



Developing English Learning Materials for Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia

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Abstract: *This study aims to develop contextually responsive English learning materials for students in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) through the integration of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) framework and the ADDIE instructional design model. A comprehensive needs analysis was conducted involving 55 students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo to examine their target needs, linguistic deficits, preferred input types, and favored task formats. The results indicate considerable skill-related challenges, particularly in speaking, where students struggled with pronunciation (44.44%) and idea expression (33.33%). Reading difficulties were also prominent, primarily due to limited vocabulary knowledge (66.66%). Listening challenges included difficulty comprehending native-speaker input (44.44%), while writing issues centered on sentence construction (33.33%). Students demonstrated a strong preference for materials grounded in their daily pesantren routines, such as dormitory-based activities (44.44%) and religious practices, and favored multimodal input types, including short texts accompanied by visuals (55.55%) and illustrated listening materials (77.77%). Interactive tasks—particularly interviews (66.66%) and review-based activities (55.55%)—were perceived as the most engaging. In response to these findings, a set of tailored English learning materials was developed, incorporating culturally relevant vocabulary, task-based speaking activities, pronunciation support, integrated reading–listening input, and scaffolded writing practices. Expert validation confirmed the materials’ relevance, pedagogical soundness, and cultural appropriateness. Overall, the study underscores the critical importance of localized and context-sensitive materials in enhancing learners’ motivation, linguistic accuracy, and communicative competence in Islamic boarding school settings, while also offering recommendations for broader implementation and future refinement.*

Keywords: *ESP; Material development; Islamic Boarding School*

INTRODUCTION

English language education has become an essential component of twenty-first century learning, particularly in countries undergoing rapid sociocultural and technological transformation such as Indonesia. Within this context, Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) hold a unique position as traditional yet adaptive educational institutions that integrate religious formation with general

academic learning. These institutions educate millions of students nationwide and are increasingly expected to equip their learners with global competencies, including English proficiency, to enable meaningful participation in higher education, professional fields, and global religious discourse. Despite this growing demand, the availability of English learning materials that genuinely reflect the lived experiences, values, and communicative needs of pesantren students remains limited. Existing materials used in pesantren generally rely on generic textbooks designed for mainstream schools, which lack alignment with learners' sociocultural contexts, daily activities, and domain-specific language functions required in Islamic educational environments.

Current scholarship on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) highlights the importance of designing instructional materials that are explicitly grounded in learners' target needs, learning needs, disciplinary practices, and sociocultural backgrounds. However, research focusing on ESP for Islamic education—particularly for pesantren—remains scarce. Most studies emphasize general English competence, with minimal attention to contextualized content, Islamic discourse genres, or the integration of authentic communicative tasks relevant to boarding school life. As a result, pesantren students often face difficulties in mastering receptive and productive skills due to the absence of meaningful input, unfamiliar vocabulary, inadequate pronunciation support, and the lack of opportunities to practice language in authentic, culturally appropriate contexts.

Given these challenges, there is an urgent need to develop English learning materials that are pedagogically sound, culturally responsive, and directly relevant to pesantren learners' daily communicative demands. Such materials should incorporate principles of ESP, task-based pedagogy, and contextualized language use to support greater engagement, improve language acquisition, and strengthen the functional application of English in academic and religious domains. This study responds to these needs by designing and validating English learning materials specifically tailored for Indonesian Islamic boarding schools.

The purpose of this research is therefore to identify pesantren students' specific language needs, develop contextualized English learning materials aligned with those needs, and evaluate their feasibility through expert validation and classroom implementation. Methodologically, the study adopts a research and development (R&D) approach using the ADDIE framework integrated with ESP curriculum design. The expected outcomes include a set of structured English learning units that reflect pesantren-based themes, communicative tasks, and Islamic values, as well as empirical evidence of their suitability for classroom use. The remainder of this article presents a review of relevant literature, methodology, results of need analysis, product development procedures, validation outcomes, and implications for future ESP material development in Islamic educational contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) constitutes a pedagogical orientation in which decisions related to syllabus construction, material development, and instructional procedures are systematically anchored in the demonstrable needs of a clearly defined learner group. Rather than adhering to generalized language curricula, ESP prioritizes a functional alignment between linguistic instruction and the communicative demands learners encounter in specific academic, occupational, or socio-cultural contexts. Foundational work by Hutchinson and Waters established the widely adopted tripartite framework comprising *target needs*—the linguistic competencies required for performance in real communicative situations; *lacks*—the gap between learners' current proficiency and the competencies required; and *wants*—learners' expressed preferences and perceived needs. Although these constructs remain central, the field has undergone significant methodological expansion over the past two decades, evolving into a data-rich, analytically diverse domain of inquiry.

Recent developments in ESP research offer critical implications for designing materials tailored to Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) settings. Corpus-based and data-driven approaches have gained prominence as rigorous tools for extracting authentic lexical, grammatical, and discourse features from domain-specific texts. These approaches—applied extensively in fields such as medicine, engineering, and law—enhance the empirical grounding of ESP materials by reducing developer subjectivity and improving alignment with real-world communicative practices.

Contemporary scholarship highlights the convergence of ESP with content-oriented frameworks such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and socio-cultural perspectives. This convergence reinforces the need for disciplinary authenticity and cultural appropriateness in materials. Within *pesantren* contexts, this necessitates the integration of Islamic discourse genres (e.g., sermons, explanatory religious talks, Qur'anic commentary), dormitory-based interactional routines, and administrative or institutional communication forms, rather than relying solely on generic academic or technical registers.

Needs analysis methodologies have become increasingly sophisticated, emphasizing mixed-method designs that combine quantitative instruments (surveys, diagnostic assessments) with qualitative techniques (interviews, observations, corpus sampling). Such triangulated approaches yield more ecologically valid insights into learners' linguistic requirements. Data from Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo, for example, reveal highly specific learner priorities—such as the high proportion of learners reporting vocabulary limitations and the substantial number indicating difficulties with oral communication—which should directly inform the structuring, sequencing, and focus of ESP materials.

Taken collectively, these developments underscore the necessity for ESP materials in *pesantren* to be: (a) grounded in empirically derived lexical and discourse patterns pertinent to the Islamic boarding school environment; (b) reflective of culturally and religiously embedded genres and communicative

practices; and (c) systematically aligned with learners' articulated and observed needs through rigorous, multi-method needs analysis.

2. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) — Q1-Level Formal Paraphrase

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) conceptualizes language learning as a process driven by the performance of authentic communicative tasks that mirror real-world interactional demands. These tasks—which function as structured “workplans”—require learners to use language meaningfully in order to achieve a communicative outcome. Seminal definitions proposed by Nunan and Ellis emphasize that tasks are distinguished by their focus on meaning, the presence of a clearly defined goal, and the requirement that learners mobilize linguistic resources under conditions resembling real communicative pressure. A substantial body of empirical research has demonstrated that appropriately designed tasks facilitate significant gains in fluency, interactional competence, and strategic language use, particularly when task complexity is calibrated to learners' proficiency levels. Recent reviews continue to refine principles for sequencing tasks and adapting them to novice or low-proficiency learners.

Contemporary theoretical developments within TBLT offer several insights directly relevant to the present study. Research on task complexity and sequencing, most notably framed within Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis, indicates that manipulating cognitive demands (e.g., information-gap versus reasoning or problem-solving tasks) can systematically influence the balance between accuracy, fluency, and complexity in learner output. For pesantren learners, whose proficiency levels are generally low—as indicated by 77.77% of students reporting basic or lower competence—task sequencing must incorporate gradual, well-scaffolded progressions from simpler, highly supported tasks toward more complex communicative tasks to prevent cognitive overload while fostering incremental linguistic development.

TBLT foregrounds meaning-focused communication, contemporary scholarship underscores the pedagogical importance of integrating timely focus-on-form episodes within task cycles. Short, targeted interventions—such as pre-task lexical orientation or post-task corrective feedback—strengthen linguistic accuracy without detracting from communicative intent. Such an approach is particularly critical for learners who exhibit notable structural limitations, including difficulties with sentence construction reported by 33.33% of respondents. Embedding brief grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation support within task sequences can therefore address these identified gaps while maintaining the core communicative orientation of TBLT.

Technological and multimodal enhancements have become increasingly prominent in task design. Studies highlight the affordances of audio-visual materials, digital listening tasks, corpus-based resources, and mobile-assisted interactions in improving comprehension and engagement. These findings align with learner preferences observed in the current needs analysis, where pesantren students expressed strong interest in multimodal texts—particularly

150–200-word passages accompanied by images and listening materials supported by visuals. Integrating simple audiovisual tasks, such as listening to brief announcements paired with images or recording peer interviews, provides a practical means of implementing TBLT in resource-limited pesantren environments.

Effective TBLT implementation requires selecting tasks that reflect the communicative realities of learners' environments. For pesantren students, the most relevant tasks mirror institutional routines and interpersonal interactions, such as requesting permission, giving instructions, describing daily activities, explaining religious practices, or summarizing lectures. Empirical data from Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo reinforce these priorities, with students indicating a strong preference for interview-based speaking tasks (66.66%) and review-oriented reading and writing activities (55.55%). Such preferences support the inclusion of contextually grounded tasks that replicate authentic communicative demands typical of pesantren life.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a Research and Development (R&D) approach to create and validate English teaching materials tailored for students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo. The research process was guided by the ADDIE model—Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation—enhanced with principles from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum design. This combination ensured the development process was systematic, responsive to learners' needs, and grounded in real-world classroom contexts.

Data Collection Procedures

To gather comprehensive insights, multiple data collection techniques were employed:

Questionnaire Surveys: A structured questionnaire was distributed to 55 students to explore their learning needs, target situations, and preferences regarding English materials. The survey covered topics such as learning difficulties, desired skills, preferred activities, and ideal learning environments.

Expert Validation: The initial draft of the teaching materials was reviewed by three experts: two language specialists and one layout designer. Their feedback focused on content accuracy, language clarity, activity design, and visual appeal.

Field Testing: The revised materials were implemented in actual classroom settings. Student feedback was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, assessing the materials' usability and impact.

Observation: Classroom observations were conducted to monitor how both students and teachers interacted with the new materials, noting engagement levels, challenges, and positive outcomes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize student responses. Qualitative data from interviews and expert reviews were analyzed thematically, identifying recurring themes, suggestions, and areas for improvement. This mixed-method approach provided a robust and nuanced understanding of the materials' effectiveness.

Research Procedure

The development process unfolded in six stages:

Needs Analysis: Identifying students' needs and target situations through surveys and interviews.

Material Development: Creating a syllabus and initial draft of materials based on the needs analysis and curriculum guidelines.

Expert Validation: Evaluating the draft materials by language and layout experts.

Revision: Incorporating expert feedback to refine the materials.

Field Testing: Implementing the revised materials in the classroom and collecting feedback from students and teachers.

Final Revision and Product Finalization: Using feedback to finalize the teaching materials for classroom use.

This structured, evidence-based approach ensured that the development of English teaching materials was both systematic and responsive to the learners' needs, enhancing the overall validity and reliability of the study.

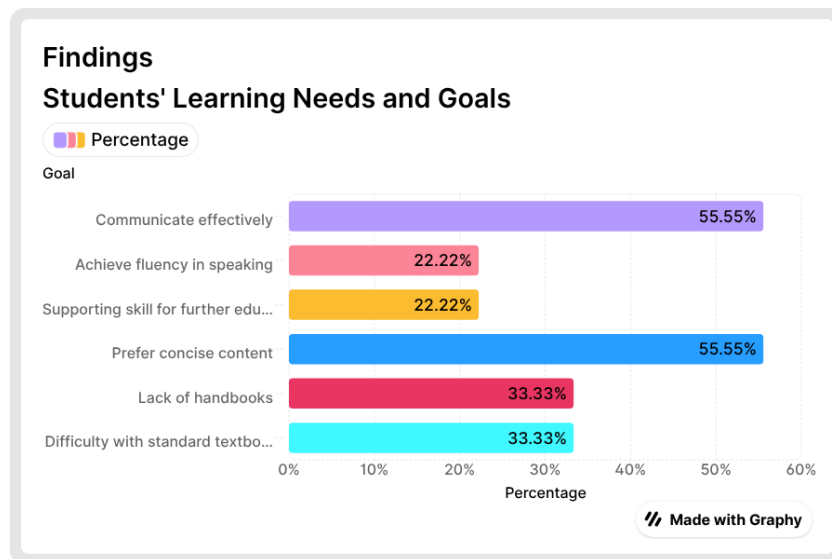
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research are presented in a structured and systematic manner, reflecting the data collected through questionnaires, expert validation, and field testing. The results highlight the learning needs, challenges, preferences, and the effectiveness of the developed English teaching materials for students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo.

Students' Learning Needs and Goals

The majority of students (55.55%) indicated that their primary goal in learning English is to communicate effectively. A significant portion (22.22%) aimed to achieve fluency in speaking, while another 22.22% viewed English as a supporting skill for further education. Students emphasized the need for practical, easy-to-understand materials, with 55.55% preferring concise and straightforward content. The lack of existing handbooks and the difficulty in understanding standard textbooks were highlighted as major issues by 33.33% of students.

Figure 4.1 (Target Requirements for Islamic Boarding School Students)



Current Proficiency and Challenges

The analysis revealed that most students (77.77%) are at the basic (lower) level of English proficiency, with no students having taken proficiency tests such as TOEFL. The main challenges faced by students include:

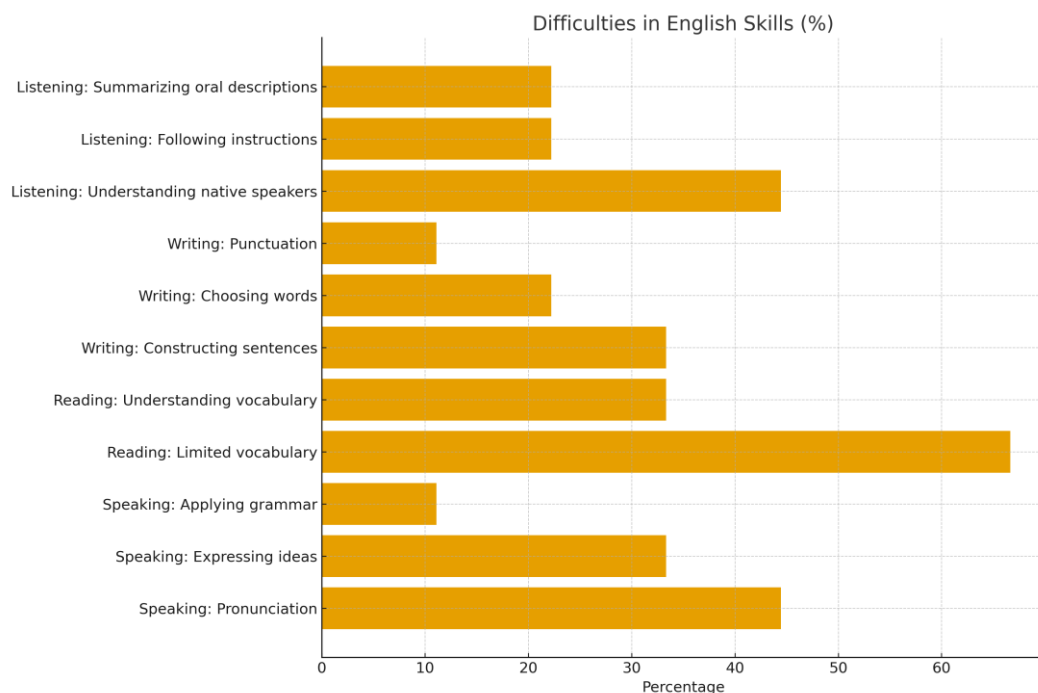
Speaking: Difficulty in pronunciation (44.44%), expressing ideas (33.33%), and applying grammar (11.11%).

Reading: Limited vocabulary (66.66%), difficulty in understanding vocabulary in texts (33.33%).

Writing: Difficulty in constructing sentences (33.33%), choosing appropriate words (22.22%), and using punctuation (11.11%).

Listening: Difficulty in understanding native speakers (44.44%), following oral instructions (22.22%), and summarizing oral descriptions (22.22%).

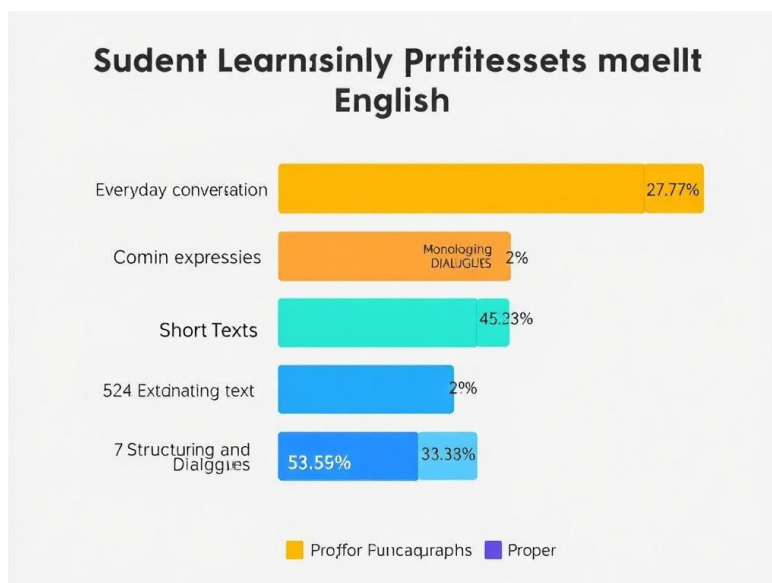
Figure 4.2 (Level of Proficiency of Islamic Boarding School Students)



Desired Competencies and Skills

Students expressed a strong interest in mastering everyday conversation in English (77.77%), with 22.22% wanting to learn common expressions. For listening, 44.44% wanted to understand monologues and dialogues, while 33.33% aimed to comprehend explanations in English. In reading, 55.55% wished to understand short texts, and 33.33% wanted to interpret texts beyond reading, such as images and graphs. For writing, 33.33% wanted to write paragraphs with a clear structure, and 22.22% aimed to use proper punctuation.

Figure 4.3 (Competencies and Skills of Islamic Boarding School Students)



Preferred Activities and Materials

Students preferred activities such as paired interviews (66.66%) for speaking, translating difficult words (44.44%) and reviewing news (44.44%) for reading, and watching news and reviewing articles (55.55%) for writing. For listening, 44.44% preferred listening to monologues and dialogues and identifying main ideas. Multimedia resources such as audio (44.44%), audio-visual (33.33%), and print media (22.22%) were identified as the most supportive teaching aids.

Figure 4.3 (Preferred Activities and Materials of Islamic Boarding School Students)

Student activity and needs for English

Speaking:	Activity	Include	Teaching	Media
Paired Interviews	(Translating)	46.64%	44.05%	1:3.886
Reading		46.416%	44.70%	23.232%
Writing		44.64%	27.55%	42.373
Listening		44.48%	43.568	22.6%
Listening		5.45%	14.31%	34.55%
Listening		44.20%	47.71%	13.810
Listening		45.31%	17.59%	13.236
				22.8%

Monologue & Dialogues and Dialogues & Dialogues.

Learning Environment and Teacher Role

Students favored learning in both classrooms (33.33%) and outdoor settings (33.33%). They appreciated teachers who provide feedback (33.33%), participate actively (22.22%), and organize activities (11.11%). Students preferred to work in pairs (66.66%) or small groups (22.22%) rather than individually (11.11%).

Figure 4.4 (Learning Environment and Teacher Role of Islamic Boarding School)

Student preferences and teaching methods

	Outdoor	Work Methods
• Learning environment	33.33%	3.11% 34.63%
• Surviving quality	9	9
• Provide feedback	1	10%
• Active participation		
• Organize activities	9%	110%
• Design activities		
• Work in pairs,	63.63%	1.13%
• Individually	22.42%	11.13% 1.11%

• Student preferences and teaching methods learning ... 1.810.
• Use clear concepts (forget the for practice).

Expert Validation

Expert evaluations of the initial draft of the teaching materials yielded high scores across all indicators, with a mean score of 3.89. Experts praised the content, language, activities, and design, suggesting minor revisions for clarity and vocabulary accuracy. Layout evaluations also indicated that the materials were clear, attractive, and well-organized, with a mean score of 3.8.

Field Testing and Student Feedback

Field testing of the revised materials received positive feedback. Students found the materials relevant and engaging, particularly appreciating the inclusion of vocabulary related to daily life in the pesantren and the use of illustrations. Suggestions for improvement included providing instructions in Indonesian and adding a small dictionary at the end of each unit for difficult words.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the development of English teaching materials for students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo. The emphasis on practical, easy-to-understand materials aligns with the students' need for effective communication and their desire to achieve fluency in speaking. The challenges faced by students, such as limited vocabulary and difficulty in understanding standard textbooks, highlight the importance of developing materials that are tailored to their specific needs and contexts.

The preference for paired interviews, translating difficult words, and reviewing news suggests that interactive and multimedia-rich activities are highly valued by students. These activities not only enhance their language skills but also increase their engagement and motivation. The positive feedback from both students and experts indicates that the developed materials are well-suited for the needs of students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo.

The high scores from expert evaluations and the positive feedback from field testing further validate the effectiveness of the materials. The inclusion of vocabulary related to daily life in the pesantren and the use of illustrations are particularly appreciated, as they make the materials more relevant and engaging. The suggestions for improvement, such as providing instructions in Indonesian and adding a small dictionary, highlight the importance of making the materials accessible and user-friendly.

Overall, the findings suggest that the developed materials are effective in addressing the key challenges faced by students and can serve as a valuable resource for English language teaching in similar contexts. The positive feedback from both students and experts indicates that the materials are well-suited for the needs of students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo, and can be further refined and expanded to benefit other educational settings.

CONCLUSION

This research and development study on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching materials integrated with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Junaidiyah Lauwo has successfully

produced a product tailored to students' target and learning needs, including daily communication skills in the pesantren environment, relevant vocabulary mastery, and practical activities like paired interviews and news reviews. The materials incorporate Islamic values, local Luwu culture, and pesantren-specific contexts, featuring engaging designs with images, mini-dictionaries, and progressively challenging tasks, validated by experts with mean scores of 3.8-3.89 and trialed effectively with 55 students to boost motivation.

In the Industry 4.0 era, these materials support pesantren education transformation by enhancing foreign language proficiency, ICT skills, and entrepreneurship, ensuring students excel in religious knowledge while remaining globally competitive without losing cultural identity. Needs analysis revealed students' basic-level challenges, such as pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and listening comprehension, addressed through pesantren-relevant content like dormitory activities and media exposure.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should develop materials for intermediate and advanced student levels and explore digital integration, such as AI-based apps for interactive tasks. Teachers are encouraged to use this product flexibly as a guide, continually adapting materials based on student feedback to meet evolving needs. Thus, this innovation contributes to producing high-quality pesantren alumni ready for global challenges while advancing community welfare.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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