



CONNECTING LANGUAGE AND LAW: ESP CLASS ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AT INSTITUT PARAHIKMA INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research explores the use of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in constitutional law classes at Institut Parahikma Indonesia (IPI) Gowa, focusing on the role of English language skills in the legal field. Many law students face difficulties in understanding legal terms and language structures. This study aims to connect language and law through ESP-based classroom activities and evaluate their impact on students' language skills and legal understanding. The respondents in this study were six first-semester students from the Constitutional Law Study Program at IPI in the 2024/2025 academic year, as well as lecturers teaching English courses. By using qualitative methods, the researchers collected the data through observations and interviews. The results showed that activities such as trial simulations helped improve students' legal knowledge and communication skills while building their confidence in using English professionally. However, the study also identified challenges in implementing ESP effectively, particularly in aligning teaching materials with students' needs. This highlights the importance of collaboration between educators and legal experts in developing a relevant curriculum. Overall, this research underscores the value of creative ESP teaching in preparing students for legal careers.

Keyword: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Legal English, Constitutional Law, Law Students, ESP Classroom Activities

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, English language skills are becoming increasingly crucial, especially in the legal field. English serves not only as a means of communication but also as a means to understand and apply complex legal principles. In Indonesia, where English is often a second language, law students struggle to master the terminology and language structures used in legal contexts, particularly constitutional law (Hrdličková, 2020). Therefore, effective teaching approaches, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), are indispensable to help students develop language skills relevant to their professional needs. Previous research has shown that having a strong understanding of legal terminology in English can enhance a professional's ability to communicate effectively with clients from diverse geographical areas and handle international cases (Anindhyta, C., 2022).

Study legal English is part of ESP, an approach to English language teaching specifically designed to meet the needs of professional and academic communication in the legal field. In this context, learning not only focuses on mastering general English structures and vocabulary, but also includes technical terms, formal language styles, and

the ability to understand and produce legal texts such as contracts, statutes, and litigation documents. The ESP approach in legal English helps students or legal professionals to use English effectively and appropriately in specific work or legal study environments.

ESP is an approach to language teaching designed to meet the specific needs of students in a particular context (Ningsih, 2024). In contrast to General English teaching which focuses on the development of overall language skills, ESP is designed to meet linguistic needs that are specific to a particular field of study or profession. The main goal of ESP is to equip learners with language and communication competencies that are relevant and applicable in their academic and professional contexts.

The main objective of ESP is to bridge the gap between general English language proficiency and specific linguistic competencies in accordance with the demands of certain professional or academic fields. ESP programs are designed in a practical and contextual manner, emphasizing the relevance of teaching materials to the needs of learners. Through this approach, students are equipped with the language tools necessary to succeed in their field, while focusing on developing language skills appropriate to the context of their specialization.

Before teaching ESP courses, lecturers can conduct a needs analysis to find out the learners' needs for English (Said & Herlina, 2022). Needs analysis is essential in any learning process, as it helps identify the specific language skills and knowledge required for the chosen field. In the case of language learning, it is important to tailor lessons and materials to the specific needs of learners. By conducting a needs analysis, language instructors can better understand learners' goals, interests, and the specific language skills and knowledge they need to acquire.

In legal education, ESP focuses on teaching English related to legal terminology, legal documents, and legal practice. The utilization of legalese, the specialized language used by lawyers and in legal documentation, contributes to the complexity faced by ordinary individuals in understanding legal content (Surani et al., 2023).

Herlina and Said (2022) found that lecturers and students agreed that English for Constitutional Law is necessary for their future careers. Presearch by Rahmawati and Anindhyta (2023) revealed that the majority of law students rated ESP as very useful in improving their language skills, especially speaking skills in a legal context. However, although several studies address the application of ESP in legal education, there is still a lack of research that specifically explores ESP classroom activities used in the context of constitutional law.

This study aims to bridge the fields of language and law through ESP classroom activities at Institut Parahikma Indonesia, an educational institution located in South Sulawesi, specifically at Jl. Mustafa Dg. Bunga No. 191, Somba Opu, Gowa. The institution houses a Faculty of Sharia and Law, with Constitutional Law being one of its primary areas of study. This research will analyze the activities used to teach English in the context of constitutional law and evaluate their effectiveness in improving students' language skills. Thus, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for teachers and educational institutions in designing a better ESP curriculum for law students.

METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at exploring the implementation of ESP activities within the context of constitutional law education at Institut Parahikma Indonesia.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were first-semester students of the Constitutional Law Study Program at Institut Parahikma Indonesia during the 2024/2025 academic year. A total of Six students who participated in the ESP course were involved as participants. In addition, the English course instructor was also included as a subject in the interviews to gain perspectives from the teaching side.

Instruments

The data in this study were collected through classroom observation, interviews with the lecturer, and student feedback. Observations were conducted to assess the learning activities implemented during the ESP instruction. Interviews were carried out to explore the lecturer's perspectives on the effectiveness of the teaching methods applied. Meanwhile, student feedback was gathered to understand their experiences throughout the ESP learning process.

Data Analysis

Data in this study were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach, guided by the analytical framework developed by Miles et. al. (2014). The process of qualitative data analysis consists of three interrelated stages. The first stage is data reduction, which involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data gathered from classroom observations, interviews, and student feedback into more manageable and meaningful information. The second stage is data display, where the reduced data are systematically organized and presented in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or charts to facilitate clearer understanding and interpretation. The final stage is conclusion drawing and verification, in which the researcher formulates initial conclusions based on the identified patterns and emerging themes, and then verifies these findings by comparing data across sources and referring to relevant theoretical frameworks to ensure their credibility. By applying these stages, the researcher gains a comprehensive understanding of the patterns, perceptions, and experiences of both students and the instructor regarding the implementation of ESP instruction within the Faculty of Law.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classroom activities implementing ESP significantly improved students' understanding of legal terminology (Nhac, 2023). Through classroom trial simulations, students not only learn the basics of law but also how to apply them in a realistic context. These activities allow students to practice calmly and effectively in situations similar to everyday legal practice, which in turn increases their confidence when speaking English in a professional setting.

In addition, activity-based approaches such as role-play, legal debate, and real case analysis enrich students' learning experience in the context of ESP. These activities not only enhance the understanding of terminology but also encourage students to use English functionally in complex legal discussions. The success of ESP is largely determined by the extent to which learning activities reflect actual professional communication needs. Therefore, the more authentic and relevant the learning context, the greater the impact on students' readiness to face workplace situations that demand specific English competencies.

In addition, the instructor's observations of students after participating in the ESP class indicated that their communication skills had improved. This finding is consistent with the study by Rahmawati and Anindhyta (2023), which demonstrated that teaching English for Specific Purposes can significantly enhance students' proficiency in legal subjects. This improvement not only benefits students in academic contexts but also equips them to face challenges in the workplace.

However, despite significant progress, there are some challenges in the implementation of ESP at Institut Parahikma Indonesia, especially at the Faculty of Constitutional Law, as ESP learning has not been effectively implemented. This creates a gap between theory and practice, where instructors have to put in a lot of effort to adjust the teaching materials to meet students' expectations. Research by Liu et al. (2011) also suggests that ESP curriculum development should be done collaboratively between academics and practitioners to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

To overcome the challenges in ESP implementation, it is necessary to increase the capacity of lecturers through systematic and sustainable training programs. This training should include mastery of professional context-based teaching methods, development of materials relevant to the needs of constitutional law, and evaluation techniques that are in line with the ESP approach. Thus, lecturers are not only able to deliver materials effectively, but can also adjust the teaching approach to be more responsive to the dynamics of student needs.

In addition to increasing the capacity of teaching staff, active student participation is also a crucial element in the success of ESP learning. Collaborative learning activities, such as discussion of legal cases, presentation of contemporary issues, and writing legal documents in English, need to be integrated consistently in the curriculum. This approach not only encourages the mastery of legal terminology, but also strengthens the skills of critical thinking, argumentation, and legal rhetoric in English - skills that are essential in a professional work environment.

Furthermore, the utilization of digital technology in ESP teaching can be an innovative strategy to enhance learning engagement and effectiveness. The use of online learning platforms, video-based trial simulations, and legal vocabulary practice applications allow students to learn flexibly and independently. The integration of these technologies is in line with the development of digital pedagogy in higher education, and strengthens the institution's readiness to respond to the demands of the globalization of legal education.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the implementation of ESP has a significant positive impact on legal education at Institut Parahikma Indonesia. Well-designed classroom activities, such as trial simulations, not only enhance students' understanding of legal terminology but also strengthen their communication skills, which

are crucial in legal practice. Students' increased confidence when speaking English in a professional context has been one of the most striking outcomes of this approach (Muravev, 2020).

However, challenges in implementing ESP in the Faculty of Constitutional Law need to be overcome for the full potential of this approach to be realized. Therefore, educational institutions need to collaborate with legal practitioners in developing a relevant and effective curriculum. By doing so, educational institutions can continue to adapt innovative ESP teaching methods to meet the demands of the ever-evolving professional world and prepare students for success in their careers in law.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the growing importance of English proficiency in the legal field and demonstrates that the implementation of ESP at Institut Parahikma Indonesia has significantly improved students' understanding of legal terminology and their ability to communicate in professional legal contexts. Well-structured classroom activities, such as trial simulations and legal debates, not only help students internalize legal concepts but also boost their confidence in using English practically. However, challenges such as aligning course materials with student expectations remain, underscoring the need for closer collaboration between educators and legal professionals in designing relevant and contextualized curricula. Addressing these issues will maximize the impact of ESP, equipping students with the linguistic and critical thinking skills required in the legal profession and better preparing them to meet the demands of an increasingly globalized legal environment. Success in their careers in law, as well as enhance their ability to communicate effectively in English in a professional environment.

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