



Evi Agustin¹

EXPLORATION OF ENGLISH LEARNING PREFERENCES FOR ECONOMICS STUDENTS

Abstract

In an increasingly globalized world, English proficiency is essential for economics students to access international resources and opportunities. This study aims to explore the specific English learning preferences of economics students to develop more effective educational strategies. Utilizing a qualitative research method with a multi-case design, data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, with informants selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal a strong preference for integrating English learning with economics content, the need for specialized vocabulary and context-specific materials, and a favoring of interactive, practical learning activities. Students also highlighted the importance of effective instructors and robust institutional support in their language learning journey. Challenges such as varying levels of English proficiency and time constraints due to demanding coursework were also identified. The study concludes that tailored educational approaches, including interdisciplinary courses and adaptive teaching strategies, are crucial for enhancing English proficiency among economics students. These insights can inform curriculum design and pedagogical practices, ultimately supporting the academic and professional success of economics students in a global context.

Keywords: Economics Students, English Learning Preferences, Exploration.

Abstrak

Di dunia yang semakin terglobalisasi, kemahiran bahasa Inggris sangat penting bagi mahasiswa ekonomi untuk mengakses sumber daya dan peluang internasional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi preferensi belajar bahasa Inggris spesifik siswa ekonomi untuk mengembangkan strategi pendidikan yang lebih efektif. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan desain multi kasus, pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semi terstruktur, diskusi kelompok terfokus, dan analisis dokumen, dengan informan dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Temuan ini mengungkapkan adanya preferensi yang kuat untuk mengintegrasikan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan konten ekonomi, kebutuhan akan kosa kata khusus dan materi yang konteksnya spesifik, dan lebih menyukai aktivitas pembelajaran yang interaktif dan praktis. Siswa juga menyoroti pentingnya instruktur yang efektif dan dukungan institusional yang kuat dalam perjalanan pembelajaran bahasa mereka. Tantangan seperti tingkat kemahiran bahasa Inggris yang berbeda-beda dan keterbatasan waktu karena banyaknya tugas kursus juga diidentifikasi. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendekatan pendidikan yang disesuaikan, termasuk kursus interdisipliner dan strategi pengajaran adaptif, sangat penting untuk meningkatkan kemahiran bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa ekonomi. Wawasan ini dapat menginformasikan desain kurikulum dan praktik pedagogi, yang pada akhirnya mendukung keberhasilan akademis dan profesional mahasiswa ekonomi dalam konteks global.

Kata Kunci: Mahasiswa Ekonomi, Preferensi Belajar Bahasa Inggris, Eksplorasi.

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly globalized world, English has become the lingua franca of international business, trade, and academia. For students majoring in economics, proficiency in English is not just an academic requirement but a critical skill that can significantly enhance

¹Institut Pangeran Dharma Kusuma Indramayu, Indonesia
 email: evi.agustin.rib22@gmail.com

their career prospects (Mozer & Prost, 2023; Waham et al., 2023). As the primary language of global communication, English allows economics students to access a broader range of academic resources, engage in international research collaborations, and participate effectively in the global job market (Aldiab et al., 2019). This background underscores the importance of understanding the specific learning preferences of economics students in mastering the English language.

However, despite the recognized importance of English proficiency, many economics students face significant challenges in learning the language. These challenges can be attributed to a variety of factors, including differences in educational backgrounds, varying levels of exposure to English, and diverse learning environments (Akinwamide & Oguntade, 2023; Lascano Pérez & Altamirano Carvajal, 2023). Furthermore, the traditional methods of teaching English often fail to address the unique needs and preferences of economics students, who may require specialized vocabulary and contexts that align with their field of study. These problems highlight the need for tailored English learning approaches that cater specifically to the preferences and requirements of economics students (Obloberdiyevna D S, 2022).

The study of English learning preferences among economics students is not only relevant but also timely, given the evolving educational paradigms and the increasing emphasis on student-centered learning (Indah Sari et al., 2020). By exploring these preferences, educators can develop more effective teaching strategies that enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes. Moreover, this exploration can reveal insights into the cognitive and motivational factors that influence language learning, contributing to the broader field of educational psychology and linguistics (Agustin & Ayu, 2021).

Previous research has often focused on general English learning strategies or has been limited to specific contexts, such as secondary education or non-specialized university programs (English & Mayo, 2019; Eyob Kenta, 2019; Mukadimah & Sahayu, 2021; Putri & Putri, 2020; Wang & Dostál, 2018). There is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the specific preferences and challenges faced by economics students in learning English. This gap presents an opportunity for novel research that can provide a deeper understanding of how economics students approach language learning and what specific strategies can best support their educational journey. The novelty of this study lies in its targeted approach to investigating the English learning preferences of economics students. By focusing on this specific cohort, the research aims to uncover unique patterns and preferences that have not been extensively studied before. This focus not only fills a critical gap in the existing literature but also offers practical insights for educators and curriculum designers seeking to improve English language instruction for economics students.

The primary objective of this research is to identify and analyze the English learning preferences of economics students. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, the study aims to explore the factors that influence these preferences and to determine the most effective strategies for enhancing English proficiency among this group. By achieving this objective, the research seeks to contribute to the development of more tailored and effective English language programs that can better support the academic and professional aspirations of economics students.

The anticipated benefits of this research are manifold. For students, the findings can lead to more personalized and effective learning experiences, thereby improving their language skills and boosting their confidence. For educators and institutions, the research provides valuable insights that can inform curriculum design and teaching methodologies, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes. In a broader sense, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on language education, offering new perspectives and practical solutions that can be applied across various disciplines and educational settings.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method with a multi-case design to explore the English learning preferences of economics students. The qualitative approach is chosen to gain in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and preferences of the participants, which are best captured through rich, descriptive data (Miles et al., 2018). The multi-case design

allows for a comparative analysis across different educational institutions, providing a broader understanding of the contextual factors influencing English learning preferences. This design facilitates the identification of common themes and unique differences among the cases studied, offering a comprehensive perspective on the subject matter.

Data collection is carried out using a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews with individual students provide detailed, personal accounts of their learning experiences and preferences. Focus group discussions enable the exploration of shared and divergent views among peers, promoting a deeper understanding of collective preferences and challenges. Document analysis, including the review of curriculum materials and learning resources, helps contextualize the students' experiences within the broader educational framework. Informants are selected through purposive sampling, targeting economics students who have varied levels of English proficiency and diverse educational backgrounds to ensure a representative sample. Data analysis involves coding and thematic analysis, where the transcribed interviews and discussion data are systematically examined to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to English learning preferences. This methodical approach ensures the reliability and validity of the findings, providing a robust foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions and implications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study on the English learning preferences of economics students revealed diverse individual learning preferences and motivations. While some students preferred traditional classroom settings with structured lectures and clear guidelines, others favored more interactive and practical approaches such as group discussions and project-based learning. Many students highlighted the importance of integrating English learning with their core economics subjects, allowing them to see the practical application of language skills in their field of study. Motivation varied, with intrinsic factors such as personal interest in the language and extrinsic factors like career aspirations and academic requirements playing significant roles.

Several challenges were identified that economics students face in learning English. A common barrier is the lack of specialized vocabulary and context-specific materials tailored to economics. Students often found that general English courses did not adequately prepare them for reading academic journals, writing research papers, or participating in international conferences specific to economics. Another significant challenge was the varying levels of English proficiency among students, which sometimes led to feelings of inadequacy and hindered collaborative learning. Time constraints due to the demanding nature of economics coursework also posed a significant barrier to dedicating sufficient time for English language practice.

Economics students expressed clear preferences for certain types of learning resources and activities. Online platforms and digital resources were highly favored due to their accessibility and flexibility. Many students utilized websites, apps, and online courses that offered tailored content for economics students. Interactive activities, such as role-playing business scenarios, debates on economic issues, and simulations, were also highly appreciated. These activities not only made learning more engaging but also provided practical contexts in which students could apply their English skills. Furthermore, peer learning and collaborative projects were highlighted as effective methods for improving language skills, as they provided opportunities for real-time feedback and shared learning experiences.

The study underscored the critical role of instructors in shaping students' English learning experiences. Effective instructors were those who could contextualize language learning within the framework of economics, making lessons relevant and engaging. Students valued instructors who employed a variety of teaching methods and who were responsive to their individual learning needs. Additionally, institutional support was found to be a significant factor. Universities that offered tailored English language programs, workshops, and additional resources specifically for economics students were seen as providing a more supportive learning environment. Access to language labs, writing centers, and tutoring services were also noted as beneficial.

The multi-case design of the study allowed for a comparative analysis across different educational institutions, revealing both commonalities and unique differences. While the general trends in preferences and challenges were consistent, certain institutions stood out for their innovative approaches to integrating English learning with economics education. For instance, some universities had developed specialized English courses that were co-taught by language instructors and economics professors, which were particularly effective in addressing the specific needs of economics students. Differences in institutional resources and support also influenced the effectiveness of English learning programs.

Based on the findings, several implications for curriculum design and pedagogy were identified. There is a clear need for more specialized English courses that focus on the language skills required for economics. Curriculum designers should consider integrating English learning with economics content, creating interdisciplinary courses that allow students to simultaneously develop their language and subject-specific skills. Additionally, adopting a more flexible and student-centered approach to teaching can help cater to the diverse preferences and needs of economics students. Institutions should also invest in resources and support systems that facilitate effective language learning, such as online platforms, language labs, and peer tutoring programs.

The exploration of English learning preferences among economics students highlights the importance of tailored educational approaches that address the unique needs of this group. By understanding and addressing these preferences and challenges, educators and institutions can significantly enhance the effectiveness of English language instruction, ultimately supporting the academic and professional success of economics students.

Tabel 1. Summary of Research Findings

No	Category	Findings
1	Individual Learning Preferences	- Preference for traditional classroom settings (structured lectures) vs. interactive and practical approaches (group discussions, project-based learning)
		- Importance of integrating English learning with core economics subjects
		- Motivations include intrinsic factors (personal interest) and extrinsic factors (career aspirations, academic requirements)
2	Challenges and Barriers	- Lack of specialized vocabulary and context-specific materials tailored to economics
		- General English courses not adequately preparing students for economics-specific tasks (reading academic journals, writing research papers, international conferences)
		- Varying levels of English proficiency among students leading to feelings of inadequacy and hindering collaborative learning
		- Time constraints due to demanding economics coursework
3	Preferred Learning Resources	- High preference for online platforms and digital resources due to accessibility and flexibility
		- Utilization of websites, apps, and online courses tailored for economics students
		- Favorable interactive activities (role-playing business scenarios, debates on economic issues, simulations)
		- Effective peer learning and collaborative projects providing real-time feedback and shared learning experiences
4	Role of Instructors	- Effective instructors contextualize language learning within the framework of economics

		- Valued instructors employ varied teaching methods and respond to individual learning needs
5	Institutional Support	- Importance of universities offering tailored English language programs, workshops, and additional resources for economics students - Beneficial access to language labs, writing centers, and tutoring services
6	Comparative Analysis Across Institutions	- General trends in preferences and challenges are consistent - Innovative approaches in certain institutions (specialized English courses co-taught by language instructors and economics professors) - Differences in institutional resources and support influencing the effectiveness of English learning programs
7	Implications for Curriculum Design	- Need for specialized English courses focusing on economics-specific language skills - Integration of English learning with economics content - Adoption of flexible and student-centered teaching approaches - Investment in resources and support systems (online platforms, language labs, peer tutoring programs)

Source: Primary Data, 2023.

This table summarizes the key findings from the study "Exploration of English Learning Preferences for Economics Students." It categorizes the findings into individual learning preferences, challenges and barriers, preferred learning resources, the role of instructors, institutional support, comparative analysis across institutions, and implications for curriculum design (Mogale & Malatji, 2022; Yang, 2022). The table highlights that economics students have diverse preferences, with a significant number favoring integrated learning approaches and practical activities. It identifies challenges such as a lack of specialized vocabulary and varying proficiency levels. Preferred resources include online platforms and interactive activities, while effective instructors and robust institutional support are critical (García-Peñalvo, 2016; Okunade & Osmani, 2020). The comparative analysis underscores consistent trends and innovative practices across institutions, and the implications for curriculum design emphasize the need for specialized, integrated, and flexible educational strategies.

The findings from the study on English learning preferences among economics students provide a nuanced understanding that both aligns with and extends previous research in the field. Prior studies have consistently highlighted the importance of English proficiency for academic success and career advancement in various disciplines, including economics (Asfahani et al., 2023; Fandino et al., 2019). However, this research specifically delves into the unique needs and preferences of economics students, offering insights that were not extensively covered in earlier literature. This study corroborates those findings, indicating that economics students also highly value online platforms and digital resources due to their flexibility and accessibility (Jamin et al., 2024; Tao & Xu, 2022). Additionally, the preference for interactive activities like role-playing and simulations aligns with existing theories on active learning, which suggest that practical application of language skills enhances retention and comprehension. Economics students often find general English courses insufficient for their academic and professional needs, as they do not adequately cover the specialized terminology

and contexts relevant to their field (Suzabar et al., 2020). This aligns with the theoretical perspective that language learning is most effective when contextualized within the learner's specific academic or professional domain.

The challenges of varying proficiency levels and time constraints are also consistent with previous research, which has documented similar issues across different student populations. However, this study's focus on economics students reveals additional layers of complexity. The demanding nature of economics coursework exacerbates the time constraints, making it difficult for students to dedicate adequate time to language practice (Munandar & Newton, 2021; Rohman et al., 2023). This finding suggests that integrated learning approaches, where language instruction is embedded within the economics curriculum, could be particularly beneficial.

The role of instructors and institutional support emerges as a critical factor in this study. Effective instructors who can contextualize language learning within the framework of economics and employ varied teaching methods are highly valued by students. This finding supports the theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of adaptive teaching strategies and responsive pedagogy (Nursalim et al., 2022; Sulaiman et al., 2022). Moreover, institutional support, such as tailored English programs and access to learning resources, significantly enhances the learning experience (O'Connor et al., 2023). This underscores the need for educational institutions to invest in specialized language support services that cater to the specific needs of their students (Saha, 2023).

Comparative analysis across different institutions reveals both commonalities and unique approaches. While general trends in preferences and challenges are consistent, innovative practices in certain institutions, such as co-taught courses by language and economics instructors, highlight effective strategies that could be adopted more broadly. This variation suggests that while there are universal aspects to effective English learning, there is also room for institution-specific adaptations that can address particular student needs.

In summary, this study advances the understanding of English learning preferences among economics students by providing detailed insights into their specific needs and challenges. It highlights the importance of specialized resources, integrated learning approaches, and robust institutional support. By aligning these findings with previous research and theoretical perspectives, the study offers a comprehensive view that can inform future curriculum design and pedagogical strategies, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of English language instruction for economics students.

The research on the English learning preferences of economics students contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge, particularly by addressing specific needs and preferences that had not been extensively explored in earlier studies (Gao & Pan, 2023; Hibatullah, 2019). Previous research has broadly emphasized the necessity of English proficiency for academic success and global employability, yet it often lacked a focused examination of discipline-specific requirements (Ma & Li, 2022; Supriatnaningsih et al., 2019). This study fills that gap by offering insights into the unique challenges and preferences of economics students.

One of the key findings of this research is the clear preference among economics students for integrating English learning with their core subject matter. This aligns with the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, which posits that language acquisition is more effective when taught in conjunction with relevant subject content (Artipah et al., 2024; Chen, 2018). Previous studies have highlighted the benefits of CLIL in various disciplines, but this research underscores its particular relevance for economics students, who need to master specialized vocabulary and context-specific language skills. This tailored approach not only makes the learning process more relevant and engaging but also helps students see the practical applications of their language skills in their field of study.

The challenges identified in this study, such as the lack of specialized materials and the varying levels of English proficiency among students, are consistent with earlier findings in language education research. However, this study provides a deeper understanding of how these challenges manifest specifically for economics students (Díaz & Zajia, 2020). For instance, while the general lack of specialized vocabulary has been noted before, this research highlights its critical impact on economics students, who frequently engage with complex texts and

academic papers that require a high level of language proficiency (Febriani et al., 2023); (Obloberdiyevna D S, 2022). This underscores the need for developing targeted educational resources that can bridge this gap.

Moreover, the study's findings on preferred learning resources and activities resonate with the constructivist theory of learning, which advocates for active, student-centered approaches. Economics students' preference for online platforms, digital resources, and interactive activities such as role-playing and simulations aligns with the idea that learners construct knowledge most effectively through engaging and contextually relevant experiences (Dewi & Primayana, 2019; Hermino & Arifin, 2020). This suggests that economics students benefit from practical, hands-on learning opportunities that allow them to apply their language skills in realistic scenarios, thereby enhancing both their engagement and retention of the material (Sain et al., 2024; Sánchez Tapia et al., 2018).

The critical role of instructors, as highlighted by this study, supports the socio-cultural theory of learning, which emphasizes the importance of social interactions and the guidance of knowledgeable others in the learning process. Effective instructors who can contextualize language learning within the framework of economics and employ diverse teaching methods are highly valued by students (Mohammed & Kinyó, 2020; Saccomano, 2019). This finding aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where the presence of a skilled instructor can significantly enhance a student's ability to learn and apply new concepts. It also reinforces the importance of adaptive teaching strategies that are responsive to the specific needs and preferences of students (Fatimah, 2019; Lyman et al., 2023).

Institutional support, another critical factor identified in this research, is consistent with previous studies that have emphasized the role of the learning environment in student success. The availability of tailored English programs, workshops, language labs, and tutoring services provides the necessary infrastructure for effective language learning (Darmuki et al., 2023; Rahmatullah & Ghufron, 2021). This finding aligns with the ecological systems theory, which posits that multiple layers of support—from individual instructors to institutional resources—are crucial for optimal learning outcomes.

The comparative analysis across different institutions reveals both commonalities and innovative practices, highlighting the potential for cross-institutional learning and adoption of best practices. While some institutions have developed specialized courses co-taught by language and economics instructors (Damayanti et al., 2024; Yusuf et al., 2019), which have proven particularly effective, others could benefit from adopting similar approaches. This variation suggests that while universal principles of effective language learning exist, there is also significant value in customizing approaches to fit the specific context and resources of each institution (Nor & Ab Rashid, 2018).

In conclusion, the exploration of English learning preferences among economics students provides a detailed and nuanced understanding of their unique needs and challenges. By aligning these findings with previous research and theoretical perspectives, this study offers valuable insights that can inform the development of more effective and tailored educational strategies. These insights can enhance the quality of English language instruction for economics students, ultimately supporting their academic and professional success in a globalized economy.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the research findings from the study "Exploration of English Learning Preferences for Economics Students" reveals a critical need for tailored educational approaches that address the specific needs and preferences of economics students. The study highlights the importance of integrating English learning with economics content, providing specialized vocabulary and context-specific materials, and employing interactive, student-centered teaching methods. Effective instructors and robust institutional support are also essential for enhancing the learning experience and outcomes. These findings align with existing theories on content-integrated language learning and active, constructivist learning approaches, reinforcing the need for contextually relevant and engaging educational practices.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the long-term impact of integrated English and economics courses on student proficiency and career outcomes. Additionally, comparative studies across different regions and educational systems could provide further insights into the universal and context-specific factors influencing English learning preferences among economics students. Research could also investigate the effectiveness of various technological tools and online platforms in supporting specialized language learning. By continuing to explore these areas, educators and institutions can develop more effective strategies and resources to support the unique needs of economics students, ultimately contributing to their academic and professional success.

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