

Challenges of a non English education graduate in teaching ESP: A case study in State University of Surabaya

Sugeng Susilo Adi
University of Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

Khusnul Khotimah
State University of Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail: ssaradya@gmail.com

Abstract: Recently, ESP has been receiving even greater interest due to the effects of globalization within industry and academia, particularly in Asia. In industrial settings, workers increasingly need strong English skills to succeed in their jobs (Anthony, 2015, p.2). Accordingly, this paper aims at describing the ESP learning process in Non-English Departments at State University of Surabaya (UNESA). This is a case study within the context of the university's Department of Instructional Technology, School of Educational Sciences. The choice of the case study method is due to its uniqueness because the ESP lecturer at this context does not have an English Language educational background. In depth interview, document analysis, questionnaires, and teaching material evaluation are conducted to collect the details of description about the ESP learning process in the selected context. The research reveals that from the policy perspective, the purpose of the ESP of the university is to prepare the students to complete the English proficiency test designed by the university language center. The topics in the locally designed teaching material are not specifically related to the instructional technology academic discipline. They are about daily issues related to university students' life. The lecturer utilizes Edmodo, an internet based social media like for assessing students' performance through quiz and assignments. The various level of students' proficiency is one of the constraints faced by lecturer. A constructivist approach is applied by the lecturer by providing students opportunities to explore the English language in a communicative use. At the end of semester, majority of the students show an increase in confidence in using English for communicative use.

Keywords: ESP, Non-English Departments, case study, Edmodo, constraints

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a system of learning English in Indonesian public (state) and private universities. English language courses are mandatory courses for all universities in Indonesia based on the national curriculum standards established by the Ministry for Research, Technology, and Higher Education. In reality, ESP in Indonesia is seen as a learning system with many difficulties. According to the writer, the difficulties that often become discussion matters for practitioners of English language learning can

be classified according to their areas, among them the areas of higher education policies, lecturer autonomy, learning management, and socio-culture.

In the area of higher education policies, writer's observations on several state universities in the province of East Java have shown that there are differences and similarities in applied policies related to ESP. The basic similarity is that the universities have all executed the policy that had been executed by the central government, in this case by a ministry, that English language courses are to

be mandatory for Bachelor's (S1) degree programs. However, each university has different policies in the management of curriculum levels, and even internally within a university there are several differences from one school to another. One university, in implementing and achieving a vision to become an international-standard university, have stipulated English-language competence as an absolute prerequisite for its graduates. The university has required a certain score on an international-standard English-language test certificate as a requirement, which has the consequence that the system of management for ESP learning is only directed for achievement of the target score on the test.

The differences of internal implementations of ESP learning management policies at the level of schools in a university comprise differences in materials and learning genres. Several schools teach ESP with the purpose of increasing student competence of the English language in mastering the terminology and understanding textbooks in the field of knowledge that becomes the focus field of discipline of the school. Several other schools within the said university emphasize the learning goal of general English-language ability at the intermediate level, which would allow the student to be able to actively interact in spoken or written forms using the international language.

In the area of lecturer autonomy, the inexistence of equal perceptions regarding the goal ESP makes it difficult for ESP learning to succeed. Meanwhile, issues of the lack of course meetings, limited facilities for learning, and ineffective class behaviors makes learning management difficult. Finally, the position of English, which is considered a foreign language, often becomes a reason why English-language learning in universities is often considered ineffective.

Even so, with the various difficulties of ESP learning in several universities in Indonesia, research by Dja'far, Cahyono, and Bashtomi (2016) had revealed that learning motivation

for English in universities are quite high. Further, they had concluded that:

"The results of the research showed that the Indonesian EFL teachers perceived that university students' motivation was generally high. The students' motivation is moderately related to ESP learning achievement for both groups of students. However, it was revealed that the students' motivation and achievement in reading and writing aspects of ESP between the students of low and high motivation were considerably different. Based on the findings, we recommend teachers apply motivational strategies in ESP classrooms as the strategies bring benefits to the improvement of students' ESP learning achievement" (Dja'far, Cahyono & Bashtomi, 2016:33).

This article has the intent of describing the difficulties, challenges, and strategies of a lecturer in the ESP learning process. This research is a case study research on the ESP learning and teaching process at the Department of Education Technology of the State University of Surabaya (UNESA).

Formulation of the problem

From the above explanation, this research is aimed to describe several problems as in the following formulation:

1. What are the learning strategies that lecturers apply in managing ESP learning at the Department of Education Technology of the State University of Surabaya?
2. What are the learning goals ESP at the Department of Education Technology of the State University of Surabaya?
3. What are the difficulties that lecturers encounter in achieving ESP learning goals?
4. What are the learning outcomes that are achieved by students after learning ESP?

Literature review

ESP in the Asian and Indonesian context

In an article titled *Recent Trends in Asian ESP*, Sa-ngiamwibool (2014) stated that more and more Asian countries will require ESP competence for use in the workplace. The regional economic integration of the AEC will play a vital role in ESP learning going forward. The development of ESP as a field of discipline in Asia will continue to increase. The primary field of pedagogical ESP is also thought to be further expanding. This reflects the increased influence of ESP in the future, and also that ESP can become a more well-known academic discipline. The growth of business in English and the growth of Business English courses in the entire Asian region is reflected from the increase in percentage of researches being published in this field. Several international journals that are fully dedicated to studies in ESP include *The Asian ESP Journal*, *ESP World*, *the Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, and *the Taiwan International ESP Journal*. This growth also reflects the increase of professional people in the field ESP because of the internationalization of English as a global language.

Meanwhile, in *The Changing Role and Importance of ESP in Asia*, Anthony (2015) stated that within the past several years, ESP has attracted massive attention from industrial actors and scholars in Asia due to increased pressures from the general public to provide high-quality English language education as a result of the globalization of economies and higher education. Trends that have been observed within the past 20 years, such as globalization in industry and academics as well as the increase in international students, indicate that ESP teaching will become a part with increased importance in university curricula in Asia. ESP lecturers are expected to play an important role in designing and participating in English language programs to fulfill the needs of students who struggle to handle the demands of English Mediated Instruction (EMI) programs. The growth in EMI instruction can be seen as a reflection of the current state of English language teaching.

What is happening in tertiary institutions in Japan is that English language courses that have been traditionally managed by non-English language faculties or departments have been transferred to institutions that claim to provide English language education that is more appropriate to certain needs (Howell 2009, in Anthony 2015). It appears that the increasing importance of globalization will cause changes in the design and structuring of ESP programs, making them more integrated, coordinated, and connected in the form of network-based learning.

In the Indonesian context, Kusumaningputri (2010) explained that the implementation of ESP in higher education is essentially an effort to respond to the challenges of the demands of the working world. ESP courses are expected to provide two benefits. First, as ESP is being taught during the time students undergo academic education within their respective fields of discipline, students then learn to use English directly in the context of their fields of discipline, for both academic and non-academic interests. Here, academic interests refer to being able to read, listen, write, and speak about things that are related to content or materials of their fields of discipline. The second benefit is skills for non-academic interests outside their fields of discipline, such as speaking, reading, listening, and reading about their everyday things. The examples include talking to lecturers and friends, writing light reviews, listening to news in English, and many more.

Even so, Kusumaningputri (2010) adds that ESP instructors naturally experience teaching difficulties because teaching ESP in universities may very well be a new experience for them. Pedagogical and emotional maturity, and the time required to prepare for teaching in a different department from their field of discipline, demands preparations that are not simple. In addition, many young lecturers also do not understand the character of ESP courses, which are essentially different from learning the English language for general purposes. This affects the teaching materials, aims, and methods, which when progressed will cause

ESP learning to be misdirected. A third challenge that lecturers face is excessive teaching load. In addition to teaching ESP, the lecturers are also lecturers in the Faculty of Literature and Faculty of Teaching and Education Science, teaching various courses in both faculties. This very high teaching load causes the achievement of ESP learning goals to not be at the maximum because the lecturer is too tired, putting the learning quality at risk. In terms of teaching materials, in particular in non-English study programs, sometimes this becomes irrelevant with the backgrounds and needs of the students. This occurs due to several reasons, such as the lack of English language teaching materials that have been designed for particular purposes, and the many available teaching materials published in foreign countries which have inappropriate difficulty levels to the needs of Indonesian students.

Another ESP learning context in Indonesia is depicted by Coleman (1996) in "Shadow puppets and language lesson: Interpreting classroom behavior in its cultural context". This article is an ethnographic study on the classroom behavior for the English language in classes of state universities in the late 80s. Coleman wanted to see how far the factor of culture is related to the English language teaching process in the classroom. In his research, he performed direct observation on the learning-teaching process in the classroom, made notes, interviewed lecturers, and read books on Indonesian and in particular Javanese culture, including the work of Clifford Geertz and about *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets). In one of his notes, he interestingly pointed out that:

"By the time I left approximately 75 people were present... Throughout the lesson there was a tremendous amount of coming and going, of people changing place, of late comers arriving and searching for seats, and constant noise of people talking, quite openly and loudly, with each other". (Observation 35).

Coleman saw that the learning process in the Indonesia is highly related to two Javanese

local cultural products, which are *wayang kulit* shows and greetings at wedding receptions or other major events. The English language learning process in the classroom, according to Coleman, is no different than a *wayang* show. The lecturer is analogized to be the actively speaking *dalang* and the students are the *wayang* audience who relax while occasionally smoking, eating, drinking, yawning, and even sleeping, only to then wake up and take notice when there is a funny or war scene. The same is true during greetings at a reception; not many in the audience take notice. For Coleman, English language learning in the Indonesian classroom is purely a ritual. Interestingly, when he interviewed several English language curriculum experts in Indonesia, including Sadtono, they consider such classroom behavior to not be a problem. At the end of his discussion, in what may be an attempt to avoid negative reactions to his observations, Coleman considered this English language teaching problem in a neutral way. He stressed that effective English language teaching for the Indonesian context is by taking external courses, coming to a lecturer's home, forming study groups, or taking private lessons. As revealed above, English language teaching in Indonesia and in particular the classroom behavior cannot be removed from the Indonesian local cultural context. Researches that do not see this as a cultural point will immediately leap to the conclusion of poor teaching.

Though circumstances may now have changed, and though the observations of Coleman were done on a small scale, some of the facts he revealed indeed does capture the true reality, including passive students, classes with many students, students not possessing the materials, and lack of opportunities for students to actively participate using English in their learning process.

Method

This research applies the case study method. In this case study, in-depth interviews are conducted with lecturers. In addition, document analysis, student questionnaires, and

examination of teaching materials are done to obtain a detailed picture of ESP learning in the selected research context.

A case study is an empirical research that examines contemporary phenomena in a real-life context. Case studies involve intensify analyses on people, communities, or organizations. Case studies provide opportunities for the researcher to obtain holistic and in-depth views on research problems, and can facilitate the depicting, understanding, and explanation of problems or contextual situations of the research (Yin, 1994). In case studies, documents and data are examined in detail in order to explain the phenomena within the data. Based on the data, the researcher can produce a theory and will be able to test this theory (McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

Rahardjo (2017) added that a case study is a series of scientific activities that are done in an intensive, detailed, and in-depth manner on a program, event, and activity, whether on the level of individuals, groups of people, institutions, or organizations, to obtain an in-depth knowledge on the event. Usually, the selected happening (which is then called a case) is an actual (real-life) event that is taking place, not something that has already taken place (Rahardjo, 2017:3).

In this case study, the researcher used the steps to a case study as had been developed by Rahardjo (2017: 23). These are the explanations to the steps of the case study research:

- (1) determining the focus of study, which covers the selection of a problem that is feasible and meaningful to study;
- (2) development of theoretical awareness by studying relevant literature and previous studies;
- (3) determining the case or matter to be studied, which covers the activity of selecting from where and whom data is obtained;
- (4) development of a protocol for obtaining and processing data, which covers the activity of determining the tools, steps, and technique to be used for obtaining and processing data;

(5) executing the activity of data collection, which is composed of the activity of collecting data from the field or examining through the selected literature;

(6) processing of obtained data, which covers the activities of coding, categorizing, comparing, and discussing;

(7) negotiation of study results with the subject of the study; and

(8) formulating the conclusion of the study, which involves the activity of interpreting and integrating findings into the structure of previous knowledge, and providing suggestions for further studies (Rahardjo, 2017: 22).

Findings

Lecturer profile

As explained in the introduction to this article, the profile of lecturers for the English language course at the Department of Education Technology of UNESA represents a unique part of this research, making this research able to be categorized as a case study. These lecturers do not possess the theoretical and practical foundations for English language teaching because they are not graduates of the Department of English Education. These lecturers are only Bachelor's and Master's graduates of Education Technology who were appointed by department authorities to teach the English language course. These lecturers were appointed because they happened to have high scores in international-standard English language competence tests. To make up for their lack of English language educational background, department provided to them the chance and facilities to participate in several training courses for English language teaching, both inside and outside the campus of the State University of Surabaya.

To equalize perceptions regarding teaching content and method, university authorities assigned the language center in the campus to design the curriculum, teaching materials, lesson plans, and evaluation system. The lecturers of the English language course become part of a community of ESP lecturers who routinely communicate informally regarding the issue of ESP teaching.

The aim of the faculty in relation to the mastery of the English language

In the documents regarding the vision, mission, and goals of the university and the department of education technology, the researcher did not find data that shows the importance of mastery of foreign languages, in particular English, for its graduates. Yet, in a document found for the aims of the Faculty of Education Science, there is very clearly an indirect acknowledgment of the importance of English as an international language. These are the aims of the Faculty of Education Science of UNESA:

1. To create high-quality and competitively superior graduates with competence at the national and international levels.
2. To create innovative scientific works in the field of education science and the science of psychology for both lecturers and students, and to have them published nationally and internationally.
3. To create cooperation with other institutions, both national and international, in order to strengthen the institution and development of education science and the science of psychology.

From the above explanation, mastery of English is considered important because of the noble reasons of being able to compete at the international level, publish articles internationally, and create institutional cooperation with international institutions.

Aims of ESP learning

Normatively, lecturers stated that the aims of teaching the ESP course at the department of education technology at UNESA is so that students possess an integrated competence of the English language at the intermediate level in order to understand the discourse of written and spoken texts in the field of education technology. Further, lecturers explained that the ESP course is expected to increase student competence in fulfilling the need for speaking English for academic purposes, which is also related to the field of discipline of education technology.

Students are expected to be able to use the English language for communicative purposes that a student is demanded to have in a global life. In detail, lecturers expect that their students can peruse their competence of the English language for practical academic needs. For their speaking abilities, students are expected to be able to understand simple academic spoken discourse such as lectures, lesson videos in English, audio explanations of spoken academic texts, and simple conversations discussing academics and education technology as the field of discipline they study. For their reading abilities, students are expected to be able to understand simple academic texts about the field of discipline of education technology. Students should be able to explain the primary ideas found within a text as well as to understand specific information found in them. For their writing abilities, students should be able to write simple paragraphs with good grammatical accuracy, explain ideas orderly and chronologically, provide relevant information, and draw conclusions from the written ideas. Finally, for their speaking abilities, students are expected to be able to present academic texts at an intermediate level in simple academic forum settings such as group discussions, class discussions, and class seminars.

In reality, the ESP course at the Department of Education Technology at the State University of Surabaya is directed to prepare students to face the Test of English Proficiency (TEP) di Language Center of the university as a prerequisite for student graduation. The lecturers explain that the teaching content is extrapolated from the curriculum in the form of a module book containing general and specific English language material (EAP and ESP) with text related to student life on campus. This module was composed in relation to the application of the TEP regulation for students of the State University of Surabaya as one of the requirements for graduation. It is expected that the various materials and training exercises found in the module can help students to study materials in order to achieve the required score.

To bridge the gap between the need for English language competence integrated in ESP with the demands of the TEP, lecturers innovated by providing several activities that allow students to use the English language for communicative purposes. Several forms of these activities include paired conversations, class discussions, storytelling, and academic presentations that are packaged in a teaching model that is both challenging and interesting.

Difficulties, learning strategies, and class behaviors

The primary difficulty in ESP teaching as found by the lecturers is the lack of confidence of students in using the English language for communicative purposes. Second, the varied proficiency levels also become a challenge for lecturers in the effort to create meaningful learning. Several class activities were conducted by the lecturer in facing those difficulties.

In addition to following the teaching guidelines found in the module, as explained in the discussion above, lecturers innovated with the use of several learning strategies through interesting and challenging activities. One example is learning English while having breakfast together, where students were asked to bring their own food to be made as storytelling and discussion activities on breakfast from the point of view of the student, including daily activities of the student. In this discussion, students were made to be motivated to use English as a communication tool. The inability of lecturers in comprehending theories, methods, and approaches in ESP learning did not stop lecturers from managing learning that is interesting and meaningful. This is proven by the basic principle of foreign language learning, which is to provide a chance for learners to use the language as a communication tool, which has been executed.

In a further explanation, a lecturer stated that students were provided the chance not only to use the language in classroom communication, but also the chance to utilize the language in its cultural context. As an example, students were asked to demonstrate a telephone conversation

on how to reserve a table at a restaurant. This is designed to provide a chance to students so that they know about the cultural context of the English language if they wish to dine at a restaurant. The lecturer states that the activity was necessary to be conducted in order to provide cross-cultural understanding, considering that they are used to eat at food stalls or traditional Indonesian restaurants and very rarely eat at a modern restaurant as in the cultural context of the English language.

Students' progress

The lecturer explains that some students feel motivated to learn more about English after studying ESP in the first semester. They say that after studying ESP they love English more than before. They started to read some English textbooks and fictions. To increase their listening skill, they say that they started to watch English movies with no subtitles. But the most meaningful progress the lecturer noted from the classroom interaction is that the students are not afraid to speak up anymore in the speaking activities.

The scores of proficiency test (TEP) for the students investigated in this research were not published yet so that the relationship between the teaching strategies and the scores were still not revealed. However, the lecturer tried to perform the foreign language principles that she perceived effective. The interview with the lecturers shows that she provides the students with, *first*, opportunities to use the language in communicative purposes in some various activities. Secondly, the students are provided with all integrated language skills, forms, and meaning. And the last, students get their feedback from online communication by using a social-media like Edmodo. This Edmodo is utilized to measure the students' progress such as mid-semester test as well as giving feedback for the students performance.

Conclusion

From this research it may be concluded that a non English education graduate could be a good ESP lecturer. Some criteria could be applied when a higher education institution appoints a non English graduate to an ESP

lecturer. A training on English language teaching methodology is a compulsory subject. Also, they should have an excellent English language proficiency. And the last, they should have an appropriate knowledge about the subject or academic discipline of the ESP in which they are teaching. The research also reveals that from the purpose of the ESP of the university is to prepare the students to complete the English proficiency test designed by the university language center. The locally designed teaching material are not specifically related to the instructional technology academic discipline. They are about daily issues related to university students' life. The lecturer utilizes Edmodo, an internet based social media like for assessing students' performance through quiz and assignments. The various level of students' proficiency is one of the constraints faced by lecturer. A constructivist approach is applied by the lecturer by providing students opportunities to explore the English language in a communicative use. At the end of semester, majority of the students show an increase in confidence in using English for communicative use. The students progress could be the result of the approach the lecturer applied, such as providing the students with opportunities to use the language in communicative purposes in some various activities.

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