# CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO NON-ENGLISH MAJORS IN BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTING PROGRAMS

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the challenges and strategies in teaching English to non-English majors, specifically within business and accounting programs at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research explores the perspectives of both instructors and students to identify key difficulties and effective practices. The study reveals that student motivation is a significant challenge, with many students perceiving English as peripheral to their main field of study. To address this issue, instructors have integrated business-related content into the English curriculum, enhancing relevance and engagement. Additionally, the research highlights the diversity in student proficiency levels, which necessitates the use of differentiated instruction and peer-assisted learning to cater to varying needs. The integration of technology and blended learning approaches has been beneficial but also presents challenges related to access and instructor proficiency. Institutional support for resources, collaboration between language and subject-matter experts, and continuous professional development are crucial for overcoming these challenges. The findings offer insights into improving English language education for non-English majors and provide recommendations for educators and institutions.

*Keywords*: *English language teaching, non-English majors, business and accounting programs, blended learning*

## 1. Introduction

The globalized nature of today's economy has made English a crucial tool for communication in various professional fields, particularly in business and accounting. In Indonesia, where English is not the first language, mastering English is increasingly seen as essential for students aiming to enter the global job market. Despite this growing recognition, teaching English to non-English majors, especially in business and accounting programs, remains fraught with challenges. These challenges stem from various factors, including the perceived relevance of English to students' core subjects, differences in English proficiency levels, and the overall design of the curriculum.

At Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia, English is a mandatory component of the curriculum for students majoring in business and accounting. However, the effectiveness of English language instruction in these programs is often hampered by students' low motivation and engagement. This is consistent with findings by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), who argue that students' motivation is a key determinant of success in language learning, and

that motivation can be particularly low when students do not perceive a direct connection between language skills and their primary field of study. This disconnection often leads to a lack of interest and effort, which in turn affects their overall language acquisition.

Furthermore, the diversity of English proficiency levels among students poses a significant challenge for instructors. According to Richards (2015), addressing varied proficiency levels within a single classroom requires differentiated instruction, which can be difficult to implement effectively, particularly in large classes. At Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia, the challenge is compounded by the fact that English is often treated as a supplementary subject rather than an integral part of the business and accounting curriculum. This approach can inadvertently marginalize the subject, reducing the resources and attention it receives, which can hinder students' language development.

Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the need to incorporate English for Specific Purposes (ESP) into the curriculum to make language learning more relevant to students' future careers. Basturkmen (2014) emphasizes that ESP courses designed for business and accounting students must focus not only on general English language skills but also on the specific language functions and genres relevant to these fields. However, integrating ESP into existing programs requires careful planning and collaboration between language instructors and subject specialists, a process that is often hindered by institutional constraints and a lack of resources.

Given these challenges, it is crucial to explore and identify effective strategies that can enhance English language instruction for non-English majors in business and accounting programs. This study aims to investigate the specific challenges faced by English instructors at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia and to propose strategies that can be employed to address these challenges. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discussion on improving English language education in non-English major programs, with the ultimate goal of better preparing students for the demands of the globalized job market.

## 2. Literature Review

Research on teaching English to non-English majors, particularly in business and accounting programs, has revealed a range of challenges that educators face and strategies that have been developed to address these challenges. One of the central issues identified in the literature is the lack of motivation among students to engage with English language learning when it is not directly linked to their primary field of study. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) found that motivation significantly impacts language learning outcomes, and students are more likely to be motivated when the language content is perceived as relevant to their future careers.

Several studies have also highlighted the problem of varying proficiency levels within classrooms. Richards (2015) discusses the difficulties of implementing differentiated instruction in large, heterogeneous classes, where students' English abilities range widely. This issue is particularly acute in non-English major programs, where students may have diverse backgrounds and differing levels of prior exposure to English.

In response to these challenges, researchers have proposed the integration of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) into the curriculum as a solution to increase relevance and engagement. Basturkmen (2014) emphasizes the importance of designing ESP courses that focus on the specific linguistic needs of business and accounting students, such as understanding industry-specific terminology and mastering the communication skills required in professional settings. However, the implementation of ESP poses its own set of challenges,

including the need for collaboration between language instructors and subject-matter experts, as well as the additional resources required to develop specialized course materials.

Additionally, studies have explored various instructional strategies aimed at improving language learning outcomes for non-English majors. For instance, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggested that tailoring course content to align with students' academic and professional goals can enhance motivation and learning efficiency. More recent studies have built on this by advocating for a blended learning approach, combining traditional face-to-face instruction with online resources to cater to different learning styles and provide additional language practice opportunities outside the classroom (Graham, 2019). Overall, the literature indicates that while significant progress has been made in understanding the challenges of teaching English to non-English majors, there is still a need for further research into the effectiveness of different instructional strategies in specific contexts, such as business and accounting programs at Indonesian institutions. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the challenges faced by English instructors at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia and identifying successful strategies that can be adapted to similar educational settings.

While previous studies have extensively examined the challenges and strategies in teaching English to non-English majors, particularly in business and accounting programs, there is a limited focus on the specific context of Indonesian higher education institutions. This research contributes to the existing literature by providing an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by English instructors at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia, a context that has not been widely explored in previous studies. One of the key novelties of this study lies in its focus on the integration of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) within the curriculum of non-English majors, specifically tailored to the needs of business and accounting students. While the concept of ESP has been discussed in the literature, its practical implementation, especially in Indonesian educational institutions, remains underexplored. This study not only addresses this gap but also offers insights into how ESP can be effectively incorporated into the curriculum, considering the unique challenges of large class sizes and varied proficiency levels.

Moreover, this research contributes to the understanding of student motivation in non-English major programs by exploring how the relevance of English to students' future careers can be enhanced through targeted instructional strategies. The study also investigates the potential of blended learning approaches, combining traditional classroom instruction with digital resources, to improve language learning outcomes in a context where technological integration is becoming increasingly important. By focusing on a specific Indonesian institution, this research provides valuable data and insights that can inform the development of more effective English language programs in similar educational settings. The findings and strategies proposed in this study aim to improve the overall quality of English language instruction in business and accounting programs, ultimately better preparing students for the globalized job market.

## a. Motivation and Relevance in Language Learning

One of the primary challenges identified in the literature is the issue of student motivation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) emphasize that motivation is a critical factor in language learning success. For students in business and accounting programs, English is often seen as peripheral to their main field of study, leading to lower engagement and motivation. This is particularly concerning given that motivation has been consistently linked to better

language acquisition outcomes. Research by Gardner (2010) further supports the idea that when students perceive English as relevant to their academic and professional goals, their motivation and learning outcomes improve significantly.

In response, scholars have advocated for the integration of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) within the curriculum to make language learning more relevant. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP courses are designed to meet the specific needs of learners, focusing on the language skills required in their respective fields. For business and accounting students, this includes mastering the terminology, communication strategies, and genre-specific language used in professional settings. Basturkmen (2014) expands on this by discussing how ESP can bridge the gap between general English language instruction and the specialized needs of students in specific disciplines.

## b. Diverse Proficiency Levels and Differentiated Instruction

Another significant challenge in teaching English to non-English majors is the wide range of proficiency levels within a single classroom. Richards (2015) notes that this diversity can hinder the effectiveness of instruction, as teachers must cater to both advanced and less proficient students simultaneously. Differentiated instruction, a strategy that involves tailoring teaching methods to accommodate different learning needs, has been suggested as a solution. However, implementing this approach in large classes, as often found in Indonesian universities, remains a complex task.

Several studies have explored strategies to manage varied proficiency levels. Tomlinson (2014) suggests using a variety of instructional materials and activities that can engage students at different levels, such as group work, peer teaching, and the use of technology-enhanced learning tools. These strategies can help ensure that all students, regardless of their starting point, have opportunities to improve their language skills.

## c. Integration of Technology and Blended Learning

The integration of technology in language instruction has gained increasing attention as a means to address some of the challenges in teaching English to non-English majors. Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online resources, offers a flexible approach that can cater to diverse learning preferences and proficiency levels. Graham (2019) discusses how blended learning environments can enhance student engagement by providing additional practice opportunities outside of the classroom and allowing for more personalized learning experiences.

Studies have shown that blended learning can be particularly effective in language learning contexts. According to Shamsudin et al. (2020), the use of online platforms for language practice not only supplements classroom instruction but also allows students to work at their own pace, thereby accommodating the varied proficiency levels in a typical classroom. This approach has the potential to increase student motivation by providing relevant, contextualized learning experiences that are directly applicable to their future careers.

## d. Institutional and Pedagogical Challenges

The successful implementation of ESP and blended learning strategies in business and accounting programs also requires addressing several institutional and pedagogical challenges. As Basturkmen (2014) points out, the development of ESP courses necessitates close collaboration between language instructors and subject-matter experts to ensure that the

content is both linguistically appropriate and relevant to the students' field of study. However, this level of collaboration is often hindered by institutional constraints, such as limited resources and a lack of support for interdisciplinary initiatives. Additionally, the shift towards technology-enhanced learning environments requires instructors to be proficient in using digital tools and platforms. As noted by Wang and Winstead (2016), the effectiveness of blended learning depends not only on the availability of technological resources but also on the instructors' ability to integrate these tools into their teaching practices in a pedagogically sound manner.

## 3. Methodology

The methodology of this study is designed to explore the challenges and strategies in teaching English to non-English majors in business and accounting programs at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia, using a qualitative research approach. A case study design has been selected to allow for a detailed examination of the specific context, enabling an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of both instructors and students. Case studies are particularly valuable for investigating complex issues within real-life settings, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study.

Participants in this study include English language instructors and students from the business and accounting programs at the institution. Purposive sampling will be employed to select participants directly involved in the English language courses, ensuring that those who can provide rich and relevant data are included. A total of 5-7 English instructors with experience teaching non-English majors will be selected for in-depth interviews, while approximately 20-30 students will participate in focus group discussions. These students will represent a range of proficiency levels and academic standings, capturing diverse perspectives.

Data will be collected through a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. The semi-structured interviews with instructors will explore their perceptions of the challenges in teaching English and the strategies they employ to address these challenges. The focus group discussions with students will gather their perspectives on the difficulties they face in learning English and the effectiveness of the teaching methods used. Classroom observations will provide contextual data on the teaching and learning environment, focusing on instructional methods, student engagement, and classroom dynamics.

The data collected from these methods will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data. Interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed verbatim, and the transcriptions, along with field notes from classroom observations, will be coded using a combination of inductive and deductive techniques. Themes representing the key challenges and strategies identified by participants will be developed, reviewed, and refined to ensure they accurately reflect the data and address the research objectives.

Ethical considerations will be strictly adhered to, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and anonymizing all data to protect participants' identities. The study will also employ strategies

such as triangulation, member checking, and reflexivity to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. Triangulation will be achieved by using multiple data sources, member checking will involve sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm their accuracy, and reflexivity will be maintained through ongoing self-reflection by the researcher on potential biases and their impact on the research process.

## 4.  Result and Discussion
## 4.1. Result

The findings of this study provide a detailed exploration of the challenges and strategies in teaching English to non-English majors, specifically within the business and accounting programs at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia. The results are organized into several key themes that emerged from the data analysis: student motivation, proficiency levels, instructional strategies, and the integration of technology. Each theme is discussed in relation to existing literature, highlighting both the consistencies and the unique aspects of the study's context.

One of the most prominent challenges identified by both instructors and students is the issue of motivation. The data revealed that students in business and accounting programs often view English as a peripheral subject, which leads to lower levels of engagement and interest. Instructors noted that many students lack intrinsic motivation to learn English, as they do not perceive it as directly relevant to their primary field of study. This finding aligns with the work of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), who emphasize the critical role of motivation in language learning. When students do not see the immediate value of learning English for their careers in business and accounting, their commitment to the language course diminishes.

However, the study also uncovered some strategies that have been effective in enhancing student motivation. Instructors who integrated business-related content into their English lessons reported higher levels of student engagement. For instance, using case studies, financial reports, and business communication scenarios in language exercises helped students see the practical application of English in their future careers. This approach resonates with the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as discussed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Basturkmen (2014), where the relevance of language instruction to students' professional needs is emphasized. By aligning the content of the English course with the students' career goals, instructors were able to create a more motivating and meaningful learning experience.

Another significant challenge identified in the study is the wide range of English proficiency levels among students. The data showed that classes often consist of students with varying degrees of language competence, from near-beginners to advanced learners. This diversity poses a challenge for instructors, who must find ways to meet the needs of all students without leaving anyone behind. Richards (2015) has discussed the difficulties of addressing such heterogeneous classes, particularly in contexts where large class sizes are common, as is the case at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia.

To address this challenge, instructors have employed several strategies, including differentiated instruction and peer-assisted learning. Differentiated instruction, which involves tailoring teaching methods and materials to meet the diverse needs of students, was found to be effective in managing varying proficiency levels. Instructors used a range of activities, such as group work and individual assignments, that allowed students to engage with the material at their own level. This approach is supported by Tomlinson (2014), who

advocates for the use of varied instructional methods to accommodate different learning styles and proficiency levels.

Peer-assisted learning, where more proficient students help their less proficient peers, also emerged as a useful strategy. Instructors reported that pairing students of different proficiency levels not only helped the lower-level students improve but also reinforced the knowledge of the more advanced students. This collaborative learning environment fostered a sense of community and shared responsibility among students, which contributed to a more inclusive and supportive classroom atmosphere.

The study also explored the various instructional strategies employed by instructors to overcome the challenges of teaching English to non-English majors. One of the key strategies identified was the use of task-based learning (TBL). Task-based learning involves students engaging in meaningful tasks that require the use of English, such as role-plays, presentations, and project-based activities. Instructors reported that TBL was particularly effective in promoting active student participation and enhancing language skills in a contextualized manner. This finding is consistent with the literature on task-based language teaching, which highlights its benefits in increasing student engagement and providing opportunities for authentic language use (Ellis, 2003).

In addition to TBL, the use of blended learning approaches was also highlighted as a successful strategy. Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online resources and activities, allowed instructors to extend learning beyond the classroom. Students were able to access additional language practice through online platforms, which provided exercises, quizzes, and multimedia resources tailored to their specific needs. This approach not only supported diverse proficiency levels but also catered to different learning preferences, as some students preferred the flexibility and autonomy of online learning. Graham (2019) has noted the effectiveness of blended learning in language education, particularly in contexts where technological resources are readily available.

Moreover, the integration of technology in the classroom was found to be a valuable tool in language instruction. Instructors utilized various digital tools, such as interactive whiteboards, language learning apps, and online discussion forums, to enhance the learning experience. These tools provided students with opportunities for interactive and collaborative learning, which were particularly beneficial in engaging students who might otherwise be disengaged. Wang and Winstead (2016) emphasize the importance of technology in modern language teaching, suggesting that it can significantly enhance student motivation and learning outcomes when used effectively.

The use of technology in teaching English was another major theme that emerged from the study. Instructors at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia have increasingly turned to digital tools and resources to supplement traditional teaching methods. The study found that the integration of technology, particularly in the form of blended learning, has been beneficial in addressing some of the challenges related to student motivation and diverse proficiency levels.

Blended learning environments, where students engage with both in-person and online content, were particularly effective in this context. Instructors reported that online platforms allowed for more personalized learning experiences, where students could work at their own pace and revisit materials as needed. This flexibility was especially helpful for students with lower proficiency levels, who needed more time to grasp the material. The use of multimedia resources, such as videos and interactive exercises, also catered to different learning styles, making the content more accessible and engaging for all students.

However, the study also highlighted some challenges associated with the integration of technology. Instructors noted that not all students had equal access to the necessary digital tools, such as laptops or reliable internet connections, which sometimes hindered their ability to fully participate in online activities. Additionally, while some instructors were proficient in using technology, others felt less confident, which affected the quality of the blended learning experience. This finding underscores the need for ongoing professional development and institutional support to ensure that all instructors are equipped with the skills and resources needed to effectively integrate technology into their teaching (Wang & Winstead, 2016).

In addition to the challenges directly related to teaching and learning, the study also identified several institutional and pedagogical challenges that impact the effectiveness of English language instruction for non-English majors. One significant issue is the lack of collaboration between language instructors and subject-matter experts. The development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses requires close coordination between these two groups to ensure that the language content is both relevant and appropriate for the students' academic and professional needs. However, at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia, such collaboration is often limited due to time constraints, differing priorities, and a lack of institutional support.

Furthermore, the study found that instructors faced challenges related to the availability of resources. Developing and implementing ESP courses and blended learning approaches requires access to specialized materials, technology, and training, which are not always readily available. Instructors expressed a need for more institutional investment in these areas to support the effective teaching of English to non-English majors. This finding echoes Basturkmen's (2014) argument that successful ESP implementation is contingent upon adequate resources and support from educational institutions.

Finally, the study highlighted the importance of continuous professional development for instructors. As the demands of language teaching evolve, particularly with the increasing integration of technology, instructors need ongoing training to stay current with new teaching methods and tools. The data indicated that while some instructors were actively seeking out professional development opportunities, others were less engaged, often due to heavy workloads and a lack of institutional encouragement. This variation in instructor preparedness can impact the overall quality of language instruction, further complicating efforts to address the challenges identified in this study.

### 4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study have significant implications for the teaching of English to non-English majors, particularly in business and accounting programs. The issue of student motivation underscores the need for curriculum designers and instructors to make English language courses more relevant to students' future careers. Integrating ESP content that aligns with students' professional goals can enhance motivation and engagement, leading to better learning outcomes. Additionally, addressing the diverse proficiency levels within classrooms requires a multifaceted approach, including differentiated instruction, peer-assisted learning, and the use of technology to support personalized learning experiences.

The integration of technology in language teaching, while beneficial, also presents challenges that must be addressed to maximize its effectiveness. Ensuring equitable access to digital tools and providing ongoing professional development for instructors are crucial steps in overcoming these challenges. Institutions must also foster greater collaboration between

language instructors and subject-matter experts to develop ESP courses that are both linguistically appropriate and professionally relevant.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has explored the multifaceted challenges and strategies involved in teaching English to non-English majors within the business and accounting programs at Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia. The findings underscore the complexity of teaching English in such a context, where factors such as student motivation, diverse proficiency levels, and the integration of relevant content play critical roles in shaping the learning experience.

One of the key conclusions of this study is that student motivation remains a significant hurdle. Many students perceive English as less relevant to their primary field of study, which diminishes their engagement and commitment. However, by aligning English language instruction more closely with the students' future career needs—through the integration of business-related content and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) methodologies—educators can enhance the perceived relevance of the language and thereby increase student motivation.

Another critical challenge identified is the wide range of English proficiency levels among students. The study found that differentiated instruction and peer-assisted learning are effective strategies for addressing this issue, allowing instructors to cater to the varied needs of students within a single classroom. These strategies, when combined with task-based learning and the integration of technology, can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. The study also highlights the potential and challenges of integrating technology into language instruction. While blended learning approaches and the use of digital tools have been shown to enhance the learning experience, issues such as unequal access to technology and varying levels of instructor proficiency in using these tools need to be addressed. Institutions must provide the necessary resources and training to ensure that all students and instructors can benefit from the technological advancements in education.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of institutional support in fostering effective English language instruction. This includes facilitating collaboration between language instructors and subject-matter experts, providing access to specialized resources, and encouraging continuous professional development for instructors. Such support is crucial for the successful implementation of ESP courses and the overall improvement of English language education for non-English majors.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the broader understanding of the challenges and strategies in teaching English to non-English majors, particularly within business and accounting programs. While the findings are specific to the context of Institut Teknologi Bisnis AAS Indonesia, the insights gained can inform similar educational contexts. The study highlights the need for a holistic approach that considers the specific needs and challenges of non-English majors, integrates relevant content, and leverages technology effectively, all supported by strong institutional frameworks. These efforts are essential for enhancing the quality of English language education and better preparing students for their future professional careers.

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