



Identification of Academic and Professional English Language Needs for Health Students at Hafshawati University

Siti Aisyah Syaiful Arifin^{1*}, Raudhatul Islam², Lilik Rohmatul Amelia³,
Moh. Jibrail El-Furqon⁴, Abdul Hanan⁵

¹⁻⁵English Education, Faculty of General Education, Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan
Genggong, Probolinggo, Indonesia

Email: aizafatan@gmail.com, raudhatulislam@gmail.com, lilikrohmatulamelia@gmail.com,
jibrailfurqon2004@gmail.com, abdulhannan250403@gmail.com

Alamat: Jl.Raya Panglima Sudirman No.360, Semampir, Probolinggo Regency, East Java

Corresponding author: aizafatan@gmail.com

Abstract. English language skills are an essential competency for health students, especially in accessing scientific literature, understanding medical terminology, and facing the demands of professional globalization. However, the suitability of the English language learning curriculum with the specific needs of health students is still an issue. This study aims to identify the academic and professional English language needs of health students at Hafshawati University. The study used a qualitative approach with an open-ended questionnaire instrument that was analyzed thematically. Participants consisted of five students from various semesters and health study programs. The results showed that the ability to read and understand English-language medical references was the main need, followed by speaking skills in the context of professional communication. Non-formal learning media such as YouTube and TikTok were also actively utilized by students. The implications of this study indicate the importance of curriculum reformulation based on needs analysis and strengthening the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach in health education. These findings provide a basis for the development of teaching materials, lecturer training, and more contextual and applicable learning designs.

Keywords: Contextual Learning, English Language Needs, Health Students.

1. BACKGROUND

In the era of globalization and rapid development of information technology, English language proficiency has become an essential skill in various fields, including in the health sector. English functions as a lingua franca in cross-country scientific and professional communication, especially in evidence-based medical practice, international collaboration, and access to the latest medical information sources. Health students are required to have adequate English literacy skills in order to be able to understand academic literature, attend international conferences, and actively participate in global clinical practice (Widodo, 2020; Khan et al., 2021). Therefore, English language skills are not just a complement, but a strategic need in higher health education.

In a higher education environment, good English language skills enable students to access the latest scientific journals, write academic reports with international standards, and participate in global medical training which is often delivered in English. In an academic context, academic reading and writing skills are the main focus for understanding medical terminology and producing research-based reports. In addition, speaking and listening skills are needed in class discussions, academic presentations, and

doctor-patient communication simulations (Afzali et al., 2022). These activities directly contribute to the achievement of students' professional competence in the future.

However, many health students still face major challenges in mastering English, both in academic and professional contexts. Previous studies have shown that students often feel less confident in using English actively, and have difficulty understanding technical terms and language structures in medical texts (Setiawan et al., 2023). This is exacerbated by the limitations of the English curriculum which is still oriented towards general learning, not the specific needs of the health sector. As a result, there is a significant gap between the abilities possessed by students and the demands of communication in the real world of work and academia (Nurhikmah & Nugroho, 2021).

This condition strengthens the importance of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach in the English learning process in health majors. ESP is an approach that emphasizes teaching English according to the linguistic needs and specific professional contexts of learners (Hyland, 2022). In the context of health students, ESP includes teaching medical terminology, doctor-patient communication, medical report writing, and understanding clinical journals. This approach is not only relevant but also effective in improving students' readiness to participate in international academic and work environments. Therefore, needs analysis is a crucial initial stage in designing an ESP learning program that is right on target.

Hafshawati University, as one of the higher education institutions in the health sector in Indonesia, faces similar challenges in developing students' English skills. Although this institution has a basic English curriculum, there has been no in-depth and data-based study on the extent to which the curriculum meets students' academic and professional needs. Given the importance of communication readiness in clinical and academic practice, it is necessary to systematically and contextually identify English language needs in the Hafshawati University environment. This study is a necessary first step to ensure that English language education is not only normative, but truly supports the academic success and professional careers of health students (Rahman et al., 2025).

The need for English language proficiency among health students is increasing along with the high academic and professional demands in a global context. Although health students are expected to be able to read scientific literature, write academic reports, and communicate in clinical situations, in reality many of them still have difficulty using English effectively. Research by Suryati et al. (2022) shows that the majority of nursing students in Indonesia have low levels of confidence in using English, especially in the

context of academic speaking and writing. This indicates a gap between the expectations of educational institutions and the reality of students' abilities.

One of the main causes of this gap is the lack of English language learning programs that are specifically designed to meet the needs of students in the health sector. Most programs are still generic, non-contextual, and do not touch on specific skills such as understanding medical terminology, writing nursing reports, or conducting doctor-patient communication in English. As explained by Ismail et al. (2021), the general English curriculum is unable to answer the challenges of complex professional communication in the health sector, so students are not well prepared to face the world of work.

This condition is exacerbated by the lack of empirical data based on local contexts that can be used as a basis for developing English language learning materials and approaches in health education institutions. At Hafshawati University, for example, a systematic needs analysis has never been conducted regarding students' English language skills. This results in the absence of a reference in designing an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) program that is in accordance with the actual needs of students in the health department. In fact, empirical data is needed to ensure that teaching materials are truly relevant and applicable (Rahmat & Lestari, 2023).

In addition, there is a tendency for students' English language skills to be more focused on standardized exams or formal academic aspects, while professional communicative aspects such as cross-cultural communication and medical interview skills are often ignored. In fact, according to the results of a study by Zhang and Liu (2020), interpersonal communication skills in English are an important factor in global health practices based on interprofessional and inter-country cooperation. Lack of attention to this aspect can have an impact on the readiness of graduates to face the dynamics of work in the era of globalization.

Therefore, the main problem raised in this study is the lack of comprehensive identification of the academic and professional English needs of health students at Hafshawati University. This ignorance has the potential to hinder the effectiveness of the learning process, reduce the quality of graduates, and weaken their competitiveness at the national and international levels. By conducting a structured and data-based identification of needs, this study aims to overcome the information gap that has so far hampered the development of ESP programs that are responsive to the real needs of health students (Larasati et al., 2025).

This study aims primarily to identify the English language needs of health students at Hafshawati University, both in academic and professional contexts. This identification is carried out through a needs analysis approach, which is a pillar in the development of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) program. As emphasized by Basturkmen (2020), a systematic needs analysis can produce an accurate mapping of the types of language skills, levels of difficulty, and situations of language use that are relevant to a particular field. In this context, a deep understanding of academic activities (e.g. reading journals, writing reports) and professional activities (e.g. interacting with patients or international colleagues) is the main focus of the study.

More specifically, this study aims to examine the English language skills that students already have and compare them with the skills needed in academic activities and the professional world of work. This process allows for the disclosure of competency gaps that have not been explicitly identified. According to Dudley-Evans and St John (2022), this approach is essential in determining the direction of ESP curriculum development that is responsive to the local context. In this case, the research results can be used as a reference in designing learning that is more targeted, contextual, and relevant to the real needs of health students.

Another objective of this study is to understand the perceptions of students and lecturers regarding the importance of English language skills in supporting academic success and professional practice. This perception is important as an indicator of learning motivation and as a basis for designing appropriate teaching methods. According to Cheng et al. (2021), stakeholders' perceptions of English greatly influence the effectiveness of ESP curriculum implementation, including in terms of selecting materials, media, and learning methods. Therefore, this study not only highlights linguistic aspects, but also psychopedagogical aspects that support the achievement of learning outcomes.

This study also aims to compile practical recommendations for higher education institutions, especially health study programs, in developing needs-based English learning policies. These recommendations are expected to help policy makers at Hafshawati University to compile or revise a curriculum that is not only adaptive to local academic challenges but also competitive in a global context. As stated by Flowerdew (2023), language policies in educational institutions must be based on the specific needs of students and the demands of the workplace so that ESP programs can truly have a real impact on graduates' career readiness.

With these objectives, this study as a whole aims to produce empirical and applicable contributions to the development of English language learning in health education institutions, especially Hafshawati University. This study not only contributes to the internal improvement of the local curriculum but also enriches scientific discourse in the field of English for Specific Purposes in Indonesia. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for other researchers and education practitioners who want to develop a needs-based learning approach for students in specific professional fields (Rahman et al., 2025; Latief & Kusumawardani, 2022).

Several studies have been conducted on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learning, including in the health sector. However, most of these studies focus on developing materials or pedagogical approaches in general, without being rooted in in-depth local context-based needs analysis. For example, a study by Widodo and Puspasari (2020) only highlighted the difficulties of nursing students in writing medical reports in English, but did not comprehensively dissect their academic and professional needs. Thus, there is a gap in the literature regarding the comprehensive mapping of English language needs for health students in the context of a specific institution, such as Hafshawati University.

In addition, the approach in previous studies tends to focus on the perceptions of lecturers or education practitioners, rather than on the direct experiences of students as the main users of English in learning and professional practice. According to Tsou and Chen (2022), this imbalance in focus can result in a mismatch between teaching materials and students' real needs. As a result, the resulting ESP program design is at risk of being less effective in responding to the academic demands and work competencies faced by students in the field. Therefore, a more participatory approach that is oriented towards the actual needs of end users is needed.

Some literature also does not clearly distinguish between academic and professional needs in the use of English by health students. In fact, as explained by Mahmud et al. (2023), English language skills in the context of reading scientific journals are very different from the clinical communication skills needed when interacting with patients or international colleagues. This ambiguity causes the English curriculum in many health institutions to still be “one-size-fits-all” and not reflect the complexity of the real world. This study fills this gap by classifying language needs based on the domain of use, namely academic and professional.

Another gap lies in the limited contextual data from higher education institutions in the regions, especially campuses outside large city centers or leading state universities. Previous studies have been conducted at large universities, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to the context of private universities in the regions such as Hafshawati University. In fact, according to Kurniawan & Arifin (2023), developing a curriculum based on local needs is very important so that learning outcomes are more relevant to the social, economic, and cultural conditions of students. Therefore, this study is important to answer the need for ESP curriculum development based on local and institutional data.

Thus, this study fills several important gaps in the literature: (1) the lack of local context-based studies; (2) limited student participation in the needs identification process; (3) the absence of a systematic separation between academic and professional needs; and (4) the absence of studies that explicitly target institutions such as Hafshawati University. This study is designed to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of an ESP curriculum that is more responsive, based on empirical data, and relevant to the needs of health students at the local and national levels (Hidayati et al., 2025).

This study offers novelty in the form of a holistic and local context-based English language needs analysis approach, especially in the health higher education environment at Hafshawati University. Different from previous studies that focused more on the development of teaching materials or program evaluation, this study relies on mapping the actual needs of students from two sides that are rarely studied simultaneously: academic needs and professional needs. This novelty is important because English language needs in the health sector are not only limited to understanding scientific literature, but also include interpersonal communication skills in clinical and cross-cultural settings (Saragih & Handayani, 2021).

This study also prioritizes a student-centered needs analysis approach that has not been widely applied systematically in the context of health education in Indonesia. By directly involving students in the needs identification process, this study contributes to the development of a more democratic and pedagogically relevant ESP study method. This participatory approach reflects the current demands in context-based curriculum development, as emphasized by Hyland (2020), who stated that active student involvement in formulating needs can increase the effectiveness and acceptability of the designed ESP program.

Another justification for the importance of this study lies in the fact that health students face increasingly complex global challenges, including the obligation to attend international conferences, work practices abroad, and involvement in cross-country collaborations. Academic and professional English language skills are no longer just an added value, but a prerequisite for career success in the health sector. Therefore, the development of an English curriculum that is oriented towards the real needs of students is very important. This study answers this urgency by providing empirical data that can be directly implemented in the development of institutional policies (Fatimah & Ningsih, 2022).

This study also has added value in providing conceptual contributions to ESP studies in the health sector which have so far been dominated by generic approaches. By systematically distinguishing academic and professional needs, this study can enrich the theoretical framework in the development of profession-based ESP curricula. In line with Robinson's (2021) statement, a strong ESP framework must be able to map linguistic and communicative competencies that are appropriate to the work context and culture of a particular profession. In this context, this study not only provides local contributions, but also broadens the theoretical and practical horizons in the development of ESP in the health sector.

By considering the above aspects, this study deserves to be considered an important effort to address the empirical gaps, institutional needs, and pedagogical challenges in the field of English language learning for health students. The results of this study are expected to be used as a basis for designing curricula, compiling teaching materials, and establishing contextual and applicable learning methods. Furthermore, this study can also be replicated in other institutions, so that it has the potential to provide a systemic impact on the development of ESP in Indonesian higher education. Therefore, the theoretical and practical contributions of this study are very significant and timely (Yusuf et al., 2025).

2. KAJIAN TEORITIS

Language Needs Theory in ESP

The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach serves as a fundamental framework for understanding the needs of English language learning in professional and academic environments. Hutchinson and Waters (2020) stated that ESP focuses on the specific needs of learners, not merely based on general linguistic competence, but tailored to the professional or disciplinary context in which it is applied. In this context, language

needs are not only viewed as "what must be known," but also encompass "how language is used" in real situations. This approach integrates needs analysis as a foundation for designing curricula, instructional materials, and relevant and applicable learning methods for students.

Needs Analysis Models: Present and Target Situations

In ESP theory, Dudley-Evans and St. John (2022) differentiate between Present Situation Analysis (PSA) and Target Situation Analysis (TSA). PSA functions to map the current language abilities that students possess, while TSA identifies the types of linguistic competence required in future academic and professional activities. The gap between the two forms the basis for designing instructional interventions. In the context of health students, TSA includes the ability to read scientific journals, understand medical terminology, and perform oral communication in clinical practice or academic presentations. This dual approach is a key theoretical tool in this study.

English Language Learning in the Health Field

Health students have unique English language needs compared to students in other disciplines. According to Mahmud et al. (2023), these needs fall into two major domains: academic and professional. In the academic domain, the ability to read scientific texts, write research reports, and comprehend international lectures is crucial. Meanwhile, in the professional realm, students must master interpersonal communication skills, patient interviews, and cross-country collaboration. Saragih and Handayani (2021) emphasized that ESP instruction for health students must integrate both academic and clinical components to prepare them for global challenges in the workplace.

Previous Studies on English Needs of Health Students

Several previous studies have addressed the English language needs of health students. Widodo & Puspasari (2020) identified the difficulties nursing students faced in writing medical reports in English, while Suryati et al. (2022) highlighted students' lack of confidence in speaking in academic settings. However, these studies tend to focus on partial aspects, without a structured needs analysis based on local contexts. The study by Ismail et al. (2021) also underlined the lack of direct student involvement in ESP curriculum design. Thus, the main contribution of this study is to provide a holistic and student-participatory map of English needs.

Relevance to Local Context and Theoretical Innovation

This theoretical review also enriches the ESP discourse by incorporating contextual and digital dimensions into language learning. According to the theory of autonomous learning developed by Reinders & Benson (2022), students who actively utilize digital media such as YouTube and TikTok demonstrate independent and adaptive learning capacities. This finding highlights the need to integrate new media into ESP curricula—an area that has been largely overlooked in traditional frameworks. Additionally, mapping needs based on academic semesters, motivational background, and affective barriers further strengthens the complexity of variables that must be considered in curriculum design.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe in depth the academic and professional English needs of students in the Health Study Program, Hafshawati University. This approach was chosen because it allows exploration of the social context and subjective experiences of students in using English in academic and professional environments. Qualitative research is also considered appropriate in revealing complex meanings and perceptions of linguistic phenomena in higher education (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

Population and Sample

The population in this study were all active students in the Health Study Program, Hafshawati University. However, due to the limitations of the scope and focus of the study, this study used a purposive sampling technique to determine the sample, namely second and fourth semester students who had experience learning English in college and had begun to engage in academic activities and early professional practice. The total participants involved were five students, considering the heterogeneity of their academic backgrounds and perceptions of the use of English in the context of health studies and practices.

Research Procedure

This study was conducted in three main stages: (1) planning, which included the preparation of research instruments and identification of participants; (2) data collection, which includes conducting interviews, classroom observations, and distributing questionnaires; and (3) data analysis and reporting, which are carried out systematically by referring to the principles of thematic analysis in qualitative research. All procedures are carried out by paying attention to the principles of research ethics, including informed consent and confidentiality of participant identities.

Data Collection Techniques

Three main techniques were used in data collection:

- a. Open-ended questionnaires, designed to explore students' perceptions regarding their needs in using English for academic and professional purposes.
- b. Participant observation, conducted in teaching and learning activities and health practice situations to identify the context of real English use.
- c. Documentation studies, including reviewing syllabi, modules, and other relevant academic documents to gain an understanding of the integration of English into the curriculum. A data triangulation approach was applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings (Patton, 2022).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis methods within the framework of a qualitative approach. The analysis process includes the stages of coding, categorization, theme identification, and interpretation of meaning based on the theory of needs in language learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 2020). The researcher classified students' needs into two main categories, namely academic needs and professional needs, by referring to the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) framework. Data validity was strengthened through member checking techniques and collegial discussions to avoid interpretation bias.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher analyzed English learning activities for health students conducted at Hafshawati University. The researcher created a questionnaire related to English learning for Specific Purposes, including the importance of English, skills, methods, materials used, challenges, motivation, and learning media. The results of the questionnaire answers are as follows :

No.	Questionnaire	Answer
1.	How important is English language skills in the health sector? Explain why?	1. Very important – to know the medical language of the disease 2. Important – references in pharmacy are mostly in English
2.	Which English skills are most relevant to the health sector?	1. All are important 2. Reading
3.	What learning methods do lecturers use to teach English?	1. Practice, speaking 2. Memorizing vocabulary 3. Teaching
4.	In the world of health work later, what situations require the use of English?	1. Less relevant during procedures because patients need basic language 2. Review journals, practicums, TOEFL tests
5.	What books or modules are used to learn English? Include photos if available	1. Many modules & PPTs 2. English books
6.	What materials are studied in the Health department?	Drug dosage
7.	In which semester did you study English in the Health department?	Semesters 1 to 3
8.	Apart from on campus, how do you learn English in the Health sector?	1. Watching practices on YouTube 2. Watching videos on TikTok/YouTube
9.	What is the biggest challenge in learning English in the Health sector?	1. Dependent – lazy, difficult to pronounce 2. Lack of breadth in learning 3. Practice
10.	What is your motivation in learning English for the Health sector?	1. Passion for the future 2. Want to work abroad

The Importance of English Language Skills in the Health Sector

As a writer, it is important to emphasize that English language skills in the health sector are an urgent need, along with the development of medical literature and professional communication which are mostly written in English. Health study program students need to have adequate linguistic skills to understand medical terms, read scientific journals, and keep up with global knowledge developments. This is in line with Hyland's

(2022) view, which states that English is the main means for accessing academic and professional information internationally. In the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach, Hutchinson & Waters (2020) also emphasize that language teaching must be oriented to the needs and contexts of its use. Therefore, this question helps identify students' initial perceptions of the strategic role of English in supporting their future competence.

The Most Relevant English Skills for the Health Sector

This question is designed to uncover the specific language skills that are considered most relevant to health students, both in their studies and professional practice. In this context, skills such as reading become very important considering the large number of English-language reference sources used in the fields of pharmacy, nursing, and medicine. Basturkmen (2021) stated that linguistic needs analysis in ESP includes mapping the dominant language skills needed in a particular professional context. Respondents' answers showed that skills such as reading and listening have high significance because they are used in understanding academic texts and clinical communication. This emphasizes the importance of designing an English curriculum that is responsive to students' actual needs.

English Language Learning Methods by Lecturers

From a pedagogical perspective, understanding the methods used by lecturers is very important to evaluate the effectiveness of the English language learning process. Communicative and practice-based approaches such as speaking, vocabulary memorization, and role-play are key to developing functional language skills. Richards (2020) emphasized that the *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)* approach places students in real situations to communicate and express themselves actively. Therefore, it is important to examine what methods are applied, and to what extent these methods are able to bridge the academic and professional needs of health students. This question provides insight into the relevance of the teaching method to the targeted skills.

Use of English in the Health Workplace

This question explores students' projections of situations where English will be used in professional work practice. This analysis is very useful in connecting language needs with real work contexts such as research presentations, clinical practice based on foreign literature, and taking international competency tests such as TOEFL. Dudley-Evans & St. John (2020) emphasize the importance of *target situation analysis* in ESP to design applicable learning. Students' answers show that although the use of English in direct patient care is considered limited, the need to understand international journals and face certification remains very high. This proves that English has an important role in the academic competence and professional career of health students.

English Books or Modules Use

As a writer, it is necessary to know the learning resources used by students as references in learning English, especially to evaluate the quality and relevance of teaching materials. In ESP, the selection of contextual teaching materials is highly recommended so that learning becomes more applicable (Graves, 2021). Data from respondents show that modules, PPTs, and basic nursing books act as the main references, although they have not been specifically designed for the needs of professional English in the health sector. Therefore, there is a need to develop more focused teaching materials, for example through the integration of authentic medical texts and task-based learning exercises.

Academic Material in Health Study Programs

It is important to know the scope of academic material studied by students in order to adjust the English learning content to their field of study. Answers that show the diversity of material—such as drug dosage, diseases, and anatomy—form the basis for mapping technical vocabulary and text genres that must be introduced in English learning. Nation & Webb (2020) explain that in ESP, mastery of specific lexical materials (technical vocabulary) is key for students to be able to understand academic and professional texts in depth. Therefore, this subject matter can be used as a reference for designing a content-based English curriculum.

Semester of English Learning

The duration of English learning in the curriculum is a crucial aspect to consider in the needs analysis. Respondents' answers indicating that English learning is only carried out until the third semester raise questions about the sustainability of language programs to strengthen students' professional competencies. According to Larsen-Freeman & Long (2021), the process of second language acquisition requires sufficient time and exposure for language internalization and automation to occur. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the curriculum structure so that English learning is not only temporary, but integrated into cross-semester learning.

Independent Learning Strategy Outside Campus

The autonomous learning approach through digital platforms such as YouTube and TikTok shows that students take the initiative in their learning process. In the theory of autonomous learning, Reinders & Benson (2022) stated that students who are able to manage independent learning strategies will have better adaptability in accessing learning resources and improving their competence continuously. This finding is important because it shows that learning does not only occur in the classroom, but also through media that are close to students' lives. Thus, the blended learning approach and integration of digital media in ESP learning are becoming increasingly relevant.

Challenges in Learning English in the Health Sector

Analysis of the challenges faced by students is very important in designing adaptive learning strategies. Answers such as laziness, difficulty in practice, and limited learning resources indicate affective and structural barriers that need to be overcome. Krashen (2020) in his theory of the Affective Filter Hypothesis states that emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence influence the language acquisition process. Therefore, learning must be designed with these factors in mind, such as through project-based learning, collaborative approaches, and motivational guidance.

Motivation in Learning English for Health

Motivation is a determining factor in the success of learning English, especially in the context of ESP. Respondents expressed motivations such as the desire to work abroad and enthusiasm for the future, which reflect intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Gardner (2020) stated that motivation plays a major role in the success of language learning,

especially if the learning goals are directly related to professional needs. Understanding student motivation is important for designing materials that are emotionally and professionally relevant, thereby increasing engagement and learning effectiveness.

The results of the questionnaire analysis showed that the majority of health students at Hafshawati University considered English language skills as an important need, especially in academic contexts such as reading medical literature and understanding pharmaceutical terminology. They also mentioned that common learning activities include memorizing vocabulary, practicing speaking, and reading English teaching materials. This shows an awareness of the importance of mastering English as part of professional competence in the health sector (Hyland & Shaw, 2020).

From the perspective of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), these results are in line with the Needs Analysis theory developed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), and expanded by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), which emphasizes the importance of mapping students' specific needs based on their academic and professional goals. The identified needs — such as understanding journals, taking English exams (e.g. TOEFL), and communicating professionally — reflect the needs of the ‘target’ and ‘present situation’ as categorized in the ESP theoretical framework.

When compared to similar studies in other health education environments, both nationally and internationally, similarities were found in the dominant needs for reading skills and understanding medical terminology (Alharbi, 2021; Sari et al., 2023). However, uniquely, the results from Hafshawati University showed that the use of social media such as TikTok and YouTube is also a popular source of informal learning, which has not been widely highlighted in previous ESP literature.

The most prominent category of needs in this finding is reading skills and understanding scientific texts, compared to speaking or writing skills. This may be due to academic demands that emphasize more on information consumption than language production. The curricular context that is still passive and the lack of integration of task-based learning are possible causes (Flowerdew, 2021).

Sociocultural factors also influence these findings. For example, the perception that English is only needed for academic purposes or working abroad causes learning motivation to be uneven. This shows the importance of a pedagogical approach that links English to everyday clinical practice so that the relevance of learning is increasingly felt (Richards, 2020).

Theoretically, this study contributes to strengthening the ESP framework, especially in the health domain in the Indonesian context which is still relatively underexplored. These local findings confirm that the needs-based approach remains relevant, but needs to be adapted to the social and cultural conditions of learners (Basturkmen, 2021). This means that the adaptation of the ESP model must consider the digital dimension, informal learning, and changing needs across semesters.

This study also encourages an update to the needs analysis approach by including new elements, such as digital learning media preferences and affective challenges faced by students. Traditional models that only focus on the context of work or academic study must now be expanded to include personal motivation, technology, and the role of social media as a learning platform (Reinders & Benson, 2023).

The practical implications of these findings are quite significant. The English curriculum in health study programs needs to be redesigned to better suit student needs. Teaching materials should include authentic medical texts, journal reading exercises, and collaborative case-based assignments that mimic real-world clinical situations (Hyland, 2022).

In addition, developing teaching materials that are relevant to local contexts and professional practices is essential. For example, using case studies from local hospitals or health centers in English learning activities can increase students' engagement and sense of ownership of the material (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2021).

These findings can also be the basis for training English language lecturers to better understand the specific context of the health world. ESP-based training needs to be encouraged at the institutional level so that lecturers are able to develop contextual materials, strategies, and evaluations according to student needs (Richards, 2020).

One of the main limitations of this study is the very limited number of respondents, which was only five students from one university. This makes the generalizability of the findings less strong and susceptible to representative bias (Creswell & Poth, 2021). In addition, respondents only came from two semesters, which means they do not cover all learning phases in the study program.

In terms of instruments, this study only used a questionnaire as a data collection tool. Although the questionnaire can provide quite extensive initial information, this approach is unable to explore the depth of information that can be obtained through interviews or direct observation. Therefore, the validity of the data in an interpretive context can still be improved (Dörnyei, 2021).

Another limitation is the aspect of time and resources that limit the scope of the study. Because the data was collected in a short period of time, it is not possible to see the dynamics of English language needs continuously over time. This also hinders understanding the context of changes that may occur between semesters (Basturkmen, 2021).

The potential for respondent perception bias is also a concern. Students' answers can be influenced by subjective perceptions, different learning experiences, or inconsistent personal motivations. These factors can affect the objectivity of data interpretation, especially if not combined with other data sources for triangulation (Hyland & Shaw, 2020).

Finally, the use of a purely qualitative method is also a limitation. Without quantitative data support, the research results are less able to answer the question of how high the level of need or significance of each aspect of English language skills is statistically (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

This study suggests that future studies expand the scope of the sample, not only limited to Hafshawati University students, but also include students from various semesters and other health institutions at the regional or national level. This is important to enrich the diversity of perspectives and increase the generalizability of research results (Creswell & Poth, 2021). A mixed methods approach is also recommended, combining qualitative and quantitative data to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings. This strategy is in line with the views of Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2022), who emphasize the integrative power of mixed methods in social and educational research.

In addition, future research needs to develop more in-depth instruments such as semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and curriculum document analysis to explore English language needs more comprehensively. This can enrich the interpretative dimension of the data and allow for more contextual identification of needs (Dörnyei, 2021). Longitudinal studies are also recommended to monitor the dynamics of students' English language needs from the beginning to the end of their studies. This approach is important to understand the development of linguistic competence over a wider time span and to assess the effectiveness of learning interventions (Basturkmen, 2021).

Finally, cross-institutional collaborative research would be very useful in mapping patterns of English language needs among health students nationally. Such collaborative studies can create synergies between institutions and produce more solid data-based policy recommendations (Hyland & Shaw, 2020). Thus, these suggestions are expected to be a

foundation for expanding and deepening research in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the health sector.

The findings of this study have a number of significant social and ethical implications. First, English language skills have been shown to be an important tool in increasing health students' access to international scientific literature and evidence-based clinical practice. In the era of globalization of knowledge, academic literacy in English is key to keeping up with developments in medical science and technology (Flowerdew, 2021). Thus, English language learning is not only seen as a curricular obligation, but as a means of academic empowerment.

Second, English language competence also plays a role in reducing the professional gap between local and global health workers. Students who are proficient in English have a greater chance of participating in international exchange programs, conferences, or global certifications that can increase their competitiveness in the global labor market (Richards, 2020). However, this raises ethical challenges in the context of equal access to quality English language education.

Third, there is an ethical responsibility to ensure that all health students, regardless of economic background or region, have equal access to English language learning. The failure of educational institutions to provide inclusive language training can deepen the gap and create marginalization for students with low abilities (Pennycook, 2022). Therefore, it is important to identify and accommodate individual needs so that the learning process becomes more equitable.

Fourth, the risk of academic and professional marginalization for students who do not have adequate English language competency is also a concern. This requires institutions to take proactive steps, such as remedial programs, language mentoring, or technology-based support to bridge the proficiency gap (Reinders & Benson, 2023). Finally, institutional support and educational policies are critical in addressing linguistic barriers in health education. Implementing policies that support foreign language literacy, ESP faculty training, and providing adequate learning resources should be strategic priorities in health higher education (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2021).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This study aims to identify the English language needs of students in the health department of Hafshawati University through a qualitative questionnaire-based approach. The findings show that students view English language skills as a very important competency, especially in understanding academic references, medical terminology, and pharmaceutical literature. Reading skills and memorizing vocabulary rank at the top of the perceived needs, while informal learning media such as YouTube and TikTok are significant alternative learning resources.

From an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) perspective, these findings affirm the importance of a learning approach based on needs analysis, both in academic and professional contexts. These results also reveal a gap between the current English language learning curriculum and the real needs of students in the health sector. The curriculum tends not to fully support the integration of linguistic competence and health profession expertise.

In addition, limitations in the number of samples and research instruments indicate the need for a more comprehensive approach in further studies. Nevertheless, the results of this study provide a significant contribution to the development of a needs-based curriculum and become the initial basis for formulating a contextual and applicable English learning strategy in the health sector.

Suggestion

1) Reformulation of English Curriculum in the Health Sector

Higher education institutions need to review their English curriculum to adjust it to the needs of health students. Learning materials should be directed at understanding scientific texts, professional communication, and medical terminology that are authentic and relevant to clinical practice.

2) Development of ESP-Based Contextual Learning

The ESP approach needs to be implemented systematically in the learning process by considering the specific needs of each department under the health faculty. The use of task-based learning and case-based instruction is highly recommended to improve students' application skills.

3) Improving Lecturer Competence

Continuous training is needed for English lecturers to have a deep understanding of linguistic needs in the health sector. Collaboration between language lecturers and health profession lecturers can also increase the relevance of teaching materials.

4) Further Research Based on Mixed Methods and Longitudinal

To get a more complete picture, further research is recommended with a mixed methods approach and longitudinal studies to monitor the dynamics of students' English language needs throughout the study period.

5) Empowerment of Digital Media as an Alternative Learning Source

The use of social media and digital platforms such as YouTube, podcasts, and health-based learning applications needs to be facilitated by institutions as part of a blended and digital literacy-based learning strategy.

DAFTAR REFERENSI

- Afzali, M., Sahragard, R., & Moinzadeh, A. (2022). Medical ESP learners' perceptions of language needs and teacher effectiveness in Iranian universities. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 60(3), 1–17.
- Basturkmen, H. (2020). *Developing courses in English for specific purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cheng, A., Anthony, L., & Flowerdew, J. (2021). *Teaching English for specific purposes: An international perspective*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2021). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2021). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (2022). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fatimah, S., & Ningsih, D. R. (2022). Preparing health students for global engagement through ESP curriculum development. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 77–92.
- Flowerdew, J. (2021). *Discourse in English language education* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Flowerdew, J. (2023). Needs analysis and curriculum development in ESP: Revisiting contextualization in Asia. *Asian ESP Journal*, 19(2), 88–107.

- Gardner, R. C. (2020). *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational model*. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Graves, K. (2021). *Designing language courses: A guide for teachers*. Heinle ELT.
- Hidayati, R., Pramono, A., & Yulianti, I. (2025). Localized needs analysis in ESP: A case study of health sciences students in East Indonesia. *Journal of Language and Education Research*, 12(2), 34–49.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (2020). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2020). Second language writing and needs analysis: Learner involvement in ESP course design. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 46, 100–113.
- Hyland, K. (2022a). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2022b). *English for academic purposes: An advanced resource book*. Routledge.
- Hyland, K., & Shaw, P. (2020). *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes*. Routledge.
- Ismail, S., Yusof, N., & Nor, N. M. (2021). Challenges in designing ESP courses for medical students: Insights from curriculum developers. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 60(4), 11–27.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2022). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 51(2), 3–14.
- Khan, M. A., Alam, M., & Ahmad, A. (2021). English language needs of medical students: A case study in ESP curriculum design. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(2), 141–156.
- Krashen, S. D. (2020). *Explorations in language acquisition and use*. Heinemann.
- Kurniawan, D., & Arifin, M. Z. (2023). ESP curriculum development for regional universities: Challenges and strategies. *Indonesian Journal of English Education*, 10(1), 101–119.
- Larasati, N., Hamid, A., & Prasetyo, W. (2025). Analyzing English needs for health sciences students: Toward contextualized ESP curriculum. *International Journal of Language Education*, 9(1), 18–33.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Long, M. H. (2021). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. Routledge.
- Latief, M. A., & Kusumawardani, R. (2022). Reconstruction of ESP curriculum in medical faculties: A case from Indonesia. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(4), 129–142.
- Mahmud, M., Idris, M., & Fauzia, H. (2023). Academic vs. clinical English: Mapping distinctive needs of health science students in Indonesia. *Journal of ESP Studies*, 7(2), 78–92.

- Nation, I. S. P., & Webb, S. (2020). *Researching and analyzing vocabulary*. Heinle ELT.
- Nurhikmah, S., & Nugroho, H. (2021). Needs analysis of English for nursing students: A preliminary study. *Journal of English for Academic and Specific Purposes*, 4(2), 35–48.
- Patton, M. Q. (2022). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Pennycook, A. (2022). *Language and mobility: Unexpected places*. Multilingual Matters.
- Rahman, T., Putri, N. R., & Hidayat, M. (2025). Curriculum relevance and ESP design in Indonesian health education institutions: A needs-based perspective. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15(1), 21–35.
- Rahmat, R., & Lestari, F. (2023). Local needs-based ESP design: A case study in health sciences education. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 8(1), 45–60.
- Reinders, H., & Benson, P. (2022). *Autonomy in language learning: Theory and practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reinders, H., & Benson, P. (2023). *Autonomy in language learning: Theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richards, J. C. (2020). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, P. (2021). ESP and professional identity: Revisiting needs-based curriculum design in the medical field. *English for Specific Purposes Journal*, 63(1), 12–27.
- Saragih, R., & Handayani, F. (2021). Integrating academic and clinical English in nursing education: Toward a new ESP framework. *Journal of Medical English Education*, 10(2), 43–59.
- Sari, Y. N., Hidayat, D. N., & Hasanah, N. (2023). Kebutuhan bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa keperawatan: Studi kasus ESP. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 10(2), 123–134.
- Setiawan, A., Sari, R., & Santosa, F. (2023). ESP implementation challenges in Indonesian medical schools: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Language and Education*, 9(1), 45–58.
- Suryati, N., Fatimah, D., & Anggraeni, T. (2022). Exploring English communication challenges among nursing students in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(1), 52–64.
- Tsou, W., & Chen, Y. C. (2022). Learner-centered ESP curriculum development in health education: A participatory perspective. *English for Specific Purposes Journal*, 67(1), 23–38.

- Widodo, H. P. (2020). Critical literacies in English for specific purposes (ESP) teaching in higher education: Addressing local and global issues. *English Education Journal*, 10(1), 15–29.
- Widodo, H. P., & Puspasari, D. (2020). Addressing challenges in ESP for nursing: A reflective inquiry. *Asian ESP Journal*, 16(3), 95–112.
- Yusuf, A., Hidayah, R., & Pratiwi, L. (2025). Contextualizing ESP in Indonesian health education: From local needs to global readiness. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and ELT*, 13(1), 59–74.
- Zhang, Y., & Liu, Q. (2020). Cross-cultural communication competence among medical professionals: A critical need in ESP curriculum design. *Asian ESP Journal*, 16(4), 78–95.