EXPLORING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING STRATEGIES IN BUSINESS ENGLISH COURSES: INSIGHTS FROM EFL CONTEXTS

Suratman Dahlan[1], Amaliah Ramdani[2], Nurdin Noni[3]
Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia[1,2,3]
suratman.dahlan@student.unm.ac.id[1], amaliah.ramdani@student.unm.ac.id[2], nurdinnoni@unm.ac.id[3]

Abstract
The aims of this research were exploring the teaching strategies used by lecturers in Business English courses in Universitas Khairun, Ternate within the EFL context. The researchers used classroom observation and semi structure interview to collect the data. There were two lecturers and two classes of students who participated in this study. The findings of this research reveal that the case method and project-based learning (PBL) were the most commonly used strategies, while cooperative learning, small group work, and direct teaching were also occasionally applied. Although these strategies were effective in enhancing students' understanding of business concepts, they did not significantly contribute to the improvement of students' English language proficiency.
Keywords: *Business English Course, EFL Students, Entrepreneurship, Teaching Strategies*

Introduction

The proficiency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students plays a significant and vital role in higher education in Indonesia, particularly in specialised fields or subject such as business English. (Rokhyati, 2013) stated that understanding English will provide students entry into the global community. As the global corporate environment becomes more interconnected, the need for good English communication skills in entrepreneurial contexts has never been greater. Therefore, in the globalized world, having a strong command of the English language is beneficial for interacting with global communities across several domains of society, such as in trade, business, education, and industry (Tipmontree & Tasanameelarp, 2018; Todd, 2006).

Furthermore, English is today the main language used to foster connections and communication amongst the widest range of cultures and languages globally

(Alharbi, 2022; Alkubaidi, 2014; Shafie et al., 2015). Because of this, higher education institutions in nations where English is a second language have made significant efforts to help students learn the language, realizing its significance on a worldwide scale (Moratinos-Johnston et al., 2019). (McKay, 2012) argued that having skilled human resources is only economically beneficial in a global setting if those resources can communicate in English. The issue in some of these areas is what and how lecturers utilise the strategies used in teaching English, particularly Business English courses aimed specifically at EFL students in higher education.

The strength of the lecturer and the student must be equal when conducting the teaching process. They share building and production materials in the form of knowledge (Tanjung, 2018). A measurement developed based on the cultural context of EFL students must be investigated in order to determine language learning processes of EFL students in the Indonesian setting (Setiyadi & Sukirlan, 2016). In this example, the researcher created the groundwork for a detailed evaluation of the teaching strategies employed in the Business English course, which was designed exclusively for EFL students in higher education, in order to review how such strategies contributed to business knowledge, including English proficiency. To address this, a speedy implementation of an effective English teaching strategy that supports the business English course at the EFL Higher Education level is required (Tanjung, 2018). As a result, students must be actively engaged in studying the topics provided by lecturers by employing specific tactics.

In addition, the challenges of teaching Business English to EFL students in higher education include understanding lecturers' strategies in teaching Business English to EFL students. Teaching strategies are the teacher's efforts to build an ecosystem that facilitates teaching. It indicates that the predetermined teaching objectives can be achieved in an efficient and successful manner (Fernandez, 2022). (Upa & Mbato, 2020) states that teaching strategies are multiple actions implemented by teachers and or lecturers with the goal of the teaching and learning process as effectively and efficiently as possible, resulting in successful learning objectives. Recognizing this, lecturers and researchers are forced to investigate teaching

strategies and approaches used by lecturer in English course in higher Education, not only improve language competence but also equip EFL students with the communicative skills necessary to thrive in a business environment in an entrepreneurial context. Therefore, lecturers have to be able to modify their teaching methods in accordance with the aptitude, traits, and material references of their students (Anjaniputra, 2013; Jon et al., 2021; Xia, 2020).

The main goal of higher education programs in Indonesia is to provide students with English language proficiency. However, this study focuses only on the methods/strategies used by lecturers at Universitas Khairun in eastern Indonesia to teach business English to EFL students. The compatibility between teaching methodologies specific to business English and the overarching goal of acquiring English knowledge is lacking. This raises the question of whether business English techniques can really advance the overall goal of learning English. Based on this, the researchers are then interested in exploring the strategies used by lecturers when teaching Business English courses and how students perceive these strategies.

Method

This study was conducted using qualitative methods. This aims to explore the teaching strategies used by lecturers when teaching business English courses and students' perceptions about these strategies. (Mills & Gay, 2016) state that qualitative research involves extensive collection, analysis and interpretation of narrative and visual data - i.e. non-numerical data. Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling technique. There were two lecturers and two classes of students who participated in this study. The data collection used classroom observation and interview. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study and the researchers used open-ended questions while conducting the interviews. After conducting the interviews, the data obtained was then analyzed using the interactive data analysis model (Miles et al., 2014). The recorded data was transcribed into text, then interpreted and analyzed in the form of conversation quotes.

Findings

In interviews, lecturers and students acknowledged that they gained a lot of business insights while studying business English, as knowledge after students graduate and can develop businesses. On the other hand, they mentioned the lack of understanding and knowledge about business as well as entrepreneurship components. So it's also important to have entrepreneurship courses at the department.

All two lecturers in Class A and B highlighted how they use a variety of teaching strategies by implementing some approaches.

> L1: *"Saya menggunakan beberapa strategi dengan menerapkan pendekatan seperti PBL, case study, saat mengajar mahasiswa, ..."* (I use several strategies by applying approaches such as PBL, case study, when teaching students...).

The lecturer further added that teaching was even more difficult when knowledge of business was limited. However, if students do not identify, organize, oversee, and assess their own learning, it will become more challenging for them to study independently. In addition, the lecturer also explained that in order to know the strategies, procedures are quite important to produce effective teaching. Therefore, the suggested strategies to be applied are.

> L1: *"Saya memilih strategi sesuai kebutuhan mahasiswa, kadang-kadang saya menggunakan case method untuk memperkenalkan busnis internasional dan kebijakan nasional tentang bisnis..."* (I choose strategies according to students' needs, sometimes I use the case method to introduce international business and national policies on business...)

On the other hand, from student interviews, it is known that they like the teaching strategies used by their lecturers when teaching English for business, this can be seen from the interview extract below:

> S1: *"Iya strategi yang dosen pake tu menyenangkan, torang (kami) tara bosan. kadang torang diskusi dan buat projek juga"* (Yes, the strategy that the lecturer uses are interesting, we don't get bored. sometimes we discuss and make projects too).

S2: "*Kalau dari Strategi yang digunakan, kami rasa menyanangkan, Pak.*" (From the strategy used, we think it is enjoyable, sir).

Related to the benefits obtained by students, the lecturer said that this will be their basic understanding when they will enter the world of work. This can be seen from the interview extract below:

L2: "*Itu mungkin dasar untuk pemahaman tentang bagaimana dunia kerja, terutama dalam hal globalisasi, bagaimana perkembanga-perkembangan dunia bisnis di Indonesia. Kemudian gambaran-gambarannya, persaingannya, dan bagaimana pentingnya Bahasa Inggris di dunia bisnis itu...*" (That's probably the basis for understanding how the world of work is, especially in terms of globalization, how the development of the business world in Indonesia. Then the descriptions, the competition, and how important English is in the business world...).

The above statement is confirmed by the students' views that they really benefited from this lecture.

S1: "*Kalo bagi saya tu saya punya pengetahuan bisnis berkembang, ada juga beberapa kosakata yang baru saya dapat. Jadi intinya saya suka mata kuliah ini.*" (For me, I have developed business knowledge, there are also some new vocabulary that I have learned. So basically I like this course.)

S2: "*Ya sebagai mahasiswa, saya juga ingin tahu terkait bisnis. Kaya membuka kita pe wawasan wirausaha bagitu pak. Jadi menurut saya ini bagus.*" (Yes, as a student, I also want to know about business. It opens up our entrepreneurial insights, sir. So I think this is good.)

Moreover, the researchers aslo ask question about the students' english proficiency as it seen in the extract below:

I: "*yang ditekankan itu pada, English proficiency-nya, pada strategi bisnisnya atau strategi mengajar?*" (the emphasis is on, English proficiency, business strategy or teaching strategy?).

L2: "*...yang pertama mungkin itu wawasan bisnisnya mereka. Mereka bisa memanfaatkan keterampilan yang mereka miliki didalam dunia bisnis*" (...the first one is probably their business insight. They can utilize the skills they have in the business world.).

Dahlan, S, et al. (2024). Exploring Students Perceptions of Teaching Strategies in Business English Courses: Insights from EFL Contexts

Inspiring: English Education Journal
Vol. 7 No. 2 (September 2024) pp. 247-256
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The answer was in line with data from interviews with students that their English skills were not improved because the course focused on introducing business. It can be seen in the extract below:

S1: "*Kalo dari segi speaking itu biasa saja pak. Alhamdulillah banyak kosa kata saya tahu, ada juga saya tahu pengetahuan baru tentang bisnis.*" (In terms of speaking, it's normal sir. Thank God I know a lot of vocabulary, I also know new knowledge about business.)

Moreover, observation data was further confirmed by the interview findings, which showed that lecturers understood business English teaching strategies. They said they learned a lot about business rather than English skills, while the lecturers said they knew when to use the right approach for a business English course.

Discussion

Lecturers' teaching strategies play a crucial role in how they manage EFL students in the classroom, significantly influencing the students' ability to become independent learners. This independence is essential not only for acquiring knowledge but also for managing and developing the information available to them (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020; Wong & Nunan, 2011). As members of a global community, Indonesian university students are expected to plan, coordinate, oversee, and assess their learning processes. Therefore, the effectiveness of teaching strategies is a key component that must be recognized, utilized, and enhanced to achieve both high conceptual understanding and practical performance, particularly in mastering business English.

To reach this desired outcome, lecturers must actively engage in raising students' awareness by effectively leveraging the instructional strategies they employ (Eison, 2010). This involves implementing steps that help students recognize and apply their own learning strategies for effectively mastering business English. However, findings from student interviews reveal a gap in this process. While students recognize that their lecturers use effective teaching strategies in business English courses, the strategies have not significantly improved their English language skills to the extent needed to comprehend business concepts and global business knowledge

Dahlan, S, et al. (2024). Exploring Students
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English Courses: Insights from EFL Contexts

Inspiring: English Education Journal
Vol. 7 No. 2 (September 2024) pp. 247-256
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through English communication. This contradiction indicates a need to further explore how these strategies are applied and how they could be better aligned with the students' learning objectives.

The data from student interviews also suggest that, besides lecturers' strategies, students rely heavily on learning strategies that emphasize cognitive aspects. These strategies aid in understanding business English, yet there seems to be a disconnect between the strategies employed and the students' ability to effectively engage with business English content. University students specializing in English language education utilize a range of learning strategies simultaneously, creating a positive and engaging classroom environment (O'Malley et al., 1985). They have experience in educational activities and are capable of selecting and analyzing their learning plans collectively. This finding aligns with previous research by (Salahshour et al., 2013), which found that students use metacognitive strategies to prepare, regulate, and assess their language learning processes consistently (Graham, 1997; Zare, 2012). Furthermore, students mix direct and indirect learning strategies, including social, metacognitive, and compensatory techniques (Tanjung, 2018).

Interviews with students highlighted that they used specific learning tools to accelerate their comprehension of business English. Both lecturers and students have crucial roles in preparing for and participating in the learning process. As (Jon et al., 2021) note, the collaboration between lecturers and students significantly impacts academic success. While lecturers are pivotal in guiding the teaching and learning process (Kaur, 2019), the strategies employed are critical for enhancing the efficiency and enjoyment of these processes, ultimately leading to successful learning outcomes. Teaching techniques and strategies are intertwined with other elements of the learning system, such as lecturers, facilities, students, learning objectives, and instructional materials (Gill, 2017).

Conclusion

The study reveals that while lecturers' teaching strategies effectively enhance students' understanding of business concepts, they fall short in significantly improving English language proficiency among EFL students. Although strategies like the case

Dahlan, S, et al. (2024). Exploring Students
Perceptions of Teaching Strategies in Business
English Courses: Insights from EFL Contexts

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Vol. 7 No. 2 (September 2024) pp. 247-256
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method, PBL, and cooperative learning successfully introduce business knowledge, they do not adequately address the language skills necessary for students to fully engage with and apply this knowledge in an English-speaking context. This highlights the need for a more integrated approach that balances business education with the development of English proficiency, ensuring that students can confidently navigate both the language and content of global business.

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Dahlan, S, et al. (2024). Exploring Students
Perceptions of Teaching Strategies in Business
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Inspiring: English Education Journal
Vol. 7 No. 2 (September 2024) pp. 247-256
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