattern, 56% of the students said they appreciated working in groups and pairs, whereas 44% gave a negative response.

Teacher's Interview

The teacher has been a full-time member of the Economics Department faculty for around seven years, and they hold a "Magister" degree in the subject. He works in the same department as a part-time English teacher. As far as he was concerned, the teacher said he had seven years of experience teaching economics and four years of experience teaching English. In spite of this, the teacher claimed to have researched books and the Internet to get understanding about business English and economics before taking a job in which he had no prior experience teaching ESP. The instructor conveyed his whole faith in the subject matter—economics. In regards to extrasensory perception, he felt insecure and acknowledged the necessity for training, arguing that it would benefit both teachers and students.

The teacher declared that neither the syllabus nor the materials were supplied by the organization when talking about the use of the materials. Instead, he chose and modified a textbook because he believed it was suitable for ESP classes. Because the material was related to his students' areas of expertise, he thought it was appropriate for them. The instructor stated that he prioritized teaching reading comprehension during the course, placing a strong emphasis on economics-related vocabulary.

According to the teacher, ESP classes don't do a very good job of preparing students for using English in the workplace. This resulted from the students' lack of any form of English foundation. The instructor saw the absence of prior knowledge as a black hole that prevented the students from interacting with one another and from progressing academically.

The teacher recommended that we reconsider English's place in our universities. According to him, studying English has become necessary and even obligatory. He continued by saying that accuracy and fluency are necessary to thrive in the business and economics sectors. He was adamant that pupils should only study English for an entire year—never studying any other subjects. He believed that a student's inability to succeed in English was caused by their background. Rather than assigning them to the

important work of teaching ESP, he insisted on training inexperienced ESP teachers first. Furthermore, he connected successful academic learning to the future career success of students.

Discussion

Based on the data gathered from both instruments, it can be concluded that most students were driven to acquire proficiency in the English language. Teachers should view this scenario as an incentive to get students involved and become active participants. The teacher and students both understood how important English is to their future success in the workforce. Thus, after doing a thorough examination, the instructor should align the course material with the goals of the students. "If students are made aware of the importance of using English in their work and are regarded as partners in the learning process, even those who appear weary, distracted, and uninterested in the language can become highly motivated learners." (Sylvie Donna, 2000).

Lack of time spent studying English was one of the primary reasons for pupils' poor performance in this subject. English begs to be studied for longer periods of time because it is currently the language of business [21], [22]. Here, the teacher and pupils both voiced their displeasure with the amount of time allotted to learning English. It takes more than an hour and a half a week to cover all the linguistic domains.

Even if the students indicated a desire to master various language skills, the course material was decided upon solely on the basis of the teacher's gut feeling, with no regard for the needs of the students either now or in the future. Students also stated that they had trouble with language in all domains. Eventually, in order to gauge the proficiency of each student and pinpoint their areas of strength and areas that need improvement, the teacher should conduct ongoing evaluations [23]–[25].

Not every student was a fan of the teacher's approach, so he needed change the way he engaged with them. He ought to motivate them to work in groups and in pairs by giving them stimulating assignments. To put it briefly, offering teacher training programs may be the most effective way to improve the state of ESP instruction and learning, particularly in economics classrooms and other settings where English is employed for specialized purposes [26]–[30].

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The condition of ESP teaching and learning in economics classrooms, where English is a mandatory subject taught for one and a half hours per week, is clearly illustrated in the current research. The results demonstrated that there are no differences between the teaching of ESP and regular English. The same process is used, and the teacher's primary responsibility is to impart knowledge. As a specialist in economics, the instructor modifies pre-made content because he thinks it is appropriate for the students. The foundation of ESP, needs analysis, is based on the teacher's intuition and never occurs.

ESP teachers at Medan colleges mention a number of issues that contribute to their sense of undervaluation. According to Hutchinson & Water (1987, p. 164), Johns (1981) enumerates five issues that the English teachers teaching ESP complain about: timetabling with a lower level of priority, which the results of this paper confirmed, lack of professional and personal contact with subject teachers, lower grade than subject teachers, lack of respect from students, and isolation from other English teachers teaching ESP in different classes. This could make ESP teachers feel inadequate and demotivate them to perform to the best of their abilities.

It is therefore imperative that decision-makers and curriculum developers consider the state of ESP instruction in Medan colleges. To meet the constantly changing needs, expectations, and advancements in the ESP area, they should reevaluate the status and grade of ESP teaching and learning.

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