

The English Needs of Islamic Studies Learners: ESP Speaking Course Model

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Abstract. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has attracted experts in the educational field as an effective program to learn English at tertiary level. Need Analysis (NA) serves as the determinant factor for successful ESP program. This research aims at exploring students' needs in speaking course in the Faculty of Islamic Studies at University of Muhammadiyah Malang Indonesia. This research highlights on students' level of mastery upon 11 English speaking skills and its urgency of mastering those skills. A quantitative study involving a questionnaire distribution was implemented in this current research. The result reveals that the respondents were lack in the skills set in a formal situation; meanwhile, they were more competent with daily-used skills. Also, it was revealed that the urgency to learn the skills including 'the not specific skill' was significant, as 67% to 83% of the respondents want to be competent in the skills now. In another word, it is found that the students required ESP and GE for a short-term goal. Thus, the finding of this research suggests that in ESP course, teachers are expected to infuse more speaking skills situated in a formal setting in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) with a mixture of General English (GE). To shed a light on the course, a model of ESP speaking course design is formulated.

Keywords: *need analysis, Islamic studies, course design.*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has led students into a growing demand of English mastery. Therefore, the idea of integrating language teaching into content course is paramount. As a result, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a way solution to this interest. ESP design refers to learning English as a second or foreign language that the main goal of learning is mastering English in a specific domain [1]. Also, this approach is preferred as it focuses mainly on English for academic, profession, and workplace context. Recently, higher education has been implementing this approach expecting that graduates are ready to carry professional task upon graduation. Meanwhile, ESP teaching in tertiary education has its own challenges. In teachers'

aspect, as it has been revealed, there are two dimensions of challenges, namely students-related challenges and institutional challenges [2]. Further, in students' perspective, it is suggested that knowing their needs of English learning is the significant determinant factor for their learning success [3].

Further, ESP research has broadened and find its new directions. The expansion includes English for Academic Purposes, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), and etc. EAP is detailed in this section. EAP has shown the way language differs in its rhetorical form. Also, EAP is often emerged because of the demand for academic literacy, and has been institutionally contextualized, as it specifies more on how language is used to perform academic task [4].

However, of its importance on teaching ESP with specific-designed material, this model is not always what the students' wants. A study on South Korean students shows that GE is more preferred, especially on speaking skill, and they stated of taking advantage on job-related skill in ESP/EAP course [5]. In addition, the Taiwan students across six universities declare that their attendance in GE course is tightly related to their short-term and long-term purposes whilst their willingness to attend ESP/EAP course is to achieve job-specific skill [6].

In ESP program, Need Analysis (NA) comes as the basis to measure on what and how to teach English. In its basic definition, NA is a procedure completed to gather information about students' need, in particular about their lack, want, and necessity [7]. NA in the fundamental continuum, "it is the cornerstone of ESP and leads to a focused course" [8]. There are three dimensions to proceed on doing NA, i.e. get ready to NA, do the NA research, and use the NA result [9]. However, the dimension is not a fixed linear approach [10]; rather, NA is a dynamic cyclical procedure that can be conducted and revised upon teaching-learning process assessment, and evaluation [11]. Thus, NA is a continue process serves as the starting point of course development also to revise the existed English curriculum.

A growing interest in NA researches have been conducted in several fields; an investigation on Accounting Department in Greek [12]; a study on Educational Administration Department in Iran [13]; a research on Engineering Department in Dhaka [14];

and the last Nursing Department in Thailand [15]. All the researches mentioned previously have put the concern on identifying students' specific needs so as to develop the right course content for the target learners. The result of NA research signifies the stakeholders' perception on important aspects to develop in running the success of ESP program. Mainly, NA plays a fundamental role to course design, material selection, and teaching method implementation.

However, of this importance, NA research is still limitedly done in the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Indonesian setting. It is vital to do NA research in Muslim context like Indonesia for two central explanations. First, Indonesia has Muslim as the major populated citizen, thus, there are Islamic affiliated universities existed, either public or private universities, obviously students majoring in Islamic Studies are there. Secondly, graduates of Islamic Studies are widely absorbed in the workforce as teachers, translators and interpreters, judges, economists, etc. In addition, in today's world, English and Islam or Western and Muslim have been closely attached as two continuums because of Arab and the oil, for instance. Thus, to explore their needs in learning English is somewhat important for the target students have their own specific discourse. In this regards, the research problem of this present study is formulated as follows: (1) What are the urgent needs of Islamic Studies students in ESP speaking skills?

METHOD

This research implemented a quantitative method as its research design involving a questionnaire as the main instrument to collect data. There was a phenomena of students majoring in the Faculty of Islamic Studies. The students were recorded to have lower achievement compared to students in the mainstream course such as students in the Faculty of Medicine, Psychology, Engineering, Politics, and Economy. This confirms the research finding highlighting that students with religious background are verified to be low motivated also have negative perception on English learning mainly because of the cultural issue [16], [17]. Thus, a profound move on how English is taught to students in Islamic context is necessary.

In this regards, the questionnaire was distributed to 60 students majoring in Islamic Education, Arabic Language, Islamic Law, and Sharia Economics in the Faculty of Islamic Studies University of Muhammadiyah Malang Indonesia. The participants of the research were selected randomly for convenient purpose. The questionnaire detailed about 11 skills in speaking course exploring students' level of competence and their urgency of having those skills. After been collected, the data were analyzed using a simple statistical analysis measuring its frequency,

percentage, and mean data. Afterwards, the data were analyzed and interpreted.

RESULT

Data in table 1 shows that participants were lack (fair) in the five skills; *having a discussion in formal situation* (47%), *having a conversation with a foreigner* (38%), *doing a formal presentation* (37%), *delivering a speech* (35%), *being an MC in a formal situation* (35%). Meanwhile, about the rest of skills the respondents felt capable of doing, ranging from 32% up to 53% rating themselves as 'good' at the skills. This result implies that the respondents were lack in the language used in a formal situation, meanwhile, they were competent in the skills performed in daily uses or on a less demanding skill such as *self-introduction*, *expressing opinion*, *daily conversation*, *describing place*, *telling procedure*; also the respondents were familiar to language discourse used in short functional talk such as *giving announcement*.

Table 1. Statistical data of respondents' perceived lacks on speaking skill

Skill	Responses									
	Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good		Excellent	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Introducing oneself	7	12%	12	20%	19	32%	12	20%	10	17%
Having a discussion in a formal situation	11	18%	28	47%	15	25%	4	7%	2	3%
Having conversation with a foreigner	7	12%	23	38%	19	32%	9	15%	2	3%
Expressing opinion	5	8%	17	28%	31	52%	7	12%	0	0%
Delivering speech	11	18%	21	35%	17	28%	10	17%	1	2%
Describing place	4	7%	9	15%	32	53%	13	22%	2	3%
Telling procedure	7	12%	18	30%	24	40%	10	17%	1	2%
Giving announcement	7	12%	18	30%	25	42%	8	13%	2	3%
Doing a formal presentation	11	18%	22	37%	20	33%	6	10%	1	2%
Being an MC in formal situation	14	23%	21	35%	17	28%	6	10%	2	3%
Being able to have conversation in daily life	9	15%	16	27%	22	37%	9	15%	4	7%

Table 2. Statistical data of respondents' perceived target needs on speaking skill

Skill	Responses							
	Now		Next Year		No Need		Don't Know	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Introducing oneself	50	83%	7	12%	0	0%	3	5%
Having a discussion in a formal situation	49	82%	7	12%	1	2%	3	5%
Having conversation with a foreigner	49	82%	7	12%	0	0%	4	7%
Expressing opinion	49	82%	7	12%	1	2%	3	5%
Delivering speech	40	67%	9	15%	4	7%	7	12%
Describing place	47	78%	7	12%	3	5%	3	5%
Telling procedure	47	78%	6	10%	2	3%	5	8%
Giving announcement	49	82%	5	8%	1	2%	5	8%
Doing a formal presentation	46	77%	7	12%	1	2%	6	10%
Being an MC in formal situation	44	73%	6	10%	2	3%	8	13%
Being able to have conversation in daily life	48	80%	8	13%	0	0%	4	7%
Mean		4.3		0.6		0.1		0.4

In addition, result in table 2 indicates that a major portion of respondents recorded that the urgency of mastering the 11 skills were dominant, as the 'now' percentage ranging from 67% to 83% with the highest mean of 4.3. This finding suggests that the respondents need the 11 skills including the less specific skills to be taught at the time they study English in tertiary education.

DISCUSSION

Initially, the study on Islamic Studies students shows that speaking in a formal setting were still come as their constraint as the respondents rate themselves a lack of competence speaking in this situation. This summary suggests that the students need to be competent in speaking English for formal setting, thus, to design speaking course aiming at improving students' skill for academic setting is necessary. In regards to this, it confirms the idea that ESP in this context serves its function as English for Academic Purposes (EAP). As it is defined, EAP is used in English teaching and research needed for those who use English to perform an academic task which is socially constructed within institution and globally driven [4]. In other word, the students need to be competent in the skills because there is a demand which is forced by academic convention. All the perceived lack of skills can be formulated into a conference simulation. Here is the framework:

Table 3. A Model of ESP speaking course

Model of International Conference Simulation
Part I Opening
- Being an MC
- Delivering Speech
Parallel Session
- Presenting a poster/paper
- Raising and answering questions (discussion)
Ice Breaking: Having conversation with a foreigner
Establishing rapport and persona
- Greeting
- Making a heartwarming talk
Closing

Further, there was an interesting fact found in the study that speaking for daily usage and speaking with less demanding skills such as *conversation in daily life* were less needed, however, these skills remain wanted to be learnt in a major portion. This point refers that ESP course and material design can be fluid and lenient to students' context, not strictly and specifically taught. It is in line with the finding in South Korean students that they preferred GE compared to ESP even though they had or had not experienced taking English class [5]. Also, some previous researches have pinpointed that General English (GE) is still needed to prepare students prior to attending a more complex ESP course. This nuance has been justified that 972 EFL college students in Taiwan's college enrolled in GE course for short and long term goals meanwhile their reason on enrolling in ESP/EAP course is more on job requirement [6]. Thus, this study highlights that ESP course in the Faculty of Islamic studies and in certain circumstances can be a mixture between EAP and GE.

CONCLUSION

This present study concludes that speaking in a formal setting is highly required to be taught in students majoring in Islamic Studies. In addition,

involving GE is also still visible and necessary for the target learners enrolling in ESP course. This finding invites stakeholders—teachers and curriculum developer to take this concern into account to achieve better design on ESP course at Islamic Studies Faculty.

In addition, this current study is still limited on data triangulation, therefore, a follow-up interview on their reason of choosing their response can be more elaborated in further research, thus, a deep understanding of learners need can be clearly drawn.

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