English for Specific Purposes Teaching in Current Academic Atmosphere in Digital Era in STIES Mitra Karya

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates the dynamics of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction at STIES Mitra Karya within the current digital academic environment. With the integration of digital platforms such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) and the adoption of blended learning approaches, ESP teaching has evolved to become more flexible, contextualized, and aligned with the professional needs of students in the fields of economics and business. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. The findings reveal that digital technologies have significantly enriched the learning process, enhancing accessibility and engagement. However, challenges persist, particularly regarding infrastructure limitations, digital literacy gaps, and the readiness of human resources. Institutional support, including the provision of training programs, network enhancement, and innovation incentives, is identified as critical to the successful transformation of ESP teaching. This study emphasizes the need for sustainable strategies to ensure the ongoing effectiveness and resilience of ESP instruction in the digital era.
Keywords : *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Digital learning, Learning Management System (LMS), Blended learning, Higher education, Digital transformation*

INTRODUCTION

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to English language teaching that focuses on developing language skills tailored to the specific academic or professional needs of learners. In higher education, ESP plays a crucial role in equipping students with language competencies that are relevant to the demands of the workforce. ESP instruction not only addresses basic linguistic skills but also emphasizes the use of terminology, language styles, and communication contexts specific to professional fields such as business, information technology, and accounting.

In today's digital era, technological transformation has significantly changed the ways of teaching and learning. This transformation has positively impacted the flexibility of learning processes, access to resources, and the efficiency of interaction between instructors and students. According to Aditya and Suranto (2024), digital transformation in education has the potential to enhance the quality of learners through the use of digital platforms, making learning more dynamic and innovative.

The digitalization of education has driven the development of Learning Management Systems (LMS) as essential platforms for managing the learning process, including distributing materials, organizing assignments, and providing feedback efficiently. LMS platforms such as Ruangmu and Moodle have been widely utilized in higher education institutions in Indonesia, including in ESP instruction, as a medium for delivering digital-based learning content (Ja'ashan, 2020; Fauzan & Pimada, 2018).

However, the adoption of digital technology in ESP instruction is not without challenges. Some instructors experience difficulties in adapting their teaching methods to technology, especially in designing interactive online learning. Technical obstacles, limited internet access, and infrastructure inadequacies are common issues, particularly in institutions that lack sufficient technological support (Hakim et al., 2023; Haryanto, 2021).

At STIES Mitra Karya, as a private higher education institution, ESP instruction has adopted a digital approach through the integration of LMS and ICT-based learning media. This initiative aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning process, providing a contextual learning experience aligned with the fields of economics and business, which are the main focus areas of the institution. Nonetheless, similar to other

institutions, the implementation faces challenges, including instructors' limited technological proficiency and students' varied abilities to access digital platforms effectively.

The theory of digital transformation in education suggests that teaching practices must adapt to technological changes to meet the demands of globalization and the needs of modern society (Ifenthaler et al., 2018). In the context of ESP, this theory is highly relevant, as the language competencies taught must align with real-world professional communication practices, which are increasingly influenced by digital technologies.

Research by Straková and Cimermanová (2018) indicates that technology-based learning can enhance students' critical thinking skills and accelerate the acquisition of context-based knowledge. In ESP, this becomes crucial as students are expected to understand and use English appropriately in real-world professional situations.

Additionally, the use of game-based learning media or digital simulations offers an engaging alternative for teaching ESP, particularly in strengthening the appeal of learning and increasing student participation (Perini et al., 2018). Such learning models provide active and practice-oriented learning experiences.

At STIES Mitra Karya, a blended learning approach has been increasingly implemented, combining face-to-face sessions with online learning. This approach has proven effective in providing students with greater flexibility and supporting the achievement of broader learning objectives (Castro Benavides et al., 2020).

Active student engagement in the learning process remains a critical factor for the success of ESP instruction. Therefore, instructors are required to design learning activities that foster collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills through digital means. This aligns with Boholano's (2017) findings, which state that 21st-century learning skills can be achieved through the integration of social media and technology as educational tools.

Given this background, the research questions addressed in this study are: how is the dynamic and effectiveness of ESP instruction at STIES Mitra Karya in a digital academic atmosphere, and what challenges and strategies have been implemented by the institution in response to digital transformation?

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively describe the implementation of ESP teaching at STIES Mitra Karya in the digital context, to identify the challenges encountered, and to analyze the strategies employed to enhance the effectiveness of ESP instruction. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to the development of ESP curricula and teaching methods that are more adaptive to the evolving needs of the digital era.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. The Concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of English language teaching that focuses on developing language skills tailored to the specific academic or professional needs of learners.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach to language teaching that is based on the specific learning needs of students. In the context of higher education, ESP is not solely concerned with general language proficiency but emphasizes specialized terminology, language styles, and communicative contexts relevant to specific fields such as business, technology, or finance.

According to research by Aditya and Suranto (2024), ESP has become increasingly important in the era of globalization and digitalization, as the workforce demands professionals capable of communicating effectively and specifically within their areas of expertise. Therefore, the ESP approach must be adaptive to the evolving needs of industry and the rapid developments in information technology that influence communication practices.

2. Digital Transformation in Higher Education

Digital transformation in higher education refers to the use of digital technologies to enhance the quality and efficiency of learning processes. Ifenthaler, Gibson, and Dobozy (2018) assert that the adoption of digital technologies can enrich teaching methodologies, increase learning accessibility, and create more flexible and personalized learning environments. In the digital era, Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Moodle and Google Classroom have become essential tools for supporting teaching and learning activities.

A study conducted by Hakim, Rahmawati, and Setiyawati (2023) reveals that although digitalization offers numerous benefits, significant challenges remain, particularly concerning infrastructure readiness and digital literacy among lecturers and students. Therefore, the success of digital transformation in higher education largely depends on strong institutional support, technological training, and the provision of adequate facilities.

3. Blended Learning in ESP Instruction

Blended learning is a teaching approach that combines online and face-to-face learning. This model enables students to enjoy the flexibility of online learning while simultaneously benefiting from direct classroom interaction. According to Castro Benavides, Blanco, and Ramírez-Correa (2020), blended learning enhances student motivation and participation by offering varied methods of instruction.

In the context of ESP instruction, blended learning is highly relevant, as it allows students to access digital-based learning materials independently while also developing direct communication skills through face-to-face sessions. Straková and Cimermanová (2018) emphasize that the use of blended learning models can improve students' critical thinking skills, which are essential for understanding the professional context of English language usage.

4. The Role of Institutions in Supporting Digital Innovation in Learning

Higher education institutions play a critical role in supporting digital innovation in learning. According to Marcelo and Yot-Domínguez (2019), institutional support in the form of training, technological infrastructure, and innovation incentives can accelerate the adoption of technology among lecturers and enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes.Without consistent policies and adequate facilities, it is difficult to sustain digital learning innovations over the long term. At STIES Mitra Karya, as demonstrated by the findings, institutional support such as the provision of internet networks, LMS platforms, and faculty training programs has been a key factor in the successful integration of technology into ESP instruction.

5. Challenges and Solutions in Digital ESP Instruction

Digital-based ESP instruction inevitably faces various challenges, including limited internet access, low digital literacy among lecturers and students, and a lack of innovation in the use of digital platforms. Haryanto (2021) notes that many higher education institutions in Indonesia still struggle to optimize online learning due to inadequate infrastructure.To address these challenges, comprehensive strategies are necessary, such as enhancing technological training for lecturers, providing supportive devices for students, and fostering innovation in digital teaching methods. The utilization of technology must be accompanied by creative pedagogical approaches to ensure that ESP instruction remains effective and engaging for students.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method conducted at the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Syariah (STIES) Mitra Karya, Bekasi City. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction at the institution, particularly within the context of digital transformation. The case study strategy was utilized to explore the actual and contextual conditions of ESP instruction within a specific

academic environment (Bahri, 2017). The subjects of this study consisted of lecturers responsible for teaching ESP courses and students enrolled in these courses. The object of the study was the practice of digital-based ESP instruction, including the utilization of Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive media, and a blended learning approach.

Data were collected through three main techniques: (1) in-depth interviews with lecturers and students to explore their perceptions and experiences related to ESP instruction; (2) direct observations of the learning process, both online and face-to-face, to examine the practical implementation of instruction; and (3) documentation analysis involving learning devices, ESP modules, and the use of digital platforms such as Ruangmu and Google Classroom. The primary instruments used in this research included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document analysis formats. Data were analyzed through triangulation of sources and methods, involving stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Mariani & Nambisan, 2021; Ifenthaler et al., 2018). Data validity was strengthened through cross-validation among data sources and by applying the theoretical perspective of digital transformation in education as proposed by Aditya and Suranto (2024), further supported by the findings of Haryanto (2021) and Hakim et al. (2023) regarding the integration of technology in higher education learning environments in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of interviews with a lecturer teaching ESP at STIES Mitra Karya, Ms. Dina S., indicated that digital platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom have become essential tools in the teaching process. "We use Google Classroom to deliver materials and collect students' assignments, while Zoom is used for online face-to-face meetings," she explained. This demonstrates that the integration of LMS platforms has been successfully implemented to support flexible ESP instruction.

In a follow-up interview, a student named Dimas R. revealed that digital platforms significantly facilitated access to learning materials. "I can revisit the materials uploaded by the lecturer at any time via Google Classroom, which really helps because sometimes I don’t fully understand everything during class," he stated. This reinforces the finding that digital platforms enhance independent and repetitive learning.

However, despite these advantages, some students reported that the use of LMS was not fully optimized. Another student, Siti A., commented, "Sometimes we have trouble accessing classes due to unstable internet connections, especially during Zoom sessions." Connectivity issues thus emerge as a major challenge in the implementation of comprehensive digital learning.

Another challenge identified was the lack of variety in digital teaching methods. Lecturers continued to rely heavily on the lecture method even when using LMS platforms. According to Dimas, "Most assignments only involve summarizing materials; there are few interactive discussions or simulations." This highlights the need for increased creativity in utilizing digital media.

In conclusion, the utilization of digital platforms in ESP instruction at STIES Mitra Karya has been satisfactory in terms of technical accessibility, but improvements are needed in terms of diversifying teaching methods and enhancing infrastructure readiness to ensure seamless learning experiences.

2. Developing Student Competence through ESP Instruction

In an interview, Ms. Dina S. explained that ESP instruction focuses on mastering economic and business terminology in contextual settings. "We design materials based on terminology commonly used in the workplace, such as 'financial statement' and 'market analysis'," she stated. This indicates that the curriculum is tailored to the professional needs of students.

A student named Rani P. remarked that ESP instruction had significantly prepared her for the professional world. "I used to struggle

reading financial reports in English, but now I am more comfortable because we frequently discuss them in ESP classes," she said. This illustrates that ESP has made tangible contributions to students' readiness for professional challenges.

Nevertheless, developing competence is not without difficulties. Rani also noted, "Some terms are hard to understand just through texts; it would be easier with videos or simulations." This emphasizes the importance of incorporating multimodal media in ESP teaching to enhance comprehension.

Lecturers also recognize the significance of practical application. Ms. Dina added, "We have started using simulation tasks, such as creating simple financial reports in English, as final assignments." This task-based approach promotes students' functional skills.

In conclusion, ESP instruction at STIES Mitra Karya plays a crucial role in developing students' professional competence in economics and business. However, to maximize its effectiveness, a more contextual and multimedia-based learning approach is necessary.

3. Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Digital ESP Instruction

In the interviews, the primary challenge identified was the lecturers' readiness to manage digital instruction. Ms. Dina stated, "Not all of us are familiar with technology. Although there are training sessions, we still need assistance when applying it." This underscores the need for continuous professional development for lecturers.

Students also highlighted digital access issues. Rani commented, "When the internet connection is poor, I often miss important materials. It would help if the campus provided internet access or study spaces with Wi-Fi." This reflects the necessity for equitable access to supporting facilities.

Another challenge is the lack of integration between digital platforms and learning assessment systems. According to Ms. Dina, "We still use manual systems for grading, even though they could be integrated into the LMS." This creates inefficiencies in online classroom management.

To address these challenges, STIES Mitra Karya has initiated internal training programs and established a technical support team to assist lecturers and students. "We have formed a technical team ready to assist during online class disruptions," she explained. This is a proactive measure to bridge digital gaps.

In conclusion, the success of digital-based ESP instruction largely depends on human resource readiness and institutional support. Technical support and continuous training are key to overcoming the challenges of digital implementation.

4. The Role of Institutions in Supporting Digital Transformation in ESP Teaching

An interview with the Head of Study Program, Mr. Arief H., revealed that the institution is committed to supporting digital transformation. "We have allocated funds to strengthen internet networks and to develop our own campus LMS next year," he stated. Policy support serves as a fundamental factor in successful technology integration.

Furthermore, the institution encourages teaching innovation through incentive programs. "We offer awards to lecturers who develop digital content or create instructional videos," Mr. Arief added. This provides motivation for lecturers to be more creative in their teaching practices.

However, challenges in policy consistency were also noted. Ms. Dina observed, "Sometimes the policies change depending on leadership. There should be consistent and clear SOPs." This highlights the need for stable, long-term policies to sustain digital transformation efforts.

Students also expressed the need for feedback forums. Rani stated, "If there were platforms for suggestions or regular surveys, we could better communicate our issues and feedback regarding digital classes." Student participation in policy evaluation would enhance institutional responsiveness.

In conclusion, institutional support is crucial for the successful digital transformation of ESP teaching. Consistent policies, robust

infrastructure, and participatory mechanisms for lecturers and students are essential.

5. The Effectiveness of Blended Learning in ESP Instruction

The blended learning model implemented at STIES Mitra Karya combines online and face-to-face instruction. Ms. Dina explained, "We usually have two online meetings and one in-person session. This helps students avoid boredom and maintain engagement." This approach offers flexibility while preserving direct interaction.

Students recognized the benefits of the model. Dimas commented, "When classes are fully online, it can be boring. But with a mix, it's more exciting. Face-to-face sessions are also important for asking questions directly." This shows that blended learning provides a balance between flexibility and student engagement.

However, blended learning demands greater preparedness in planning. Ms. Dina added, "We must prepare two versions of the materials — for online and for face-to-face classes — which can be an additional burden." This challenge necessitates careful planning and equitable workload distribution among lecturers.

In terms of assessment, blended learning enables a variety of evaluation methods. Mr. Arief mentioned, "We encourage the use of collaborative projects, online discussions, and offline exams as combined assessment tools." This allows for a more holistic evaluation of learning outcomes.

In conclusion, blended learning is an effective approach for ESP instruction at STIES Mitra Karya. To ensure its success, careful planning and administrative support for lecturers in preparing dual-format materials are required.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that ESP instruction at STIES Mitra Karya has undergone significant transformation through the integration of digital platforms. The use of LMS tools such as Google Classroom and Zoom has been pivotal in material delivery and lecturer-student interaction. These findings reinforce the argument by Aditya and Suranto (2024) that digital transformation in education can enhance student learning quality by promoting flexible and interactive digital platforms.

In the context of developing student competence, ESP instruction plays a crucial role in helping students understand industry-relevant terminology and communication contexts, especially in the fields of economics and business. This finding aligns with Ifenthaler, Gibson, and Dobozy's (2018) study, which emphasizes that technology-based approaches strengthen contextual and skills-based learning processes.

However, the research also uncovered significant challenges related to technological gaps and the readiness of human resources among both lecturers and students. These challenges are consistent with the findings of Hakim et al. (2023), who found that digital literacy and technological infrastructure gaps are major obstacles to effective digital education implementation in Indonesia.

Institutional support also emerged as a critical factor in facilitating successful digital transformation. Policy support, infrastructure development, and lecturer motivation programs are essential, as highlighted by Marcelo and Yot-Domínguez (2019), who noted that institutional engagement greatly influences lecturers' successful adoption of digital teaching innovations.

Finally, the effectiveness of the blended learning model at STIES Mitra Karya supports the findings of Straková and Cimermanová (2018), who emphasized that combining online and face-to-face instruction creates more dynamic and flexible learning environments while maintaining active student participation. Overall, while digital adoption in ESP teaching at STIES Mitra Karya reflects positive institutional efforts, sustainable improvements in lecturer training, infrastructure enhancement, and digital curriculum development are necessary to ensure continued success and adaptability to future changes.

CONCLUSIONS

The teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at STIES Mitra Karya has shown positive transformation through the integration of digital technology, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) and interactive media. The learning process has become more flexible, contextual, and adaptive to the needs of students as well as the demands of the workforce, particularly in the fields of economics and business. Platform-based learning enables students to access materials independently and allows instructors to deliver content that is more relevant and practical.

However, the success of digital-based ESP teaching largely depends on the readiness of human resources and institutional support. Challenges such as limited infrastructure, uneven technological literacy, and the need for ongoing training for faculty members must be prioritized. Therefore, a holistic and sustainable strategy is required to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of ESP teaching in the digital era.

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