

DIGGING UP NON-ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR STUDENTS' ESP NEEDS

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Abstract: *This study aims to identify and explore non-English teachers' perceptions of their students' ESP needs. This study is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. The participants in this study were 16 public health lecturers at STIKes Surya Global Yogyakarta. A semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to participants to gather information related to their needs. The study analyzes the data from closed questions using simple statistics and from open questions using interpretations. The results showed that the importance of learning English is to support students' academic fields and communication skills. Reading is a basic skill that needs to master. The students found it difficult to write English journal abstracts, practice oral communication, and read, comprehend, and review academic sources in English. Teachers sometimes use English as learning resources including books written in English and international journals and websites. Students need to learn English during their study period and after graduation. The topics needed to learn to support students' backgrounds were health technology, health business service management, web causation of disease, health insurance, abstract, environmental health, health information system, safety, health promotion, epidemiology triangle, iceberg phenomenon of disease, research design epidemiology, epidemic, and infectious diseases, wastewater treatment, hygiene, and sanitation.*

Keywords: *Students' needs, ESP, public health students*

INTRODUCTION

The globalization era requires all individuals to be well-educated and skillful. One of the skills to master is communication skill since communication skill plays a key role (Akhter *et al.*, 2020). English, as an international language, has recently played a vital role in communication,

especially at the international level. Only those with good English skills can take the opportunity to expand their networks in other countries (Syifa', 2020). Of the four language skills needed to be mastered by the students, reading skill is the most important skill as it can improve overall language proficiency. It is also impossible to get

successful in language learning without good reading skills (Qrquez and Ab Rashid, 2017; Thongwichit and Buripakdi, 2021). Thus, mastering English is somehow crucial to communicating effectively and successfully in both written and spoken communication that is needed in a career.

As a foreign language in Indonesia, English is taught at almost all education levels, from elementary to higher levels. However, it is still found that English materials learned in higher education are general English (Septiana, 2018).

With the large demands of English mastery for college graduates to be used in their field of work, teaching English in higher education has not been established in General English, but is currently given based on the learners' academic background. This kind of English teaching is also known as ESP (English for Specific Purposes).

To achieve the learning target in ESP, a needs analysis must be conducted. This process involves gathering information that serves as the basis for developing a curriculum or materials that will meet the learning needs of particular groups of students

(Haryadi and Yanti, 2019). The results of the needs analysis can be used for developing appropriate materials for students. Appropriate English materials are important for learners to prepare them for their work fields (Yunita, Emzir and Mayuni, 2018; Wulandari, Muchsin and Tambunan, 2019; Lestari, 2020).

Needs analysis can be obtained by gathering information from the students and the teachers. Due to the need for appropriate materials in ESP class for the students, teachers' perceptions, as well as students' perceptions, are beneficial to provide a whole description of students' needs as the part of needs analysis. Teachers have their perceptions. As a result, they have their perceptions of what students needs and lack the ESP materials. Some non-English teachers are involved directly in meeting students' needs. Therefore they can provide suggestions on what needs to be updated related to the materials, and the teaching and learning practices in the classroom (Asri, Ulfa and Suryadi, 2019).

However, there is a lack of detailed investigation of how teachers or lecturers perceive the development of ESP teaching materials in Indonesia.

This is the main reason for the importance of the research to be conducted. Thus, this study is purposed to identify and explore non-English teachers' perceptions of their students' ESP needs. The problem of the study can be formulated as follows: "What are public health students' needs for ESP based on the teachers' perceptions?"

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Perceptions

Perception includes how people respond to the information which allows them to take the sensory information in and make it into something meaningful. In another word, perception is how people give an interpretation of something based on their experience as the result of stimuli in producing information (Dwinata, 2017; Safitri and Khoiriyah, 2017).

There are two factors affecting an individual's perception in expressing thoughts namely internal and external factors. According to Sobur, the former is in the form of an individual's belief, experience, self-acceptance, background, personality, and attitudes and the latter involves repetition,

familiarity, movement, measurement, and something new.

ESP

English for Specific Purposes, also known as ESP, has been growing as a distinct discipline since the 1960s. Different from General English which focuses more on teaching grammar and language structures, ESP emphasizes learning on the adult learners' purposes and needs. ESP focuses on teaching the skills based on the needs analysis, what learners need the most, suitable to the learners' academics background. (Rahman, 2015).

ESP is one of the approaches for teaching English to non-native speakers and non-English departments at a higher education level because it is considered to tailor students' needs and real-world careers.

ESP is appropriate for adult learners in learner-centered learning which integrates the subject matter related to the learners' present and future situations (Ma'mura *et al.*, 2020; Udu, Tafida and Udu, 2022).

Teachers' Perceptions of ESP

Some researchers conducted a needs analysis for ESP students based on students' perceptions (Yunita, Emzir and Mayuni, 2018; Wulandari, Muchsin

and Tambunan, 2019; Solihati and Rahayu, 2020). Besides students' perception of their learning English needs, it also requires teachers' of the student's needs for the ESP material.

The teachers' perceptions enrich the description to develop appropriate topics related to the academic fields in terms of ESP teaching context. Meeting the students' needs in learning as conducted in needs analysis is not only finding out the skills needed to learn but also the suitable topics needed to learn.

Since the students sometimes find it difficult to determine what appropriate topics to learn related to their fields, teachers' perceptions are helpful. For non-English teachers, their information about the topics learned by the students will complete the whole description of the ESP course plan related to students' needs and lack of ESP materials.

They can give consideration and provide suggestions on ESP materials development since they are involved directly in the teaching and learning process (Asri, Ulfa and Suryadi, 2019).

Materials Development

Because an ESP course is given based on the needs of the learners, it is important to design and develop a good

syllabus and materials which are appropriate to the learners' needs. It leads to fulfilling the learners' needs and expectations through a comprehensive needs analysis and syllabus design (Lestari, 2020).

ESP teaching materials must be suitable with the characteristics and objectives to integrate current and future learning needs. Different types of students have different language needs and what they are taught should be restricted to what they need (Richards, 2001).

Therefore, the use of ESP textbooks has to adapt the practical workplace needs-related materials as well as supplement extra materials through teachers' constant 'needs analysis' (Liton, 2015).

Students Needs

Analyzing students' needs is in line with the first step of developing learning materials both for general purposes and for ESP. The learners' needs are including target needs (what the learner needs to do in the target situation) and learning needs (what the learner needs to do to learn) (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

Needs analysis as the key stage in ESP which leads to a focused course

(Rahman, 2015), is not only useful for the teachers but also useful for the students.

The students feel aware of their language proficiency or lack; they can get information about their necessities and wants, and they can choose their preferred learning strategies. It can be said that learning is meaningful if it is appropriate to students' needs and interests (Haryono, 2020).

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The type of research is a descriptive study using a qualitative approach. Participants in this study are 16 public health lecturers at STIKes Surya Global Yogyakarta. They are from four concentrations namely Hospital Management, Health Information Systems, Health Promotion, and Reproductive Health. The instrument in this study was a questionnaire consisting of closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Closed-ended questions were conducted to find out the student's needs through questions in the Google form. Open-ended questions were conducted through semi structured-interviews as triangulation data to confirm the data from open-ended questions. Semi-structured

questionnaires include the union of open and closed questions (Asrifan *et al.*, 2020). The data collection technique used is a survey by distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews. To make the quantitative data easier to read, these data were converted into the interval of mean value on a scale of 1 to 5 using a range of the factual score as:

$$R = \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest score}}{\text{Likert scale (the amount)}}$$

Based on the calculation, the class interval is presented as follows:

Table 1. Quantitative data conversion for question number 4 and 5

Scale	Interval of the mean values	Category for number 4	Category for number 5
1	≥ 4.8	Very important	Strongly agree
2	4.1 – 4.7	Important	Agree
3	3.4 – 4.0	Quite important	Neutral
4	2.7 – 3.3	Not important	Disagree
5	2 – 2.6	Very unimportant	Strongly disagree

Table 2. Quantitative data conversion for question number 7

Scale	Interval of the mean values	Category
1	≥ 4.6	Very Often
2	3.7 – 4.5	Often
3	2.8 – 3.6	Sometimes
4	1.9 – 2.7	Rarely
5	1 – 1.8	Never

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the data can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Respondents Profile

Aspect	Description	%	N
Age range	31 - 34	14%	2
	35 - 38	58%	8
	39 - 42	7%	1
	43 - 46	7%	1
	47 - 50	14%	2
Sex	Female	86%	12
	Male	14%	2
Concentration	Hospital Management (MRS)	43%	6
	Reproductive Health (Kespro)	29%	4
	Health Information System (SIK)		
	Health Promotion (Promkes)	7%	1
		21%	3

Most of the respondents are in the age range of 35-38 years (8 from 14 respondents) with mostly females (12 respondents).

The concentration of respondents' majors is dominated by Hospital Management (43% or 6 respondents) followed by Reproductive Health (29% or 4 respondents), Health Promotion (21% or 3 respondents), and Health Information Systems (7% or 1 respondent).

Table 4. How teachers perceive the importance of English to support the students' background

Aspects	Description	%	N
Academic reasons	Learning references/sources	56.25%	9
	International Journals	37.5%	6
	Research project	12.5%	2
Communication reasons	Communication in service to foreign people	6.25%	1
	Communication in the work field	18.75%	3

International language	6.25%	1
Globalization and modernization demands	6.25%	1

Table. 4 shows two reasons for the importance of learning English perceived by the respondents including supporting the students' academic fields and improving their communication skills. The teachers agree that English is important for the students especially related to their academic knowledge.

As many as 9 respondents (56.25%) said that English helped understand the references or literature for their study, and 6 respondents (37.5%) agreed that English was useful in terms of learning or writing international journals and some research about public health. For communication reasons, there were three respondents stated that English was beneficial to use in the work field (18.75%).

In addition, there was only 1 respondent answered (6.25%) that English was important to communicate with foreigners since it is an international language.

Table 5. How teachers perceive English skills to be mastered by the public health students

Skill to master	%	N
Ability to read English-language academic sources of public health lectures/articles	21%	13

Ability to write written reports/articles/academic essays related to public health in English	17%	10	health articles
Ability to comprehend/ listen to lecture materials, seminars, and materials related to public health in English	17%	10	Ability to write written reports/articles/academic essays related to public health in English
Ability to speak English to communicate	13%	8	Ability to comprehend/ listen to learning materials, seminars, and materials related to public health in English
Ability of English vocabulary mastery related to public health/lecture resources	17%	10	Ability to communicate in English
Ability to use English learning resources, both professional and online-based tools	15%	9	Ability to master English vocabulary related to public health/learning resources.

Table. 5 shows that the teachers perceived reading, the ability to read English-language academic sources, as the most needed skill (21%), followed by writing, listening, and vocabulary mastery (17%). Meanwhile, information literacy and speaking got almost similar percentages of (15%) and (13%).

The respondents' statements in open question support that reading is an important skill to master.

(Reading) is important for understanding journal literature and technological developments that are often written in English. (R1.4)
Yes, it is very important, especially reading skills. (R2.4)

Table 6. How important English sub-skills are to be mastered perceived by the teachers.

Sub Skills	score					Mean value	Category
	5	4	3	2	1		
Ability to read English academic sources of public	9	4	1	0	0	4.57	Important

health articles	9	5	0	0	0	4.64	Important
Ability to write written reports/articles/academic essays related to public health in English	5	8	1	0	0	4.28	Important
Ability to comprehend/ listen to learning materials, seminars, and materials related to public health in English	6	7	0	1	0	4.28	Important
Ability to communicate in English	9	4	1	0	0	4.57	Important
Ability to master English vocabulary related to public health/learning resources.	8	4	2	0	0	4.42	Important
Ability to master English grammar							

From table 6, it can be seen that there are some English sub-skills to be mastered by the students. They are reading, writing, listening, and speaking, vocabulary, and grammar mastery sub-skills. They are in the range of 4.1 – 4.7 (important). Both open and closed questionnaires show that the teachers agree that those sub-skills are

principal to be mastered by the students. The following are the results from the open questionnaire.

Yes, they have difficulties. They do not know the meaning of several terms related to the materials so they cannot explain the materials. (R6.3)

Yes, especially English vocabulary. (R4.3)

Table 7. How teachers perceive the students' difficulties in understanding materials written in English.

Component	score					Mean value	Category
	5	4	3	2	1		
Whether the students find any difficulties in understanding materials written in English.	3	7	2	2	0	3.79	Neutral

The mean value for the students' difficulties in understanding materials written in English is 3.79. It is in the range of 3.4 – 4.0 and categorized as neutral. The teachers are asked “*Do you think the students find any difficulties in understanding materials written in English? Explain them.*” Of 16 respondents, 7 respondents (43.75%) stated that public health students found it difficult to master English, especially in reading and writing related to international journals. It led the students to use Indonesian national journals

rather than international journal articles as learning references.

Because English is difficult (for them), the students only use national journals in Indonesian (as references) (R6.6).

Considering the students' difficulties in other skills, two respondents stated that the students were difficulty mastering English related to public health terms. Besides, one lecturer perceived that the students always used Google Translate.

(They are not) familiar with health terminology (in English) (R5.6).

When we asked them to review some international journals, they seemed to always use Google Translate (R11.6).

Table 8. How teachers perceive the use of English in their teaching

Component	score					Mean value	Category
	5	4	3	2	1		
The use of English in their teaching	1	2	5	5	1	2.8	Sometimes

The teachers are asked, “*Is English often used in the teaching and learning process?*” The answer choices provided are never, rarely, sometimes, often, and very often. Based on the closed and open questionnaires, it concludes that all teachers perceive that they sometimes use English in their teaching. They mostly use English in

terms of English references for example international journals, books, and websites.

We use English when we read some sources of health journals, international websites (WHO, CDC), etc. (R2.5)

Table 9. The use of English by the teachers in the class

Resources	Description
References	International journals Book references written in English International websites
Abstract Journals	Translation of Indonesian – English abstract

Table 9 shows that the teachers use English in teaching two resources; references and abstracts. International journals and book references written in English are sometimes used by the teachers in the class.

Table 10. How teachers perceive the preference of using English for public health students

Time to learn English	%	Reasons
English during the study period	71%	Understanding materials and references in English easier Mastering skills and knowledge Understanding international Journals easier
English after graduation	29%	The wider use of English Preparing work field Preparing study

The teachers were asked, *“When is English important to be given to public health students, and why?”* 71% of teachers agreed that English is important to learn during the study period, and 29% of others agree that

English is important to learn after graduation.

Meanwhile, from the open-ended question, *“why?”* five respondents (31.25%) perceived English to be used both during their study period and after graduation. During the study period, 6 respondents (37.5%) agreed that English facilitated public health students to understand the materials easily. After graduation, English is important to master since the students need English to prepare for their work field or to continue studying. *To make it easy to understand the materials thus (the students) will be able to use them after graduation (R8.10). Because (they must understand) some learning resources in English (R13.10)*

Table 11. English topics needed to learn in supporting students’ background

Topics	Skills
health technology	Reading
health business service management	Vocabulary
abstract	Grammar
safety	Writing
health promotion	
environmental Health	
health information system	
web causation of disease	
epidemiology triangle	
iceberg phenomenon of disease	
research design	
epidemiology	
epidemic and infectious diseases	
health insurance	
wastewater treatment	
hygiene	

sanitation

The teachers are asked, “*What English materials/topics should be given to students related to the subject in supporting students' background?*”

They then suggested some topics that needed to learn to support students' backgrounds. They are from four concentrations (hospital management, reproductive health, health information system, and health promotion) and include reading and writing skills, vocabulary, and grammar mastery. The answers in the open questions support the answers in closed questions.

Health insurance, nutrition, health financing (R4.6)

Wastewater treatment, hygiene, and sanitation (R5.6)

Discussion

From the findings on how teachers perceive the importance of English to support the student's background, academic and communication reasons play an important role. The teachers perceived that mastering English for the academic field helps students to understand the broader scope of the materials. While the importance of English for communication reasons is in line with Akhter et al. (2020) who stated that

communication skill plays a key role. As an international language, English has recently played a vital role in terms of communication, especially at the international level.

In addition, the teachers perceived that ability to read English-language academic sources of public health lectures/articles is the most important skill to master. Specifically, reading is the most basic skill needed by students to support the success of mastering a language which is in line with Qrquez and Ab Rashid (2017) and Thongwichit and Buripakdi (2021).

Regarding the importance of English sub-skills, the teachers perceived that all English sub-skills are important to be mastered by the students. Those are reading, writing, listening, speaking, and vocabulary and grammar mastery sub-skills.

Related to the student's difficulties in understanding materials written in English, the students find it difficult to read, comprehend, and review academic sources in English, write an abstract in English, and use English in oral communication.

The teachers sometimes use English as references in their class such

as books written in English, and international journals and websites.

The findings of the times for the students learning English are in line with the theory that it is appropriate for adult learners in learner-centered learning that integrate the subject matter related to the learners' present and future situations (Ma'mura *et al.*, 2020; Udu, Tafida and Udu, 2022).

The teachers perceived English to be used during their study period and after graduation. During the study period, English facilitates public health students to understand the materials easily. After graduation, English is perceived as important to master since the students need English to prepare for their work field or to continue studying.

Regarding the topics needed to learn in supporting students' background, they are health technology, health business service management, web causation of disease, health insurance (hospital management); abstract, environmental health (reproductive health); health information system (health information system); safety, health promotion, epidemiology triangle, iceberg phenomenon of disease, research design epidemiology, epidemic, and infectious

diseases, wastewater treatment, Hygiene, Sanitation (health promotion). These topics can enrich the students' knowledge.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Teachers' perceptions are beneficial to provide a whole description of students' needs as part of needs analysis. The information from the teachers about the students' needs creates several benefits for the researchers.

First, this study has obtained the students' descriptions of all language skills. It proves that reading needs more concern because of the students' lack of mastery. Since the use of English by non-English teachers in the classroom is inadequate, the students' sub-skills of oral communication, translation, comprehension, and review of academic sources in English need to be improved. Second, related to the teachers' perceptions, English is important to learn by students both during the study period and after graduation.

The English and academic-related topics suggested by the teachers are functional for material designers in designing the course grid and the learning materials. It needs further

research concerning developing appropriate ESP materials for public health students.

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