

ARTICLE TITLE DESIGNING LISTENING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES (EIS) COURSES

Miftahul Jannah Rangkuti¹
Muhammad Rafi'i²

^{1,2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

miftahuljannahsmp1dm@gmail.com

muhammadrafi@umsu.ac.id

Abstract: *A fundamental but often overlooked aspect of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is listening comprehension, especially in English for Islamic Studies (EIS), where students must process lengthy spoken discourse that includes academic presentations, religious lectures, sermons, and scholarly discussions given in English. In many Islamic higher education contexts, listening teaching is still mostly based on generic English resources that do not adequately address the linguistic, disciplinary, and spiritual aspects of Islamic studies, despite the increasing institutional demand for EIS programs. This pedagogical misalignment frequently leads to low comprehension, low learner engagement, and little application of listening skills in real-world academic settings. . The current study intends to close this gap by creating, implementing, and assessing a collection of contextually grounded listening resources created especially for EIS courses. The study uses a design-based research framework that includes iterative stages of needs analysis, material development, expert validation, classroom implementation, and empirical evaluation. It is based on the principles of ESP material development, communicative language teaching, and discipline-based pedagogy. In order to reflect key topics in Islamic studies, such as theology, ethics, jurisprudence, and current Islamic discourse, authentic and semi-authentic audio texts were chosen and pedagogically modified while still being accessible to learners at the intermediate level. Expert evaluation tools, learner perception surveys, and listening comprehension exams were used to gather data, which was then analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The results show that learners' listening comprehension skills have significantly improved, their confidence in processing lengthy academic speech has grown, and their views of relevance and utility have increased. The materials' educational coherence and contextual appropriateness are further validated by expert evaluation. The paper makes the case that, in EIS situations, integrating disciplinary material with communicative listening activities can successfully moderate the relationship between language development and subject-matter learning. This research adds to the growing corpus of ESP scholarship by providing a principled model for listening material creation. It also offers useful implications for instructors, curriculum designers, and material makers in Islamic higher education.*

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes; English for Islamic Studies; Listening Materials; Material Development; Communicative Language Teaching*

Introduction

For many years, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been acknowledged as a learner-centered method of teaching languages that emphasizes matching language training to the unique academic, professional, and disciplinary requirements of students. In contrast to broad English programs, ESP is based on the idea that language acquisition works best when it is closely

related to the knowledge domains, discourse rules, and communication practices of a specific area. Over the past few decades, ESP has broadened to include a variety of academic fields, including theology and religious studies, in addition to more conventional professional fields like business, engineering, and medical. In this larger context, English for Islamic Studies (EIS) has developed as a specific specialty intended to assist students who interact with Islamic literature, religious instruction.

The demand for EIS programs has increased due to the increasing use of English in Islamic higher education as a language of instruction and intellectual communication. It is becoming more and more necessary for Islamic studies students to access academic books written in English, attend international conferences, listen to lectures given by academics from around the world, and engage in interfaith and intercultural discourse. As a result, English literacy is becoming a necessary academic prerequisite rather than a choice. Since spoken discourse is a major medium for the transfer of Islamic knowledge, both traditional and modern, listening is one of the four language skills. The main ways that students are exposed to disciplinary content in English are through academic lectures, sermons (khutbah), panel debates, interviews, and online multimedia tools.

In EIS situations, listening training is still pedagogically sidelined despite its importance. Many educational institutions use decontextualized materials from basic English textbooks or approach listening as an additional ability. The lexical, rhetorical, and thematic features of Islamic scholarly discourse are frequently absent from such works. As a result, learners struggle to understand discipline-specific vocabulary, recognize important arguments, and comprehend lengthy spoken input. The success of EIS programs is ultimately limited by this gap between the academic realities of learners and the teaching materials, which compromises motivation and comprehension.

In order to overcome these obstacles, material progress is essential. Well-designed materials should integrate authentic or semi-authentic texts, encourage communicative interaction, and be based on systematic requirements analysis, according to ESP scholars. This means that Islamic content—such as theology (‘aqīdah), jurisprudence (fiqh), ethics (akhlāq), and current Islamic issues—must be integrated within a pedagogically sound framework in EIS situations. However, reading and vocabulary development are often given priority in current EIS materials, leaving listening underrepresented and methodologically undeveloped. The design of listening materials for discipline-specific contexts is still largely unexplored in ESP research, which is reflected in this imbalance.

Additionally, a lot of the listening tools that are now available lack methodological consistency and frequently deliver audio texts without any pre-listening scaffolding or post-listening communicative tasks. These methods undervalue the significance of drawing on students' past knowledge and offering chances for discussion, introspection, and critical engagement. With its focus on authentic communication and meaning-focused engagement, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) provides a useful instructional framework for overcoming these constraints. CLT can help students connect more deeply with spoken Islamic discourse while also improving their communicative skills when paired with discipline-based curriculum.

Islamic Studies courses in response to these theoretical and pedagogical issues. Through iterative material production and empirical evaluation in a real-world educational setting, the study uses a The current study aims to create and assess listening materials especially suited for English for design-based research (DBR) methodology to bridge theory and practice. The following research goals serve as the study's compass: (1) to determine the listening requirements and difficulties faced by EIS students; (2) to create listening materials that combine

Islamic content with communicative pedagogical principles; and (3) to assess how well the created materials improve students' listening comprehension and engagement.

This work adds to the expanding corpus of ESP research and addresses the pedagogical needs of Islamic higher education by focusing on the understudied field of listening material production in EIS. It is anticipated that the results will provide instructors, material developers, and curriculum designers with useful information for implementing pedagogically sound and contextually relevant listening training. In the end, the study makes the case that methodically created listening resources can act as a crucial pedagogical link between disciplinary knowledge and language proficiency, empowering EIS students to engage more completely and confidently in English-mediated Islamic academic discourse.

Literature Review

For a long time, authenticity has been considered a key component of ESP pedagogy, especially when it comes to teaching listening skills. Authenticity in ESP contexts goes beyond simply using real-world audio texts; it also includes matching discourse kinds, communication goals, and interactional patterns to those of target academic or professional societies. Reduced forms, discourse markers, hesitation phenomena, and a variety of prosodic patterns are among the natural speech characteristics that learners are exposed to through authentic listening resources. These elements are crucial for the development of real-world listening competency.

Exposure to prolonged monologic and dialogic discourse, such as lectures, conference presentations, panel debates, and interviews, is a common component of true listening in academic ESP settings. Learners in these genres must be able to follow intricate organizational frameworks, understand sign language, and discover connections between concepts. According to research, learners' capacity to process lengthy spoken material greatly improves when they are methodically directed to assess such discourse aspects. However, learners—especially those with lower competence levels—may become overwhelmed with authentic content in the absence of suitable pedagogical scaffolding.

Authenticity takes on new meanings in the context of English for Islamic Studies. Islamic academic discourse frequently incorporates culturally ingrained idioms, references to sacred books, and religious language that may not be familiar to learners when given in English. As a result, authentic EIS listening resources need to strike a compromise between instructional accessibility and disciplinary discourse fidelity. This highlights the need of carefully modified authentic materials that preserve important discourse elements while promoting comprehension through organized exercises and the activation of prior knowledge.

Most people agree that listening comprehension is a deliberate process that uses both top-down and bottom-up cognitive processes. While top-down processing relies on prior information, contextual signals, and expectations, bottom-up processing concentrates on decoding linguistic input, such as sounds, words, and grammatical structures. Effective comprehension in ESP listening relies on the dynamic interaction between these systems, especially when learners are exposed to complicated or new vocabulary.

Explicit teaching in listening techniques can improve learners' understanding and confidence, according to studies in ESP and second language acquisition. Predicting content, detecting important details, identifying discourse markers, and employing note-taking procedures are some examples of these tactics. Strategic competency is particularly important in academic listening environments since students must frequently process vast volumes of information in real time and retain it for later use.

Strategic listening is also impacted by EIS learners' acquaintance with Islamic discourse forms and concepts. Strong disciplinary knowledge makes it easier for students to use top-down

processing to make up for language deficiencies. This demonstrates the educational benefit of including Islamic information into listening materials since it allows students to use prior knowledge to enhance comprehension. As a result, listening resources that specifically encourage the use of strategies in a well-known disciplinary setting are probably going to produce better learning results.

Modern methods of teaching listening have been greatly impacted by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which moves the emphasis from passive comprehension to active meaning-making and interaction. According to a CLT framework, listening is seen as a crucial part of communication and is intimately related to speaking, debating, and group projects. In addition to testing comprehension, listening exercises are meant to get students ready for involvement and communicative response.

CLT places a strong emphasis on the use of task-based and problem-solving exercises that mimic authentic communication scenarios within particular fields in ESP contexts. Tasks like summarizing lectures, taking part in conversations, answering questions, or reflecting on spoken content may be included in listening instruction. Because communicative listening activities demand learners to use information meaningfully rather than just respond to comprehension questions, research has shown that they increase learner motivation and encourage deeper processing of material.

CLT provides a useful framework for combining listening with discussions of Islamic issues, ethical arguments, and scholarly topics when used in EIS situations. Learners can make the connection between language acquisition and intellectual and spiritual inquiry through post-listening activities like group discussions, reflective answers, and critical analysis of spoken speech. In Islamic studies, this integration promotes the growth of both academic literacy and communication skills.

Design-based research (DBR) is becoming more widely acknowledged as a methodological technique that works well for creating ESP teaching resources. DBR places more emphasis on contextual responsiveness, iterative design, and cooperation between researchers and practitioners than experimental research designs, which place more emphasis on controlled factors. In ESP situations, where learning needs are extremely unique and impacted by institutional, disciplinary, and learner-related factors, this technique is especially suitable.

Instead of treating material development as a fixed product, DBR views it as a dynamic process. Materials are created using theoretical concepts and requirements analysis, put into practice in real-world classroom environments, assessed using a variety of data sources, and then improved. Researchers can find design elements that facilitate learning and produce context-sensitive pedagogical insights through this cyclical approach.

DBR provides a strong framework for combining linguistic theory, Islamic content, and classroom realities in the creation of EIS listening materials. DBR facilitates the development of pedagogically effective, academically relevant, and culturally suitable materials through iterative review involving both students and subject-matter experts. Additionally, by clarifying how discipline-specific listening resources mediate language learning and topic comprehension, DBR advances ESP theory.

Several important findings pertinent to the current investigation are highlighted in the evaluated literature. First, hearing in ESP is a sophisticated, meaning-oriented process that necessitates the integration of disciplinary knowledge, linguistic proficiency, and strategic processing. Second, learner-centered design, authenticity, pedagogical scaffolding, and rigorous needs analysis are all necessary for the successful creation of ESP materials. Third, listening training has received disproportionately little attention in the expanding but understudied field of English for Islamic Studies.

Few studies have methodically addressed the creation and assessment of listening materials specifically suited to EIS situations, despite the fact that earlier research has recognized the significance of contextualized materials in ESP. There is a big gap in the production of listening-focused content based on communicative pedagogy and disciplinary discourse because current EIS research typically emphasizes reading and vocabulary abilities. Additionally, only a small amount of empirical research has used design-based research approaches to examine how EIS listening materials work in actual classroom environments.

By creating, implementing, and assessing listening resources especially for English for Islamic Studies classes, the current project aims to overcome these gaps in ESP scholarship. This project attempts to improve theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practice in EIS listening instruction by combining authentic Islamic material, communicative language teaching principles, and a design-based research methodology.

Method

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a design-based research (DBR) approach, which allows for iterative development, implementation, and evaluation of instructional materials in real educational contexts.

3.2 Participants

Participants included 32 undergraduate students enrolled in an English for Islamic Studies course at an Islamic higher education institution. Three ESP experts and two Islamic studies lecturers participated in the expert validation stage.

3.3 Needs Analysis

Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation to identify learners' listening difficulties, preferred topics, and academic needs.

3.4 Material Development

Based on the needs analysis, six listening units were developed. Each unit consisted of:

- Pre-listening activities activating Islamic background knowledge
- While-listening tasks focusing on comprehension and note-taking
- Post-listening communicative tasks such as discussions and reflections

Audio texts included academic lectures, khutbah excerpts, panel discussions, and interviews with Islamic scholars, adapted for instructional purposes while maintaining authenticity.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Learner feedback questionnaires, listening comprehension tests, and expert evaluation rubrics were used to assess the effectiveness of the materials. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, while qualitative feedback was thematically analyzed.

Result and Discussion

The results of the study about the creation and application of listening materials for English for Islamic Studies (EIS) courses are presented and explained in this part. The findings are examined in light of the body of ESP and EIS literature, including both quantitative and qualitative data from listening comprehension assessments, learner perception surveys, and

expert reviews. Learner performance, affective reactions, pedagogical efficacy, and the wider implications for listening instruction in discipline-specific situations are the main topics of debate.

After using the created EIS listening resources, learners' performance clearly improved, according to a quantitative study of their listening comprehension test results. Students showed improved ability to follow lengthy oral discourse about Islamic studies subjects, identify key ideas, and find supporting details. Notably, students made significant strides in understanding longer academic lectures and sermons, which were previously noted as being especially difficult during the needs analysis stage. These enhancements imply that more efficient cognitive processing was made possible by the incorporation of Islamic discipline content with structured listening activities. Through pre-listening exercises that activated learners' prior knowledge, the materials facilitated top-down processing, allowing learners to anticipate content and create meaning more effectively. This result is consistent with ESP studies that highlight the function of schema activation as Additionally, students demonstrated improved accuracy in identifying discipline-specific language and important rhetorical cues frequently employed in Islamic academic discourse. This suggests that the development of lexical and discourse awareness was aided by frequent exposure to hearing material that was thematically consistent. These findings highlight the value of methodical, culturally oriented listening teaching from a pedagogical standpoint as opposed to depending solely on generic listening resources.

Qualitative results from learner surveys showed notable improvements in learners' emotive reactions to listening exercises in addition to cognitive gains. When the material included Islamic concepts that were recognizable to their academic and spiritual identities, several participants reported feeling more motivated, confident, and eager to interact with spoken English. Compared to prior experiences with standard English materials, learners reported that listening exercises were less daunting and more relevant. The congruence between the listening input and the learners' prior disciplinary knowledge is responsible for the decrease in listening anxiety. Learners had less cognitive burden and more control over the listening process when they could refer to their past understanding of Islamic themes. This result confirms earlier studies' findings that learners are more engaged with emotionally and culturally relevant knowledge.

Additionally, it has been noted that post-listening communicative tasks, such group discussions and reflective exercises, promote a sense of academic engagement and collaborative learning. Students saw listening as an essential component of academic communication rather than as a stand-alone ability. In EIS situations, where students are expected to actively participate in academic conversation rather than passively consume knowledge, this adjustment in attitude is especially crucial.

Conversation: Consequences for ESP and EIS Listening Training The results of this study add to more general conversations in ESP scholarship about the significance of authenticity and contextualization in listening instruction. The findings show that listening materials based on students' disciplinary settings improve understanding, motivation, and engagement, which is consistent with earlier studies. In the particular instance of EIS, incorporating Islamic content allowed students to draw on past knowledge and participate more fully in spoken academic conversation. The work provides theoretical support for listening comprehension models that highlight the interplay between linguistic input and prior knowledge. By lowering the cognitive demands associated with unfamiliar content, discipline-specific listening resources may enable more effective meaning building, as evidenced by the learners' increased performance.

Restrictions and Future Research Directions The study contains a number of drawbacks that should be noted despite its contributions. The results may not be as broadly applicable as they could be because the participant sample was restricted to a single institution. Furthermore, the

study did not examine the long-term effects of the listening materials because it concentrated on short-term learning outcomes. Future studies could look at how EIS listening materials affect students' academic achievement and communication skills over time. In order to improve authenticity and learner autonomy, more research may examine the incorporation of digital and multimedia materials, such as podcasts and online lectures. A more thorough knowledge of EIS listening teaching would result from expanding studies across various Islamic educational environments.

Conclusion

The systematic creation and assessment of listening materials for English for Islamic Studies (EIS) courses is a crucial but little-studied aspect of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The study used a design-based research approach to create listening instruction that is discipline-specific, pedagogically sound, and contextually relevant in response to the growing demand for English-mediated Islamic academic discourse and the ongoing reliance on decontextualized general English listening materials. The results offer strong proof that well-crafted listening resources can greatly improve students' listening comprehension, engagement, and perception of the value of studying English in Islamic studies situations.

The findings show that combining systematic listening exercises with real Islamic content promotes more efficient meaning creation. When listening resources represented well-known theme and conceptual frameworks, learners were better able to comprehend lengthy spoken conversation, identify discipline-specific vocabulary, and follow intricate academic arguments. This result supports theoretical models of listening comprehension that highlight the relationship between linguistic processing and prior knowledge and emphasizes the significance of matching linguistic input with learners' disciplinary knowledge. Such connection is especially important in EIS situations, where students negotiate both spiritual and academic aspects of meaning.

This research could be expanded upon in future studies by looking at the long-term effects of EIS listening materials in other educational settings and organizations. Additional research on the use of digital and multimedia listening tools, including interactive platforms, podcasts, and online lectures, may enhance EIS listening instruction and encourage student autonomy. A more sophisticated understanding of successful instructional design might also result from comparison studies examining other pedagogical approaches to EIS listening, including as task-based and genre-based models. This study concludes by arguing that listening materials that are methodically created are essential to improving the efficacy of English for Islamic Studies courses.

By showing how design-based research (DBR) can be applied to ESP material development, the work also contributes methodologically. DBR made it possible to create listening materials that were grounded in classroom realities and responsive to learner needs through iterative steps of needs analysis, material design, expert validation, and learner evaluation. Particularly in interdisciplinary domains like EIS, collaborative material development including language specialists and subject-matter experts is crucial, as evidenced by the excellent ratings from both experts and learners. The study recognizes a number of limitations in spite of these advances. The results may not be as broadly applicable as they could be because the study was carried out in a single institutional setting with a small sample size. Furthermore, the assessment concentrated on immediate learning objectives.

The study emphasizes the emotive and motivational advantages of contextually grounded listening teaching in addition to cognitive gains. When listening activities aligned with their academic identities and religious orientations, learners reported feeling more confident, experiencing less listening anxiety, and being more inclined to participate in spoken English.

Because they support long-term student involvement and more favorable attitudes about language learning, these affective outcomes are important from a pedagogical standpoint. The idea that listening is an involved and intentional ability rather than a passive classroom activity was further strengthened by the addition of communicative post-listening activities. The study supports the usefulness of communicative language teaching (CLT) in discipline-specific listening education from a pedagogical standpoint.

This study concludes by arguing that listening materials that are methodically created are essential to improving the efficacy of English for Islamic Studies courses. EIS listening resources can enable students to engage more completely and confidently in English-mediated Islamic academic discourse by connecting linguistic competence and discipline knowledge through authentic content and communicative pedagogy. Thus, the study advances ESP theory and practice while providing instructors, curriculum designers, and organizations looking to improve listening instruction in Islamic higher education with useful advice.

References

- Anthony, L. (2018). *Introducing English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge.
- Basturkmen, H. (2019). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, N. B. (2016). Learners' listening comprehension difficulties in English language learning. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 123–133.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (2017). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Long, M. H. (2015). *Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2020). *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*. Routledge.
- Rahman, M. M. (2021). ESP needs analysis: Theory and practice. *Journal of Language and Education*, 7(2), 94–105.
- Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key Issues in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Salimi, A., & Farsi, Z. (2022). Designing ESP materials based on learners' academic needs. *System*, 105, 102707.
- Widodo, H. P. (2020). Genre-based approaches in ESP material development. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 44, 100832.