

**Challenges on Teaching and Learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Indonesian Undergraduate Students**

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This study examined the challenges both teachers and students in implementation of teaching and learning ESP. It focuses on mastering English in students' needs relating to the specific fields. This used a qualitative study obtaining data from questionnaires and interviews. The findings showed that the students' vocabulary mastery was an obstacle during learning ESP. It made the students felt difficult to comprehend the materials. Moreover, the teachers are supposed to prepare the ESP materials from textbooks and articles relating to the specific fields although there were lack of sources. However, learning ESP applied the students-centered activities and built an interaction between teachers and students during discussing and practicing the ESP materials. It encouraged the students to be active for their speaking skill improvement. It also assisted the students to enhance new vocabularies relating to the specific fields. Therefore, to achieve students' comprehension in ESP, the teachers should develop ESP materials and method of teaching in order to deliver optimally the ESP contents.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is concerned with developing English competence relating to the specific purposes which deals with the use of English in relevant major. It is in line with Hans and Hans (2015), the applying of specific purposes in learning English is included in teaching English for Specific Purposes. Moreover, Ahmed (2014) stated that ESP engages on learning English in a particular domain as a goal of this teaching ESP. Javid (2015) claims that ESP constitutes the specific discipline, occupation, and activity in learning English. It means that the English mastery is focused on the related major that is being learnt. Fitria (2020) stated that teaching ESP has its own subject relating to the studies. It means that the term of ESP is connected with the field of studies, especially non-English major. For example, there are teaching English for Business, Medicine, Accounting, Engineering and other studies. Regarding to the different terms in learning ESP, each subject has their own disciplines that should be mastered.

Teaching ESP is mostly implemented for the undergraduate students. The urge of teaching ESP is developed in university level (Liaghat&Latif, 2013; Septiana, 2018; Natriningrum & Nugroho, 2020; Iswati & Triastuti, 2021). The lecturer is not only teaching the academic purposes but also teaching the specific purposes. This means the undergraduate students should master the English in a professional setting relating to their own studies. It demands the lecturer to build learning atmosphere relating to the different terminology in ESP. It is in line with Natriningrum and Nugroho (2020) claim that ESP lecturers should discover the way of teaching ESP to provide ESP materials effectively for their students. Additionally, Ahmed (2014) stated that ESP lecturers transfer the knowledge of English dealing with authentic materials in professional matter. It means that the ESP teachers should be well-prepared regarding to the authentic materials during teaching ESP.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is introduced as the use of English in specific fields. According to Paltridge and Starfield (2013), ESP focuses on the use of English in particular domain (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). Richards and Rodgers (2001) assumed that ESP is a subfield of language learning relating to the learners'

need in specific roles, i.e. accountant, engineer, technician, and nurse. It means that the lecturers convey the use of English in real situation to support the students' future in their workplaces relating to their own major.

In teaching ESP, the lecturers involve key roles that make the students comprehend the ESP materials. The importance of ESP lecturers includes as a teacher, course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher, and evaluator (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Through those five roles, the lecturers are supposed to discover the students' needs relating to their fields that are being mastered. The students' needs discovery is interpreted into the ESP materials that are transferred during teaching and learning ESP in the classroom. Moreover, the implementation of ESP is students-centered approach that affect the learning strategies and needs according to the students' needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). It motivates the lecturers to interact actively to the students as well as encourage the students to develop their communicative competences.

During teaching ESP, the lecturers are needed to prepare the ESP materials to be delivered to the students. The ESP materials should be authentic material, purpose-related orientation, and self-direction (Carter, 1983). Three features of ESP materials regarding to Carter (1983) are focused on the students' specialist knowledge that are being learnt. To maximize those features, the lecturers explore the materials/courses in many sources. Meanwhile, Ibrahim (2019) claimed that the problems facing in teaching and learning ESP include lack of orthodoxy, lack of specialist knowledge, lack of materials, and lack of learners' motivation. Those problems are related to the lecturers' and students' challenges during teaching and learning ESP in the classroom. Thus, the lecturers and students could minimize their problems to obtain the goal of their learning and teaching ESP.

ESP material is designed to enhance English skill in various purposes, especially the professional setting. For the undergraduate students, the ESP materials should be related to their own future works. Fitria (2020) stated that the design of ESP materials emphasizes to a goal-oriented activity. This activity is focused on the development of students' English skill to prepare their needs in

workplace. Hans and Hans (2015) claimed that ESP involves more concentrated to language in context than to language in grammar and structures. Most students feel complicated to learn about grammar and structure, so in ESP subject they could master the language use in their own context.

There are numerous scholars investigating the implementation of teaching ESP in their classroom. Teaching ESP was carried out in non-English Department in Indonesia (Saliu, 2013; Agustina, 2014; Kusumawati et al., 2018; Iswati&Triastuti, 2021). Those studies focused on students' perception to teaching ESP in several majors, including Information System, Legal Studies, Computer Sciences, and Information Technology. Meanwhile, in abroad, teaching ESP was implemented in the classroom, such as in Vietnam, Persia, and China (Liaghat&Latif, 2013; Hoa&Mai, 2016; Luo&Garner, 2017; Wu&Lou, 2018; Enesi et al., 2021). In addition, there were some studies that investigated the challenges of teaching ESP for the ESP teachers/practitioners (Ahmed, 2014; Septiana, 2018; Sari, 2018; Agustina, 2018; Fitria, 2020). Those studies concerned with the teachers' perception what the challenges were faced during teaching ESP. Also, challenges of teaching ESP in accounting program were investigated through the teachers' perceptions (Suyadi, 2016; Rahmatunisa&Agustiana, 2020; Nugroho, 2020; Nartiningrum&Nugroho, 2020; Kamaruddin et al., 2021). Based on those previous studies, there were limited studies to investigate perception from lecturers and students toward the challenges of teaching and learning ESP. The previous studies focused on the perception only one viewpoint, for example, only students' viewpoint or teachers' viewpoint. Therefore, this present study focused on the challenges on teaching and learning ESP through both lecturers' and students' perspectives, especially for Indonesian Undergraduate students in accounting program.

## **METHOD**

This study used a qualitative method obtaining the data collection through questionnaires and interview. According to Cohen et al. (2018), a qualitative study is concerned with the process of collecting and analyzing in terms of non-numerical data. This qualitative study was employed to discover the challenges on teaching

and learning ESP faced by lecturers and students in the classroom. The participants of the study were 24 students of accounting program in UCIC Cirebon in the academic year 2021/2022 and 5 English lecturers. From the participants, they were asked to fulfill 10 questions of questionnaires by using google form. The questionnaires were distributed to recognize the students' perception of learning ESP. The questions shared the students' reaction and feeling and their opinion about the obstacles during learning ESP. The interviews' answer supported students' answer in questionnaires. In addition, the lecturers conveyed their opinion about the challenges on teaching ESP through 7 questions of interviews. The lecturers shared their own perspectives what extent the implementation of teaching ESP in the classroom as well as the obstacles were involved in esp class. The questionnaires and interviews results were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively to answer two research questions in this study.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Challenges on Teaching ESP for Indonesian Undergraduate Students**

The first section reveals the interview results from the lecturers to recognize the challenges on teaching ESP. There consisted of seven interview questions asked to the lecturers directly through Google Meet application. These are the following interview questions to the lecturers, as follows:

**Table 1.** Interview Questions about Teaching ESP

<b>No</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
1.	What is the main concept of teaching ESP?
2.	What do you prepare mostly in teaching ESP?
3.	How about the textbook in teaching ESP?
4.	What are your experiences on teaching ESP?
5.	How is the way to develop the lecturer's competence to teach ESP optimally?
6.	How is the students' feeling during teaching ESP?
7.	How is the best method of teaching ESP?

According to the table 1, there are four main points conveyed their perceptions what the challenges faced in teaching ESP in their classroom.

### **Teaching ESP developed the lecturers to be more learning, discussing, and practicing**

Based on the table 1, questions 1 and 6 are related to this first result about teaching ESP. The representative answers of the lecturers are presented below.

“The main concept of teaching ESP is teaching English for the students that their main purpose is not mastering grammar in English” (lecturer 1)

“It’s different to the General English materials. ESP is mainly trying to relate the language lesson with certain context. The goal would be applying language suitably with the context students mostly encounter” (lecturer 3)

“Using English as a medium of delivering content knowledge in specific fields not to master grammar, some texts such as descriptive, argumentative etc.” (lecturer 4)

“Some of them are interested on the material, cause ESP is really important and useful to enhance their ability in English at purpose” (lecturer 2)

“Teacher should also pay attention to students’ feeling. They should give encouragement and support to make them feel comfortable to learn” (lecturer 3)

“They have fun and enjoying the class” (lecturer 5)

Those interview answers represented lecturers’ perception on concept of teaching ESP. It means that teaching ESP is new challenge for the lecturers due to the fact that they are common to teach English in General. It is supported by Hans and Hans (2015) comparing the concept of teaching ESP and General English. They assumed that teaching ESP is concerned with teaching language usage in context than grammar and structure of texts. It means that teaching ESP makes the lecturers to be more learning, discussing, and practicing. That is why the lecturers strengthen their English use in context relating to the fields mastered. Thus, they are supposed to explore the ESP contents to motivate themselves be more learning, discussing and practicing while they are teaching ESP.

**Teaching ESP needed to prepare the ESP materials from textbooks and articles relating to the specific fields although there was lack of sources**

From table 1, questions 2 and 3 are interpreted into this second result of challenge on teaching ESP. The lecturers' answers are below.

“Enrichment of vocabularies related to the purpose that the students' need” (lecturer 1)

“Examples of certain situation and language might be appropriate in that situation. The language should be learned in detail in terms of structure and vocabularies” (lecturer 3)

“Teaching method, strategies and assignment” (lecturer 5)

“Textbook is essential in teaching. It gives clear direction for teacher, but it's very rare” (lecturer 3)

“There are some available downloadable textbooks in internet but for certain disciplines we still need to create by our own” (lecturer 4)

“Actually, I felt difficult to find out the appropriate textbook, so I combine it from some resources” (lecturer 5)

From the answers, the ESP sources could be an obstacle in teaching ESP. It causes the lecturers should discover the ESP materials in any sources. Due to the limited resources, the lecturers need to prepare before their teaching ESP, including finding the textbook or articles relating to the specific fields. It is in line with Fitria's study (2020), she claimed that quality of textbook is one of the difficulties faced by the ESP teachers. She added that several ESP textbooks contain the materials to develop English skills in specific fields while the sources are difficult to find. It triggers the lecturers to be creative in designing the ESP materials using textbook and articles needed. It is supported by Ibrahim's study (2019) assuming that lack of ESP materials is the problems affecting teaching ESP. He stated that the lecturer could manage ESP materials needed by using handmade or published materials. Therefore, it makes the lecturers to arrange freely ESP materials that are suitable with own fields.

### **Teaching ESP assisted the students to enhance new vocabularies relating to the specific fields**

Based on table 1, the third result is interpreted from question 4 in which the answers from lecturers are as follows:

“Asking to the students to speak up, so vocabulary mastery will be needed” (lecturer 1)

“Some students are still weak to master vocabulary, so they need to know new vocabularies to face ESP” (lecturer 2)

“Understanding the language itself is challenging. Students are encouraged to understand the context and the language at the same time” (lecturer 3)

“Mastering the contents related targeted discipline is related to vocabulary in that fields. Students will have new vocabularies” (lecturer 4)

“Encourage students to practice speaking English” (lecturer 5)

From those answers, it could be depicted that vocabulary mastery is needed in teaching ESP. According to Enesi et al. (2021), specific terminology of vocabulary would be familiar for the students during teaching ESP. This is supported by Sukarni’s studies (2020) stating that vocabulary is the most important aspect for the students in teaching ESP. It assists the students to communicate to each other during learning ESP. He added that students could develop their vocabulary mastery through ESP materials. Based on those experts, it means that teaching ESP could develop students’ vocabulary mastery in specific terminology relating to the major. Thus, it is related to the ESP materials delivered by the lecturers during teaching ESP.

### **Teaching ESP encouraged the lecturers to develop ESP materials and method of teaching in order to deliver optimally the ESP contents**

Questions 5 and 7 explain this result to examine how the lecturers develop ESP materials and method of teaching ESP. The interview results are as follows:

“Provide some books for ESP based on students’ need, attend some webinars or coaching for teaching ESP” (lecturer 1)

“Lecturer should have a proper knowledge of the specific purposes of teaching language via seminar or ESP training for the lecturer” (lecturer 2)

“Through workshop to introduced targeted discipline materials and topics, discuss between the program coordinator and lecturers to reach a consensus on goals and objectives of the course” (lecturer 3)

“The best method for teaching ESP is students-centered” (lecturer 1)

“Teacher must combine some methods on their processes depend on the context, learner and need analysis” (lecturer 3)

“Show real-life situation would be beneficial for the students. Learning which focuses more on meaning would be better” (lecturer 5)

According to those answers, the improvement of teaching ESP would be required for the lecturers, including attending seminar, training, and workshop. It is in line with Ahmed (2014) stating that by training, ESP lecturers could develop their necessary knowledge with the students’ specialized needs. He added that the importance of training assists the students to develop their competence in specific fields as well as understanding ESP materials in their own profession. Meanwhile, Cenaj (2015) claimed that lack of training is the problem of ESP lecturers. He added that the ESP lecturers were unfamiliar with those training activities that made them difficult to develop ESP materials. It means that the ESP training should become recognizable movement to ESP lecturers. In addition, Ho (2011) claimed that lecturers faced the problem to figure out the best method in teaching ESP. It means that the lecturers implement method of teaching to adjust ESP materials. Teaching ESP is students-centered approach (Hutchinson&Waters, 1987). Therefore, it focuses on the students’ need in which the lecturers could implement the authentic materials in teaching ESP. Those materials help the students to focus on their needs in their specialist knowledge.

### **Challenges on Learning ESP for Indonesian Undergraduate Students**

This second section depicts the questionnaire and interview results from the students to figure out their perception of learning ESP. There are 10 questionnaire questions through Google Form as well as the 7 questions of interview are delivered to support their questionnaire answers. These are the following questionnaire questions to the lecturers, as follows:

**Table 2.** Questionnaire Questions about Learning ESP

No	Questionnaire Questions
1.	In my opinion, learning ESP in this semester is very easy
2.	In my opinion, learning ESP in this semester is new and different than General English
3.	In my opinion, learning ESP in this semester is very fun
4.	In my opinion, learning ESP motivates me to comprehend English in my specific field
5.	In my opinion, learning ESP makes me obtain new vocabularies relating to my specific field
6.	In my opinion, learning ESP makes me find out the meaning of new vocabularies relating to my specific field
7.	In my opinion, learning ESP makes me be more active to interact with the lecturer
8.	In my opinion, learning ESP makes me find new things relating my specific field
9.	In my opinion, learning ESP is more interactive than General English
10.	In my opinion, learning ESP is more focused on discovering ESP materials relating to my specific field

In addition, the interview questions are as follows:

**Table 3.** Interview Questions about Learning ESP

No	Interview Questions
1.	What is your opinion about learning ESP?
2.	What are your experiences in learning ESP?
3.	What did you do during learning ESP in this semester?
4.	How is the way of lecturers in teaching ESP in this semester?
5.	What are the advantages in learning ESP in this semester?
6.	What are the problems in learning ESP in this semester?
7.	Give me new vocabularies during learning ESP (at least 3 words)!

According to the table 2 and 3, the challenges on learning ESP are interpreted into four main points below.

### **Learning ESP became the interesting and fun subject to be mastered**

The questionnaire questions 1, 2, 3, 8 and 10 represent the students' perception on learning ESP. The questionnaire results showed that: 12,5% of

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students strongly agree and 79,2% of students agree that learning ESP is very easy; 16,7% of students strongly agree and 79,2% of students agree that learning ESP is new and different than General English; 29,2% of students strongly agree and 58,3% of students agree that learning ESP in this semester is very fun; 37,5% of students strongly agree and 62,5% of students agree that learning ESP makes me find new things relating my specific field; 25% of students strongly agree and 58,3% of students agree that learning ESP is more focused on discovering ESP materials relating to my specific field.

Moreover, the interview result relies on questions 1 and 2. The students' interview answer are as follows:

“Learning ESP is related to my major” (student 2)

“Very fun” (student 5)

“In this semester, concept of learning ESP is different to General English. It's so fresh and fun to me because I can know new knowledge via this learning ESP” (student 10)

“Learning ESP in this semester is related to my specified major. I like it!” (student 14)

“Very fun and interesting to comprehend English in accounting” (student 20)

“Excited to learn new material” (student 21)

“I am happy to learn ESP in this semester (student 22)

“I think learning experience I got from learning ESP is very fun and very interactive” (student 24)

Based on those detailed results of questionnaire and interview, it explains that learning ESP is an interesting and fun activity due to the students' new experience of learning in the classroom. It is related to their new activity to master the use of English in specific field. This is supported by Fitria (2020), the students find interesting and relevant activity through ESP class acquiring the use of English in their professional and future work. She assumed that by learning ESP, the students could recognize a real context for vocabulary and structure of ESP materials. It is in line with finding of Wu and Lou (2018), they assumed that learning ESP is a need for students of non-English department to find new experience of learning English.

They added that the students have positive responses to master the use of English in specific major. Thus, by learning ESP could develop the students' desires to learn English according to their specialized fields.

### **Learning ESP showed the students' vocabulary mastery was an obstacle**

According to the questionnaire, the questions 4, 5 and 6 represent students' obstacle in learning ESP. The results of questionnaire are presented as follows: 29,2% of students strongly agree and 66,7% of students agree that learning ESP motivates me more to learn English in specific field; 37,5% of students strongly agree and 62,5% of students agree that learning ESP makes me obtain new vocabulary relating to the specified major; 45,8% of students strongly agree and 50% of students agree that learning ESP makes me use dictionary and google translate to know vocabulary meaning.

Furthermore, the interview answers 6 and 7 are presented below.

“Because different materials with General English, there are many vocabularies that I don't know the meaning” (student 2)

“My difficulty is new vocabularies that I am confused” (student 4)

“Vocabulary and pronunciation from the materials of text or exercise” (student 7)

“It's difficult for me when vocabulary with some meaning” (student 10)

“I think the difficult part of learning ESP is we need to know about vocabulary” (student 15)

“My difficulty is vocabulary in ESP” (student 20)

“I am confused with new vocabulary and I have to find the meaning in google translate” (student 22)

“It's so weird to find the meaning in Google translate and dictionary” (student 23)

From the questionnaire and interview results, lack of vocabulary in specific fields is an obstacle for the students. It is related to the Sukarni's study (2020) showing that vocabulary was the most important aspect in learning ESP. He added that developing new vocabulary could assist the students to communicate and practice in English during learning ESP. It is similar with finding of Fitria's study (2020), lack of vocabulary is one of challenges of students in learning ESP. She

assumed that students rarely find out English in specific fields, so they are not familiar with the words. It caused the students to explore new vocabulary in dictionary or any sources. Marumaya (1996) stated that students depend on the dictionary when they find difficult words in ESP terms in which they do not know the meaning. Meanwhile, dependence of dictionary was faced by the student due to the fact they had lack of skill in using dictionary. They only see the first meaning of the word in the dictionary, they do not pay attention the meaning of its word in the context of ESP materials. Moreover, students mentioned some new vocabularies in their interviews. Those are vocabularies in accounting fields according to the interview question 7.

**Table 4.** Vocabulary in Accounting Program

<b>Words</b>	<b>Frequency(times)</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>Frequency(times)</b>
Tax	5	Interest	6
Gross profit	1	Payment	10
Income statement	7	Legitimate	1
Tax avoidance	1	Transaction	11
Expense	5	Debt	16
Financial statement	2	Shareholder	7

Based table 4, the students recognized some new vocabularies relating to accounting terminology in their material during learning ESP. Those words became familiar to the students of accounting program as well as they remembered the meaning in context.

#### **Learning ESP built an interaction between lecturers and students during discussing and practicing the ESP materials**

Question 7 represented the questionnaire result to find out the impact of learning ESP. The questionnaire results are as follows: 8,3% of students strongly agree and 62,5% of students agree that learning ESP makes me be active to ask and interact to the lecturers. In addition, interview answers for questions 3 and 4 are explained below.

*“Answer the lecturer’s questions and present the material”* (student 1)

*“The students know new vocabulary and active to answer the questions directly from the exercise when learning ESP” (student 3)*

*“Interact with the lecturers in English” (student 5)*

*“Exercise about new vocabulary in Accounting and discussing with friends about the material” (student 10)*

*“Accounting in English and asking to lecturers what the definition about the difficult words” (student 15)*

*“Give more opportunities for students to ask and answer the questions” (student 15)*

*“The lecturers give me the explanation clearly and then give students the question to be discussed” (student 20)*

*“It’s so interactive between students and teacher during discussing the material” (student 22)*

Based in the questionnaire and interview results, the students were active to interact during learning ESP. The interaction occurred when the lecturers gave the ESP materials, students and lecturer discussed about it that made an interactive class. It is similar with study of Kamaruddin et al. (2021), students preferred to learn in a group and created discussion session between lecturers and them. They added that the students could comprehend the ESP materials by discussing and practicing. It is supported by Wu and Lou’s study (2018), students need to answer the questions from lecturers or their friends in ESP class. Nugroho (2020) claimed that oral communication mastery is needed through ESP materials. He added that it helps the students to practice the communication in future workplace environment. It means that learning ESP is needed for the students to be learnt in order to apply the use of English in their future professional setting. Therefore, they are familiar to discuss and practice the words in specific terminology in spoken language.

### **Learning ESP encouraged the students to be active for their speaking skill improvement**

According to the questionnaire question 9, it can be explained that 45,8% of students strongly agree and 41,7% of students agree that learning ESP is more interactive than General English. The interview answers from question 5 are presented below.

“I think the benefit of learning ESP is that we can fluently use English specifically so that it can be used according to accounting program” (student 10)

“Advantages are knowing new vocabularies and practice me to give the argumentation directly” (student 15)

“I have new knowledge and can develop the expertise field for the future work” (student 17)

“I can improve speaking skill when I deliver my opinion about the material” (student 20)

“Material makes me speak English when answering the questions from the lecturers and my friends” (student 21)

“When presentation, I can use new vocabulary to develop my speaking skill” (student 22)

“We can learn together in a group to share our opinion when learning ESP” (student 23)

“I can speak English freely in learning ESP” (student 24)

Based on the questionnaire and interview results, the encouragement of speaking English was involved in learning ESP. It means that the students could develop speaking skill through learning ESP. It is supported by Kamaruddin et al. (2021), speaking skill is the most important skill for the students in learning ESP. This is in line with the study of Fitria (2020), students are common to improve speaking skill during learning ESP due to the fact that the students spend more time to speak English with the specified terminology. While, she added that lecturers do not pay attention to the speaking activity, so the students could not convey their opinion through learning ESP. Sukarni (2020) claimed that speaking skill is the highest emphasis on language skill in learning ESP. He stated that speaking skill improvement made students ease to communicate and interact to share opinion, ideas and solution relating to the ESP materials. Thus, learning ESP makes the students to speak English due to the fact there were some activities encouraging them to develop speaking skill in ESP class, including discussion and practice session in their class.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Drawing on the results and discussion, it is obvious that teaching and learning ESP is a new challenge for both lecturers and students. Specifically, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is the use of English in specific fields that is needed to be mastered by students. The students could enrich more knowledge of English suitable with their own specified fields that makes the students apply the English in their future workplace or professional environment. It means that teaching and learning ESP refers to mastering the language in specific purposes according to the fields that are learnt. Based on the questionnaire and interview results, both lecturers and students find this teaching and learning very fun and interesting. This is caused that teaching and learning ESP is a new experience to be implemented. Moreover, the challenges faced by lecturers in this study involving lack of ESP materials/course contents, lack of variety of method in teaching, and lack of specialist knowledge. The students faced the challenges on learning ESP including lack of motivation, lack of vocabulary mastery, and lack of specialist knowledge. Therefore, this study suggests to the lecturers to be creative in teaching ESP in order to deliver optimally ESP materials for the students. The teacher could discover new method of teaching as well as develop ESP materials that improve students' language skill in specific fields.

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