

DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES MODULES IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION LEARNING AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: This study aims to develop an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) module tailored to the needs of Islamic Education (PAI) programs in higher education institutions. The research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-exploratory method, involving three stages: (1) document observation, including the analysis of Syllabus (RPS) and existing teaching materials, (2) needs analysis through interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with faculty members and students, and (3) the design and development of ESP modules integrating Islamic content. The study was conducted at two Islamic universities in Indonesia, University A and University B, with participants comprising program heads, lecturers, and students from Islamic Education programs. The findings highlight several key points: University A lacks a structured ESP module, relying solely on RPS and inconsistent content across study programs. In contrast, University B demonstrates a more organized approach, with a dedicated ESP textbook titled English for Islamic Studies that incorporates Islamic themes, such as *tafsir*, *fiqh*, and *aqidah*. Additionally, University B effectively integrates digital tools and employs student feedback mechanisms to enhance engagement and flexibility in learning. Reading skills

emerged as the most critical competency, supported by thematic Islamic content to improve linguistic and religious competencies. The study concludes that a well-structured ESP module aligned with institutional goals and students' academic and spiritual aspirations can significantly enhance the teaching and learning process. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on ESP as a transformative tool for education in Islamic contexts.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Learning; Module; Student Feedback; Textbook.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization era has fundamentally transformed the educational landscape, establishing English as a critical tool for accessing global knowledge and enhancing professional and academic capacities (Abdelhalim, S. M., & Alqubayshi, H. A., 2020). Therefore, academics and educators in various educational institutions extensively research the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tailored to their respective fields. (Schneider, 2016; Rahmawati & Anindhyta, 2022; Muhammad & Utami, 2023; Sari *et al.*,

2022; Sukerti, & Yuliantini, 2018). For students pursuing Islamic studies, English proficiency is not only a medium of communication but also an avenue for engaging with international Muslim communities, exploring contemporary Islamic scholarship, and presenting Islamic values globally (Abudhahir & Ali, 2018). Despite its significance, the existing English curricula in many higher education institutions are insufficient in addressing the unique linguistic needs of Islamic studies students (Hillalliyati, 2022). This gap highlights the importance of ESP, which aims to tailor language instruction to the academic and professional demands of specific disciplines (Rizal, 2017; 2019).

Research underscores the necessity of integrating Islamic content into ESP programs for Islamic studies students (Ma'mur, 2005; Astutik & Astuti, 2023). For instance, a study conducted at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra highlighted the need for English modules that incorporate Islamic texts, such as *tafsir*, *fiqh*, and *hadith*, while simultaneously enhancing students' core language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Warda & Dalimunte, 2022). Similarly, an evaluation of English for Islamic Studies (EIS) programs at IAIN Palu revealed that contextual evaluation is vital in aligning course content with institutional goals and student needs (Bandu *et al.*, 2021). These findings indicate that integrating Islamic themes within English instruction significantly enriches students' linguistic and religious competencies.

The role of needs analysis in curriculum development is pivotal for ESP courses. Studies from diverse academic contexts have shown that understanding

learners' goals and challenges leads to the creation of effective and relevant materials (Syah, 2015). For example, ESP programs tailored for medical students in China demonstrated how incorporating domain-specific texts can motivate learners and bridge gaps in their language proficiency (Li & Heron, 2021). Similar outcomes were observed in Indonesia, where ESP materials designed for sports students enhanced their engagement and learning outcomes (Risan *et al.*, 2021). In the context of Islamic studies, well-structured syllabi and teaching methodologies have been emphasized to ensure that students' academic and spiritual objectives are met effectively (Zakaria, 2021; Ma'mur, 2005).

Additional insights emerge from research examining explicit reading strategies and their role in improving comprehension within Islamic studies contexts. The incorporation of explicit strategy instruction has been shown to significantly enhance students' ability to understand and analyze Islamic texts in English, thereby underscoring the importance of customized pedagogical approaches (Sa'dulloh & Suhono, 2019). Furthermore, Islamic studies students often exhibit positive attitudes toward learning English when they perceive its relevance to their field and its potential to foster global engagement (Abudhahir *et al.*, 2018). The integration of culturally and contextually appropriate materials further enhances their motivation and academic outcomes (Al-Jarf, 2021; Roza, 2013).

Blended learning, combining face-to-face and digital methodologies, represents a transformative approach for ESP courses, particularly for Islamic studies. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of blended learning in

providing flexible, interactive, and engaging educational experiences. For example, Sulaiman (2023) developed e-modules for Islamic Religious Education using the ADDIE model, which combines multimedia elements to support independent and collaborative learning. Such innovations align with the broader objectives of ESP by integrating specialized content with modern instructional techniques (Yuliana *et al.*, 2022).

A corpus-based approach to vocabulary selection in ESP materials has also proven valuable, particularly for Islamic studies. This method ensures that learning resources align with high-frequency words and phrases critical for comprehension and application in academic contexts (Kirana *et al.*, 2018).

Despite the progress in ESP material development, challenges remain. Many ESP programs fail to meet students' specific needs due to inadequate needs analysis or mismatched materials, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced motivation (Hartina & Syahrir, 2021). For example, Islamic broadcasting students often cite the lack of tailored materials and professional input as barriers to achieving their learning goals (Hartina & Syahrir, 2021). Addressing these gaps requires a robust curriculum design process that integrates context evaluations and aligns with learners' academic and professional aspirations (Zaitun *et al.*, 2022).

The potential of ESP to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps is particularly evident in non-Western contexts. Studies from Pakistan and Indonesia reveal that English, when adapted to reflect Islamic cultural and linguistic values, serves as an effective medium for intercultural dialogue

and knowledge dissemination (Mahboob, 2009; Syandri, 2023). Such adaptations counter the perception of English as a hegemonic language and highlight its utility in supporting global Muslim identities (Alhamami & Almosa, 2023).

In light of these insights, this research seeks to develop an ESP module specifically designed for Islamic studies students at two Islamic universities in Indonesia. The module integrates Islamic content with communicative language teaching methods, addressing both linguistic and religious objectives. By aligning with institutional goals and student aspirations, this study contributes to the broader discourse on ESP as a transformative tool in education.

METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative approach using a descriptive-exploratory method to gather in-depth information about the needs of ESP modules relevant to the learning of Islamic Education (PAI) and to develop appropriate modules based on field findings. The research involved three stages: (1) document observation, including the analysis of Syllabus (RPS), the learning environment, and teaching materials used in Islamic studies programs; (2) needs analysis, which identified module requirements through interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with selected faculty members from Islamic Education departments; and (3) module development, designing ESP modules that integrate Islamic content based on the results of the needs analysis. This study was conducted at two universities: University A, a prominent State Islamic University in Java, and University B, a leading private Islamic university in East

Java. Participants included faculty members and students from the Islamic Education programs, providing comprehensive insights into the current needs and challenges of ESP module development tailored to Islamic Education.

Data collection

In this qualitative study, data were collected through interviews and observations.

Data for this study were collected through two primary methods: in-depth interviews and document observations. In-depth interviews were conducted with faculty members from the Islamic Education program at University B to explore the specific needs and challenges related to ESP module development. The interviews focused on several aspects, including the primary competencies required for students, the integration of Islamic content into ESP materials, and the incorporation of digital tools into teaching resources. Participants emphasized the importance of “Reading” as a core skill in ESP and highlighted challenges, such as limited interactive exercises and difficulties in understanding specific vocabulary.

Document observations involved analyzing Syllabus (RPS) and existing teaching materials used in Islamic Education programs. These documents provided a baseline understanding of the curriculum structure, key topics, and learning objectives, which informed the design and content of the proposed ESP module.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including the heads of the Islamic Education programs, faculty

members, students, and the heads of the Language Centers at both University A and University B. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the specific requirements for an ESP module tailored to their contexts, including competencies required for students, integration of Islamic content into ESP materials, and the use of digital tools in teaching resources. At both University A and University B, the interviews with the heads of programs and faculty members lasted approximately two hours per session. Interviews with the heads of the Language Centers lasted one hour per session, while interviews with students were shorter, varying in duration but generally under one hour. The questions focused on the challenges faced by students, specific vocabulary needs in Islamic Education, and strategies to enhance engagement and comprehension.

Observations

Observations were conducted to complement the interview data by examining the existing learning environments and teaching practices. At University A, observations were conducted over a one-week period, focusing on faculty members while they delivered lectures in Islamic Education courses. The aspects observed included teaching strategies, the use of English in instructional materials, and student interactions during the learning process. At University B, three observations were carried out over three different sessions, each lasting around two hours. Detailed notes were taken on the instructional methods and materials used, as well as the challenges observed in the learning environment. Observations were conducted in a non-intrusive manner to

ensure authenticity and accuracy of the data.

The combination of interviews and observations across these two universities provided a comprehensive understanding of the current state and needs for developing an effective ESP module tailored to Islamic Education programs.

Data analysis

The qualitative data collected from interviews and observations were analyzed using the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). This approach consisted of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data reduction stage, transcripts and observation notes were organized and coded to identify key themes such as vocabulary needs and instructional challenges. These reduced data were then displayed in structured formats like matrices to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the data and validating the findings through cross-referencing, ensuring consistency and alignment with the research objectives. This process provided a comprehensive understanding of the participants' needs, which informed the development of an effective ESP module tailored to Islamic Education programs.

The qualitative data collected from interviews and observations were analyzed using the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). This approach involved three interrelated stages of analysis:

1. **Data Reduction:** The collected data, including transcripts from interviews and notes from observations, were organized and simplified. This step

involved coding the data to identify key aspects relevant to ESP module development, such as specific vocabulary needs, instructional challenges, and integration of Islamic content. Irrelevant information was discarded to focus on meaningful data.

2. **Data Display:** The reduced data were presented in a structured format, such as matrices, charts, or thematic maps. This stage allowed for the visualization of patterns and relationships between different data elements, facilitating a deeper understanding of how the identified needs and challenges could inform the module design.
3. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** The final step involved interpreting the displayed data to drawing conclusions. This stage included cross-checking and validating the results to ensure their consistency and reliability. Emerging themes, such as the emphasis on "Reading Skills" and "Interactive Digital Tools," were refined and linked to the research objectives.

By applying the Miles and Huberman framework, this study ensured a systematic and rigorous analysis of the qualitative data, enabling the identification of actionable insights for developing an effective ESP module tailored to the needs of Islamic Education programs.

RESULTS

University A

University A does not yet have a module book specifically designed as an ESP textbook. The current pattern involves the study program directing the development of course outlines (RPS) for English courses, gathering lecturers who teach the subject, and then guiding them to

incorporate Islamic examples into their teaching. The approach to ESP instruction at University A is still very basic, leading to inconsistencies across different study programs. Moreover, the Language Center does not have the authority or a program to develop an ESP curriculum for the study programs. The Language Center at University A only administers English competency tests, such as TOEFL.

The teaching model at University A can be visualized sequentially in the following figure:

Figure 1: Workflow for Developing ESP Modules at University A



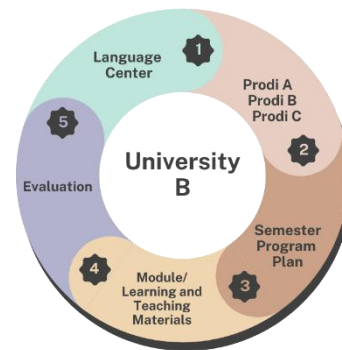
University B

University B demonstrates excellent management of ESP due to its clear workflow. The Language Center is responsible for developing the ESP curriculum, and it has even published a textbook titled *English for Islamic Studies*. The workflow at University B involves the Language Center inviting representatives of English lecturers from each study program to collaboratively formulate competency goals, syllabus, and the

content to be delivered. This ensures that the materials taught across all study programs are standardized and measurable. The data collection process also revealed that regular informal feedback from students plays a significant role in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching materials. Faculty members at University B expressed a commitment to gradually adopting digital resources, such as online exercises, to enhance student engagement and independent learning.

The teaching model at University B can be visualized sequentially in the following diagram:

Figure 2: Workflow for Developing ESP Modules at University B



The list of materials in the *English for Islamic Studies* textbook at University B, delivered over one year or two semesters, is as follows:

Table 1: List of materials in the *English for Islamic Studies* textbook at University B

Unit	Table of Contents
Unit 1	The Importance of Islamic Studies
	Writing Autobiography
	Introducing Oneself and Others
Unit 2	Is There a Dress Code in Islam
	Describing a Public Figure
	Describing People
Unit 3	What is the Quran?
	Present Tense
	Daily Activities

Unit 4	5 Amazing Health Benefits of Performing Salah Writing Progressive Actions Telling Progressive Actions
Unit 5	What is Zakah? Writing a Memo Asking and Giving Direction
Unit 6	Some Wisdom behind Fasting Writing an Invitation Letter Inviting People
Unit 7	Hajj Writing an Announcement Giving an Announcement
Unit 8	Abu Bakar As-Siddiq, the First Person of Ashara Mubashara Writing Advertisement Promoting a Product of Service
Unit 9	Business Ethics in Islam Writing a Poster Poster Presentation
Unit 10	Islamic Banking in the Digital Age Writing a Brochure Presenting a Brochure
Unit 11	Population of Islam Writing a Narrative Paragraph Telling a Story
Unit 12	Islam in Indonesia Writing a Narrative Paragraph Telling a Story
Unit 13	Gold and Silk for Men in Islamic Views Procedure Texts Telling a Procedure
Unit 14	Treating Guest: The Islamic Way Writing a Descriptive Paragraph Describing Places and Things
Unit 15	The Prophet of Islam Writing a Past Experiences Telling a Memorable Past Experiences
Unit 16	Muslim Brotherhood Writing News Item News Reporting
Unit 17	Islam and Modernity Writing Speech Script Delivering a Speech
Unit 18	Zamzam Water: Scientific Research Findings Writing a Report Text Presenting a Report
Unit 19	Woman in Islam Comparison and Contrast Paragraph Comparing Things
Unit 20	Akhlaq Writing Personal Message Making and Declining an Appointment
Unit 21	Effective Leadership Steps for Strategy Implementation in Islamic

	Organization
	Writing Tips
	Giving Tips Orally
Unit 22	Proofs of the Existence of Allah
	Writing an Expository Paragraph
	Expressing Opinion
Unit 23	What Does Islam Say about Terrorism?
	Writing an Argumentative Essay
	Performing Classroom Mini Debate
Unit 24	Steps to an Islamic Divorce
	Writing a Persuasive Text
	Presenting a Campaign
Unit 25	The Rise of Homosexuality: An Islamic Perspective
	Writing a Contract Letter
	Making a Meeting's Arrangement
Unit 26	Work and Wealth
	Writing Curriculum Vitae
	Presenting Curriculum Vitae
Unit 27	Concept of Marriage in Islam
	Writing an Application Letter
	Performing Job Interview
Unit 28	A Negative Effect of Teen Sex
	Writing a Personal Agenda
	Telling a Plan

From the table above, it is evident that the Islamic content included in the ESP module is very comprehensive, complemented by two learning activities.

The summary of the comparison between University A and University B can be presented as follows:

Table 2: Summary of the Comparison between University A and University B

Aspect	University A	University B
ESP Module	No dedicated module, only based on Syllabus (RPS).	Dedicated ESP module: <i>English for Islamic Studies</i> .
Role of Language Center	Limited to TOEFL-like competency tests; no authority over ESP curriculum development.	Actively involved in ESP curriculum and material development.
Material Standardization	Inconsistent across study programs.	Standardized and measurable materials across all study programs.
Integration of Islamic Content	General direction for incorporating Islamic examples in teaching.	Comprehensive integration of Islamic themes such as <i>aqidah</i> , <i>hadith</i> , and <i>fiqh</i> .
Use of Technology	No technological innovations in teaching.	Incorporates digital tools to enhance engagement and flexible self-learning.
Feedback Mechanism	No structured feedback mechanism from students.	Regular feedback mechanism for module evaluation and improvement.

DISCUSSION

Teaching English in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia highlights the importance of a holistic approach that

integrates Islamic values to address the challenges of globalization while preserving cultural and religious identity. Hidayati (2016) emphasizes that concerns over Western cultural influences in

English language teaching can be mitigated by incorporating Islamic values into the curriculum, which not only enhances language competence but also instills moral principles. This value-based approach is supported by Lismay (2019), who found that affective strategies, such as internal motivation and environmental support in the Ma'had of IAIN Bukittinggi, are highly effective in helping students develop their English language skills for daily communication. These findings align with Nosratinia *et al.* (2015), who revealed that learning autonomy and critical thinking skills significantly influence the success of vocabulary learning strategies, enabling learners to more effectively understand and use the language.

Furthermore, Mappile *et al.* (2022) demonstrated how the development of Islamic content-based teaching materials can provide practical solutions to meet the needs of students at SMP Annur Timor Leste. Using the *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP) approach, the teaching materials not only improve students' language proficiency but also strengthen their Islamic identity through themes, such as the pillars of Islam. The relationship between value-based approaches, innovative learning strategies, and supportive environments shows that English language teaching in the context of Islamic education can be optimized to meet global demands without losing cultural and religious roots. This reinforces the argument that holistic English teaching can bridge the gap between global competencies and Islamic character.

The findings of this study reveal several key points regarding the development of ESP modules for the

Islamic Education (PAI) study program. One of the main findings is the challenge in mastering specific vocabulary relevant to Islamic texts, such as terms from *tafsir* and *fiqh*. This finding aligns with the research by Warda and Dalimunte (2022), which identifies a lack of vocabulary resources as a major obstacle in Islamic studies programs. Furthermore, learning motivation influenced by religious identity plays a critical role in overcoming this challenge, as highlighted by Alshammari *et al.* (2024). In this regard, University B has made significant strides by designing vocabulary that encompasses concepts from *aqidah*, *hadith*, *Quran*, *fiqh*, and other Islamic sciences.

Reading skills were identified as the most critical core competency to be developed in the ESP module. This is supported by studies by Al-Jarf (2021) and Astutik & Astuti (2023), which emphasize the importance of specialized reading materials to facilitate student comprehension and engagement. Additionally, the integration of Islamic content, such as Quranic verses and hadith, in the ESP module is found to be relevant for supporting students' academic goals. This finding is consistent with Mahboob (2009), who argues that culturally relevant content can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Here lies the shortcoming of University A, which relies solely on syllabus (RPS), making it difficult for students to engage in flexible self-directed learning.

The use of interactive digital tools also emerged as a strong preference among lecturers and students. Golparvar *et al.* (2025) and Alhamami (2022) highlight that technology can enhance engagement and enable flexible self-learning. This is

particularly relevant in the context of Islamic studies programs, where students often exhibit varying levels of language proficiency. Moreover, aligning the module with institutional objectives, as emphasized by Zakaria (2021), is a key element in ensuring the sustainability and relevance of ESP programs. A well-structured curriculum-based content is critical because, without it, an effective ESP for Islamic Studies module cannot be achieved (Benson & Lor, 1999; Maynanda, 2018).

Student feedback mechanisms also play a crucial role in evaluating the module's effectiveness. Wardah (2016) highlights the importance of iterative feedback processes to support the development of dynamic curricula (Suryani & Dalimunte, 2023). Based on this discussion, the study emphasizes the need for contextually tailored ESP modules, incorporating thematic content, technological tools, and a focus on reading skills (Mahripah, 2016). The integration of institutional feedback mechanisms ensures that the module remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of both students and lecturers.

By comparing these findings with relevant literature, this study provides an important contribution to the development of Islamic Education-based ESP modules, which not only enhance linguistic competence but also support students' cultural-religious understanding. This is achieved through the creation of well-planned modules (Benson & Lor, 1999; Muluk & Aunie, 2019; Paltridge, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study address the research problem by providing

significant insights into the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) modules tailored for Islamic Education (PAI) programs. The research identifies specific challenges, such as the mastery of domain-specific vocabulary, particularly related to Islamic texts like *tafsir* and *fiqh*, and highlights the importance of integrating Islamic content to enhance students' linguistic and religious competencies. These findings align with the theoretical framework emphasizing the role of contextualized content and customized curriculum in ESP programs, as noted in prior studies.

In developing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) modules, University A and University B demonstrate significant differences in their approaches and implementation. University A does not yet have a dedicated ESP module designed to meet the academic and religious needs of its students. The approach at University A is limited to developing a Syllabus (RPS), which only guide lecturers to include Islamic examples in their teaching. Unfortunately, there are no standardized content or specific guidelines applicable across programs, resulting in inconsistencies in ESP instruction across different study programs. Furthermore, the Language Center at University A functions only as an administrator of English competency tests such as TOEFL and lacks the authority to develop ESP curricula. As a result, students do not have access to standardized and relevant learning modules, making it difficult for them to engage in flexible self-directed learning.

In contrast, University B exhibits far better ESP management with a structured and integrated approach. The

Language Center at University B plays a central role in developing the ESP curriculum, including defining competencies, designing learning materials, and ensuring content uniformity across study programs. University B has even produced a specialized module titled *English for Islamic Studies*, which covers Islamic themes such as *aqidah*, *hadith*, *fiqh*, and the pillars of Islam. This module is designed to support students' academic needs while strengthening their religious identity. By involving representatives from various study programs, University B ensures that the ESP materials taught are standardized and measurable. Additionally, University B integrates digital technology into its learning process to enhance student engagement and support flexible self-directed learning. A well-established feedback mechanism from students is effectively used to evaluate and improve the module, ensuring its relevance and sustainability.

Overall, University B demonstrates a clear advantage in developing ESP modules compared to University A. Its structured approach, deep integration of Islamic content, adoption of technology, and active involvement of the Language Center make University B a more effective model for addressing students' ESP needs. Meanwhile, University A needs to enhance its planning and management of ESP modules to create more focused, relevant, and supportive learning experiences for students in the era of globalization.

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