

LEARNERS' NEED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH LEARNING MATERIALS FOR ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH PALEMBANG

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to analyze the learners' target needs and learning needs for English learning material in the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang. This study used qualitative and quantitative research method through questionnaire and interview. The subjects of this study were 49 Economics and Business faculty students who have taken English subject in their previous semester, three lecturers of English, and three alumni users. The questionnaire was given to the students and the interview was given to the lecturers of English, and alumni users. The result of this study found that the students need the materials that can help them to understand spoken work-related instruction, conduct job interviews, write proposals (projects, plans, etc.), write a job application letter and personal data, do business presentations, read business letters, understand written work-related instructions, negotiate, read work-related literature, read contract/agreement documents, read email, express opinions at business meetings, write business email, write business letters, write contract/agreement documents, write report documents (meetings/sales/finance, etc.), serve customers orally, and to do business conversations through the phone. Furthermore, it could be highlighted from the result of the collecting data that those objectives of the study should be achieved through listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities.

Keywords: english for business, learners' target needs, and learning needs

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Introduction

English is a globally recognized as International language, and it is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. The importance of English is defined by the needs of numerous institutions and businesses in Indonesia, where English is used as a lingua franca for a variety of purposes. Yana (2017) stated that English is used as an instrument to access global communication, education, and global marketplace. English proficiency is becoming increasingly important to face global competition, which includes competition in human resources, education, and the economy. In the era of the ASEAN Economic Community, human resource quality improvement has become the key to successfully facing the free market

(AEC). English becomes the most widely used communication tool for winning in international competitiveness. Not only in global corporations, but also in small businesses, there is a growing demand for English. According to the ASEAN Study Center's research, the quality of Indonesian workers is still lacking, particularly in terms of English proficiency. English proficiency is linked to economic competition, as measured by per capita income, growth, the human development index, and level of affluence. According to the results of the English Proficiency Index (EPI) survey from 2014 as cited in Surani and Kusumawati (2018), Indonesians' English skill is placed 28th out of 63 countries, behind Singapore and

Malaysia. This explains why countries with more English speakers have a more prosperous economy. Therefore, in order to be a successful professional, a citizen must be able to communicate in English in a specific subject area.

Knowing the fact that English plays such a significant role in Indonesia, it is taught from elementary school to university level. In university level, teaching English for non-English student is called English Specific Purpose (ESP). Students require English for ESP in order to pursue their learning goals (according to their fields). Hutchinson and Waters as cited in Krismayani, Suastra, Suparwa, and Supida (2020) argued that ESP is an approach in language learning that is all decisions taken that involve teaching material and the overall learning method is based on the reason learners learn English. In the context of higher education, students learn English not just because they want to, but also because they are required to take the course. As a result, stakeholders and English instructors in particular must work to make this course more relevant and valuable for students. The main objective of ESP is to give students the language and communication skills they will need to perform effectively in their chosen fields of study, work, or vocation. ESP is aimed mostly at professionals and aims to focus on language used in a specific environment Basturkmen (2014).

This phenomenon has been acknowledged by universities in Indonesia, which have made English one of the compulsory subject for students in all faculties in order to prepare them for the globalization era. *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*, the largest private university in Palembang has 6 study programs accredited A one of them in management study program of Economics and Business Faculty. As a

faculty with the largest number of students and as well as the largest alumni contributor, it is important to do a need analysis relating to ESP learning material.

In fact, the majority of ESP in Indonesia does not take into account the language needs of the students. It could be proved from the fact that some commercial textbooks are unsuitable for the various learning needs of each college, school year, and class (Kusumaningputri, 2014). Furthermore, Mountfong Mackay, and A.J cited in Roza (2013) found that English teaching in university level so far is not knowledge of using English for communication purposes, but knowledge of how to use syntactic and lexical rules in English. They also emphasized that if teaching English at the higher education level is still emphasized on teaching structural grammar, students will feel disappointed and tend to be skeptical of English language skills.

A needs analysis is conducted to determine what the learner requires. Manalullaili (2014) added that assessing the needs of the students will assist them in learning in a natural way that is relevant to their interests. The first stage in designing an ESP program is to do a need analysis. The outcomes of the needs analysis are utilized to guide the syllabus design, material selection and preparation, teaching-learning process, and evaluation. It may be concluded that English for Specific Purposes is a type of learning that focuses on the unique needs of students. The production of learning material, including the substance of the material, the design of activities and exercises contained in the material, and the basis for the development of themes and language skills of students, reflects one of these students' particular needs.

Identifying the students' needs can help the lecturer in selecting relevant course materials. Therefore, the

researchers conducted this study in order to determine the optimal material required in teaching English for Economics Faculty students of *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*.

Methodology

A quantitative and qualitative research design was used in this study. The data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview adopted from Ria and Malik (2020). Quantitative analysis was used to examine the questioner, while qualitative analysis was used to examine the interview. There were 49 students of Management and Accounting study program, Economic and Business Faculty, *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*, three lecturers of English and 1 alumni user (Human Resource Department of company where the alumni are working) as the participants of this study. The data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview. Quantitative analysis was used to examine the questioner, while qualitative analysis was used to examine the interview.

Findings and Discussion

The data of the learning needs was collected from 49 students, three lecturers of English. Meanwhile, the data for target needs was taken from three alumni users of Management and Accounting study program, *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*. At the beginning for this learning analysis, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire used was divided into three sections; *personal information, students' need for learning English for business, and the materials' need by the students to be learnt*.

In the first section, the students were asked about their personal information. They were chosen from a group of 49 Economics and Business Faculty students who had completed

their General English course in the previous semester. Table 1 provides the detailed information.

Table 1. Students' Personal Information.

	Gender	Age
Male	8	18-21
Female	41	

Source: Students' Questionnaire

There were three questions given to the students in the second section, *the first* was about the need for students to study English for Business. There were 42 students (85.7 %) stated strongly agree and 7 students (14.3%) stated agree that English is important in running the business for their performance at work in the future. *The second* question was about English language skills (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) which should be emphasized in every implementation of English for Business teaching in order to prepare students for future work. Furthermore, it was found that there were 39 students (79.6%) chose speaking skill to be emphasized, 25 students (51%) chose listening skill to be emphasized, 20 students (40.8%) chose reading skill to be emphasized, and 14 students (28.6%) chose writing skill to be emphasized. *The third question*, students were asked about the need for additional hours in their English for Business subject. It was found that there were 33 students (67.3%) stated strongly agree, and 16 students (32.7%) stated that there should be additional hour for learning English for business in university.

The last section in the questionnaire was asked about the material that students would need to be taught, which will be provided by the objectives. The students were given a list of required objectives and asked to prioritize them 'Essential Priority,' 'High Priority,' 'Medium Priority,' 'Low Priority,' and 'Not a Priority,' were the

scales used. There were 18 list of objectives given to the students to be prioritized.

Table 2. Course Objective

Course Objective	Mean
To understand spoken work-related instruction.	4.2653
To conduct job interviews.	4.1633
To write proposals (projects, plans, etc.).	4.1429
To write a job application letter and personal data.	4.1020
To do business presentations.	4.0816
To read business letters.	4.0816
To understand written work-related instructions.	4.0816
To negotiate.	4.0612
To read work-related literature.	4.0612
To read contract / agreement documents.	4.0612
To read email.	4.0408
To express opinions at business meetings.	4.0000
To write business email.	4.0000
To write business letters.	4.0000
To write contract / agreement documents.	4.0000
To write report documents (meetings / sales / finance, etc.).	3.9796
To serve customers orally.	3.9388
To do business conversations through the phone.	3.9184

Source: Students' Questionnaire

The next data were collected from three lecturers of English, and it backs up the information from the preceding result. Semi-structured interview was used to interview them. The lecturers were asked three questions, including *the objective of teaching English for business to students, how the lecturers created materials, and what they should learn in English for Business course*. The result of the conducted interview, it was found that the lecturers' objectives in teaching English for the student of Economics and Business Faculty, *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang* were to introduce students to the English economics terms and

vocabularies, to teach the students how to interact with their international business colleagues, and to make the students understand and fluent in English especially for speaking and listening. Furthermore, it was found that the lecturers designed the material for teaching by adjusting to students' capability in learning English where they picked some general and also specific English materials which were easy to understand by them, designing the material based on students' capability and proportion, and designing the material based on English teaching guidance (syllabus and book) that has been given by the faculty. Moreover, from the last question asked to the lecturers, it could be highlighted that they considered that the students should be taught four English skills; listening, reading, writing, especially speaking.

The next data was taken from the target needs. In order to get the data, the researchers interviewed three alumni users. The researchers collected information from the interview about what English skills were frequently used by their employees during their task work. The three users confirmed that writing, speaking, reading, and listening are the skills needed. One of them clarified that all the skills are integrated each other and cannot be separated. The listening and speaking skills are important for them to communicate in some situations such as handling the telephone, video-call, customers who come to the company directly, presentation, and doing promotion. They added that in the ability of speaking and listening English could help them to expand their sales market to international level. In addition, they claimed that writing and reading skill are also important to support the administrative tasks such as drafting reports, writing and replying the emails, and letters.

Based on the result of the study, it could be interpreted that most of the students of Economics and Business faculty of *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang* (85.7%) realized that learning English is important for their performance at work in the future. Therefore, more than 50% or as 67.3% of the students believed that the hour of learning English provided by the faculty is not enough then they confirmed that there should be additional hour for learning English for business.

The course objective could provide direction in choosing a topic or material of teaching. As stated by Remache and Ibrahim (2018) it provided an opportunity for the lecturer to create better resources that met the students' needs. Based on the result of the questionnaire, it could be concluded that the students need the materials that can help them to understand spoken work-related instruction, conduct job interviews, write proposals (projects, plans, etc.), write a job application letter and personal data, do business presentations, read business letters, understand written work-related instructions, negotiate, read work-related literature, read contract / agreement documents, read email, express opinions at business meetings, write business email, write business letters, write contract / agreement documents, write report documents (meetings / sales / finance, etc.), serve customers orally, and to do business conversations through the phone.

Moreover, according to the findings of the conducted interview, the lecturers' objectives in teaching English to students at *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang's* Economics and Business Faculty were to introduce students to English economics terms and vocabularies, teach students how to interact with international business colleagues, and make students

understand and fluent in English, particularly for speaking and listening. Furthermore, the lecturers designed the material for teaching by adjusting to students' ability in learning English, selecting general and specific English materials that were easy to understand, designing the material based on students' capability and proportion, and designing the material based on English teaching guidance (syllabus and book) that has been published. However, the concluding question posed to the lecturers revealed that they believed students should be taught four English skills: listening, reading, writing, and, most importantly, speaking. In conclusion, to meet the needs of material it is a must for the lecturer to design the material of teaching English for economics and business students including four English skills that have been integrated with the objectives investigated previously.

The result of user interview in analyzing the target needs found that the four English skills are important to support the task work. Proficiency objectives, knowledge objectives, emotive objectives, and transfer objectives are the four types of language instruction goals identified by Basturkmen (2014). Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are examples of proficiency objectives. Business English courses are required to strengthen communication skills that can later be applied to improve workplace performance and open new career doors. Based on the result of the interview, speaking skill and listening skill become the top priority to their staff because those skills can help them to communicate with costumers in providing excellent service about dealing with product purchases, handling claims, handling the telephone, doing presentation, negotiating with new customers, meeting with the owner, and

selling products directly to customers. Furthermore, writing and reading skills are necessary for administrative work such as creating reports, composing and responding to emails, and writing letters.

Conclusion

In establishing English for specific purposes curriculum, a needs analysis is critical. It is the process of determining what a course will consist of and how it will be run. According to the findings, need analysis can lead to significant improvements in material design for economics and business students of *Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*. Knowing what skills students needed allows lecturers to concentrate on the teaching and learning process. Because the design is based on the needs, wants, desires, and expectations of the students. Furthermore, this study also highlights material that meets the needs of both the learner and the users. Therefore, it could be used for developing the material for English for Economics and Business.

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