
Exploring english language needs: Non-english major students at University of Al-Qolam Malang

Mulis^{1*}, Aberald Blouin²

¹ University of Al-Qolam Malang, Indonesia

² University of Passau, Germany

e-mail: mukhlis@alqolam.ac.id

*Corresponding Author.

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Abstract: This research investigated English language needs for new students majoring in non-English who are taking courses in the Foreign Language Center program. This research approach used qualitative with descriptive methods. The subjects in this research were new students majoring in non-English. The data in this research was obtained through two stages, namely Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving six students who were representatives from each study program; Indonesian Language Tadris, Mathematics Tadris, Islamic Religious Education, Sharia Economic Law, Ahwal Al-Shakhsyiyah, and Islamic Teaching Communication, and distribution of questionnaires filled in by 127 students. Here the researcher found that most students (75%) who took part in the Foreign Language Center (English) program wanted to master all English language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Apart from that, the English components they need are vocabulary and grammar with a percentage (78%). Furthermore, regarding the abilities and components of English, students want the lecturer's strategy used in the learning process to be text-based teaching. Therefore, researchers provide recommendations so that learning is implemented using relevant methods such as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method (DM), Audio Lingual Method (ALM), and Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT).

Keywords: Exploring, need analysis, english language need.

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Introduction

English takes many important parts of global issues such as in technology and Innovation, education and research, global business, cultural exchange, and media (Rao, 2019; Rahayu & Rosa 2021). Hence, this language is necessary to understand, and it should be learned earlier (Sholeh & Anam, 2020). And, University of Al-Qolam Malang has a vision, of becoming a Transformative Service University Based on Islamic Boarding Schools with International Reputation. However, English at a higher education level is necessary to provide for academic and career in the future (Nithideechaiwarachok, Maneekanon, and Bubphada 2022). Further, Al-Qolam holds a language-central program containing English and Arabic to support the vision. New students of all majors should follow it in the first semester. The class is determined by the placement test result conducted before joining the academic learning. However, this program is not provided based on the students' department and faculty. So, it is noted whether English should be based on the students' needs and competence in line with their department or it should be taught as general English. Hence, it should be highlighted by an analysis of students' needs and wants.

Yet, needs analysis (NA) is not new in educational and academic environments and it is a necessary phase in planning educational programs Richards (2001). Hence, many researchers and teachers in different parts of the world consider this approach to be a valuable tool for curriculum

development and revision to connect students' current academic learning with their future needs (Poedjiastutie and Oliver 2017). This also applies to language programs. In this case, NA takes a significant role related to providing a new thing in English teaching contexts around the world. Thus, needs analysis can be conducted to evaluate the existing program for accountability (Richards 2001). However, the student's perspectives on the need for language instruction varied according to their proficiency level, discipline, and year of study (Poedjiastutie and Oliver 2017). This need analysis has an urgent and vital role in the process of designing, developing, and implementing a curriculum of any course whether an English course is English for a specific purpose, or general English course or other courses (Poedjiastutie and Fifah, 2019) Therefore, this research intends to investigate whether there are needs to modify or renew the English language teaching goals in line to the non-English department students English course.

Regarding the needs of students, Poedjiastutie and Oliver (2017) conducted a study on the needs of students. Specifically, a mixed methods approach was used in which large-scale quantitative data was collected through surveys of 1,000 students. This was supplemented by qualitative data from focus group discussions. The results of the analysis of these two components are presented in the article. The results show that students at the target university have pragmatic reasons for learning English. These include international cooperation, better life chances, competitive employment in an international environment, better international test results, cultural awareness and understanding of English magazines and books. Alghamdi (2019) also conducted research using mixed methods including both quantitative and qualitative (naturalistic). The business students were 254, 20 foreign language teachers, and 3 business teachers. The data analysis from multiple sources (questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) revealed differences between participants in perceptions of English needs for academic purposes, but it was clear that English program in its current form did not meet students' expectations. Therefore, as indicated, NA has a lot to offer language programs, particularly requiring significant improvement. Thus, the present research undertook NA within a specific teaching context, namely English subject of Pusat Bahasa Asing (Language Centre) program. So, the research question is What are the students' English language needs?

This research was hopefully expected to give theoretical and practical recommendations. Theoretically, it is expected to note and determine the design of English course at University of Al-Qolam whether it is intended as English for a specific purpose or as a general lesson. Hence, the lecturers are easier to determine the targeted lesson based on the students' English language needs. And for practical side, hopefully, English teaching is constructed based on the students' English language needs.

Method

The present study took qualitative research, and descriptive qualitative was employed. This approach is appropriate to understand social phenomenon, and particular points of participants involved (Ary et al. 2010; Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N.E., & Hyun, 2012). The subjects involved in this study were non-English department students joining English courses of PBA from different departments. Those becoming subjects were students of Indonesian Language Tadris, Mathematics Tadris, Islamic Religious Education, Sharia Economic Law, Ahwal Al-Shakhsyiyah, and Islamic Teaching Communication. For collecting the data, focus group discussion (FGD) and distributing questionnaires were applied. Those involved in the FGD were the chief of the class. The FGD was carried out in only one group and took about sixty minutes. In another hand, questionnaires were sent to WhatsApp groups of each class through Google Forms and filled out by 176 students. Yet qualitatively, saturation data suits with similar emerging themes over indicated to final collecting data (Kumar, 2011; Bryman, 2015; Carlssen & Glenton, 2014). For data collection, the iterative approach was utilized by conducting FGD first, then the results were confirmed and verified through the results of questionnaires.

This was constructed for rechecking and connecting data with the emerging theme (Srivastava 2009). This paradigm means that FGD was done first, then verified and clarified by distributing questionnaires.

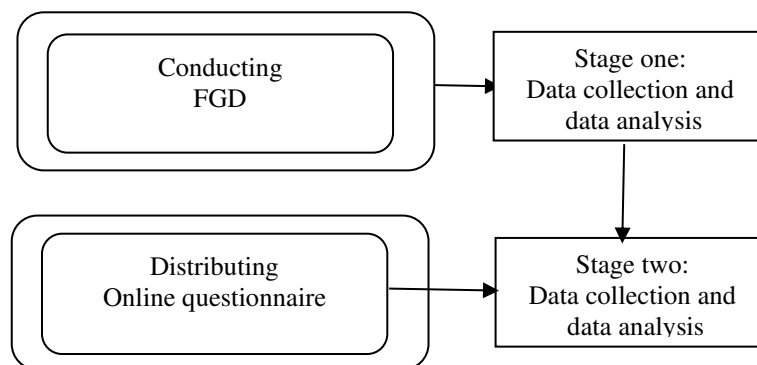


Figure 1. Stage of data collection procedure

In analyzing the data, some steps were done by data familiarization and organization, data code and reduction, data interpretation and representation (Ary et al. 2010). These were done by some steps such as reading and re-reading transcripts, notes, and questionnaire data, giving different colors for each theme, reducing unrelated points with the themes, interpreting data display elaborated with empirical and theoretical evidence, and representing the final result after conducting data verification. Furthermore, to avoid the subjectivity of feelings, motives, and perceptions, trustworthiness was adopted (Guba & Lincoln (1989) quoted in Bryman, 2012). In the trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability, and transferability were applied. Related to credibility, FGD and questionnaire were done and the confirmability was done by noting the FGD activity and the answers to the questionnaire from the participants, while transferability was done by different data collection techniques by distributing FGD and questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

The result of FGD almost all students stated to master English in general or four English skills. The reasons were international language, language competence development, access to resources, or work in the future. So, they wanted to improve their English in the PBA course. In the questionnaire, the students stated that they are eager to master all English skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The result of questionnaires revealed listening skill 3 (2%), speaking skill 17 (13%), reading skill 1 (1%), and writing skill 3 (3%). Undeniable, reading and writing skills are highly also demanded 23 (18%). And reading and writing skills are 5 (4%). Overall, almost all the students are passionately eager to master all English skills 75 (59%).s.

Table 1. Students' english skill needs

Needs of english skills	Percentage
Listening	3 (2%)
Speaking	17 (13%)
Reading	1 (1%)
Writing	3 (3%)
Reading dan speaking	23 (18%)
Reading dan Writing	5 (4%)
All skill	75 (59%)

Yet, based on the result of FGD, students also expressed that they expected the English components such as vocabulary and grammar to develop their English skills. These components are noted as important tools. The results of FGD were also supported and verified by the questionnaire. The

students agreed that vocabulary was crucial was 17 (13%). Further, other students also expected to master English by supporting sufficient components such as grammar was 11 (9%). And both vocabulary and grammar were the most highly expected by the students 99 (78%).

Table 2. Students' English language component needs

Needs of language component	Percentage
Vocabulary	17 (13%)
Grammar	11 (9%)
Vocabulary and grammar	99 (78%)

Further, related to vocabulary mastery, this is strongly in line with the lectures' strategy in teaching English especially for teaching vocabulary. Therefore, the strategy should be noted as crucial role. In this case, the results of questionnaire showed that teaching vocabulary with text-based strategy were highly agreed 60 (47%). Asking students to memorize some vocabularies was only 7 (6%). Yet, teaching vocabulary as intermezzo in teaching English also obtained highly agreement 60 (47%).

Table 3. Teaching strategy in vocabulary mastery

Teaching strategy in vocabulary mastery	Percentage
Text-based strategy	74 (59%)
Memorizing	7 (6%)
Intermezzo	46 (36%)

To achieve the grammar mastery, the students mostly expected the lecturer's teaching strategy was text- based strategy 85 (67%). While requiring students to memorize was only 11,9%. And the use of intermezzo in teaching vocabulary was also highly expected 31 (24%).

Table 4. Teaching strategy in grammar mastery

Teaching strategy in grammar mastery	Percentage
Memorizing specific formulas	11 (9%)
Text- based strategy	85 (67%)
Intermezzo	31 (24%)

Furthermore, language is a primary source of communication. It is a method in which we share our ideas and thoughts with others. In a globalized world, the importance of the English language cannot be denied or ignored as English is the most spoken language in the world (Ilyosovna 2020). English has become significant all across the world as a result of the globalization process; until recently, it was considered the worldwide language of business. In practice, it is the language of the modern world and it is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world (Ilyosovna, 2020; Sri Andayani, 2022) And English is one of the most important languages today as it is a global language. It is an essential skill to understand and master in the context of globalization because English plays a dominant role in almost all current fields (Mulis 2023; Azizah (2023) Therefore, English covers global issues such as in technology and Innovation, education and research, global business, cultural exchange, etc (Rao, 2019; Rahayu & Rosa 2021).

This research highlighted and underscored the students' English needs at University of Al-Qolam. And, these should be noted for improvement and development of the language center program. It is done to comprehensively evaluate what is required concerning the use or learning of the English language and then develop targeted strategies to fulfill those needs effectively. Hence, the analysis phase is a crucial stage that is used to suit the students' needs (Nuriya Axmedovna et al. 2019). Besides, teaching strategies also should be noted to adapt to the students' needs in learning English. The teaching should

be addressed to students' English needs and since need analysis is conducted at the early phase of developing curriculum to suit the principal elements (Sadiku 2015). For English needs, the students expect to be able to master English skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The reasons were international language, language competence development, access to resources, or work in the future. However, to fulfill the students' English needs, several challenges emerge. For example, the students expected the lecturer to provide proper teaching strategies such as utilizing various teaching methods, and to develop their vocabulary and grammar mastery. Furthermore, teaching grammar and vocabulary as a language component is a complex domain and crucial for learning any language, especially English. An English teacher is responsible for teaching vocabulary and grammar so that the students can develop their four fundamental skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

This research revealed that teaching vocabulary and grammar by text-based strategy took precedence over others such as memorizing and intermezzo activities. Hence, it should be noted and matched with the students' English needs. The data showed that most of the students are eager to understand and master all English skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, this should be a concern since the stakeholders and lecturers arrange the curriculum development, lesson plans, teaching materials, classroom management, and teaching methods. Further, this research recommended four types of teaching methods; grammar translation method (GTM), direct method (DM), audio-lingual method (ALM), and communicative language teaching method (CLT) (Azam, 2014).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that non-English major students joining Foreign Language Program (PBA) regarding with English needs passionately want to understand and master English well because nowadays it is an international language. These needs are included with the elements of the English language; vocabulary and grammar. And related to the teaching strategy, it is better that vocabulary and grammar are taught by applying a text-based strategy. Yet, for stakeholders and lecturer, it is important to note when the process of designing, developing, and implementing a curriculum is arranged or when the materials and teaching methods are designed.

For further research, it is important to investigate the students' English language needs for a particular skill in a specific department at University of Al-Qolam. Besides, it can be also conducted research related to English needs with different research approaches. Also, it can be researched about the students' needs, wants, and perceptions of learning English. So, the stakeholders can appropriately determine the curriculum development whether it is English for specific purposes or general English.

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