

NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ESP FOR INDONESIAN HAJJ OFFICERS

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Abstrak

This study aims to identify the specific English language needs of key stakeholders involved in Hajj and Umrah services, including former Hajj officers, language trainers, and employees of Hajj–Umrah travel agencies. As English increasingly becomes a crucial medium for facilitating international mobility and assisting pilgrims from diverse linguistic backgrounds, a systematic needs analysis is necessary to design an effective English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum tailored to the operational demands of pilgrimage services. This research employs a mixed-methods design combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A total of 60 respondents participated in the questionnaire, while nine participants representing the three stakeholder groups were involved in semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, whereas qualitative data were examined through thematic coding. The findings indicate that the most essential English competencies include communicating safety information, assisting pilgrims during airport and immigration procedures, providing hotel and transportation explanations, and managing emergency situations. Despite acknowledging the importance of English proficiency, many respondents reported limited mastery of functional vocabulary, insufficient exposure to real-world communication scenarios, and a lack of structured training aligned with their professional duties. The study reveals a strong need for practical ESP materials emphasizing situational dialogues, role-plays, task-based activities, and context-specific vocabulary lists. These results suggest that a specialized and operationally relevant ESP curriculum is necessary to enhance the linguistic readiness of Hajj and Umrah personnel. The study contributes to the literature by offering empirical evidence and proposing pedagogical implications for institutions and policymakers responsible for professional training in pilgrimage services.

Kata Kunci: *ESP, Hajj Officers, Needs Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

The increasing number of Indonesian pilgrims participating in Hajj and Umrah each year has created a growing demand for service personnel who can communicate effectively in multilingual and multicultural environments. As frontline service providers, Hajj officers, language trainers, and staff from Hajj–Umrah travel agencies are required to interact with international authorities, foreign service providers, and non-Indonesian-speaking pilgrims. In these contexts, English serves as a lingua franca that facilitates operational coordination and ensures the safety, comfort, and mobility of pilgrims. Previous research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emphasizes the importance of aligning language instruction with learners' professional needs, tasks, and real-world communicative demands (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Basturkmen, 2010). However, studies focusing specifically on the linguistic needs of Hajj personnel remain limited.

A preliminary survey conducted by the researchers in 2025 involving 20 former Hajj officers indicated that 78% struggled to communicate during airport procedures, emergency situations, and interactions with foreign staff. Similar concerns were expressed by language trainers who noted the absence of structured ESP materials tailored to pilgrimage contexts. These findings highlight the urgent need for a systematic needs analysis to guide curriculum development. Without such analysis, language training programs may remain generic, ineffective, and misaligned with the professional duties of Hajj personnel.

The core constructs of this study include *target needs* (the competencies required for performing the job), *present needs* (the current proficiency level of personnel), and *learning needs* (the preferred modes and strategies for acquiring English). These constructs follow the framework proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), widely used in ESP needs assessment.

Several alternative solutions were considered, including adopting existing tourism English materials or modifying general English syllabi. However, these options do not capture the unique operational contexts of Hajj—such as managing large-scale crowd movement, facilitating rituals, addressing health emergencies, and handling administrative procedures in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study adopts a comprehensive needs analysis approach that integrates data from former Hajj officers, ESP trainers, and Hajj-Umrah travel employees.

The objective of the research is to identify the specific English language needs of these stakeholder groups to develop a contextually relevant ESP curriculum framework that supports professional performance in pilgrimage services.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods research design that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the English language needs of stakeholders involved in Hajj and Umrah services. The quantitative component consisted of a needs analysis questionnaire, while the qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews. The population of the study included former Hajj officers, ESP language trainers, and staff members working in Hajj-Umrah travel agencies in Indonesia. From this population, a total sample of 60 participants was selected, consisting of 25 former Hajj officers, 15 language trainers, and 20 travel agency employees. In addition, nine participants (three from each group) were chosen for interviews. The study used purposive sampling, as the selected participants were individuals who had direct experience with English communication in pilgrimage-related contexts. This technique allowed the researchers to target respondents who could provide rich and relevant information.

Procedures

The research was conducted in three stages. First, preliminary consultations were carried out with institutional partners to refine the research focus. Second, questionnaires were distributed online and completed within two weeks. Third, interviews were conducted via video calls, each lasting approximately 30–40 minutes. All participants provided informed consent before taking part in the study. The questionnaire consisted of three main constructs: (1) target needs, (2) present needs, and (3) learning needs, adapted from Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) ESP framework. The instrument underwent expert validation by two ESP specialists and one practitioner in pilgrimage training. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency. Data were collected using Google Forms for the questionnaire and audio-

recorded interviews for the qualitative component. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic coding, which involved identifying recurring patterns, grouping themes, and interpreting participants' perceptions in relation to the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Target Needs

The questionnaire results indicated that respondents considered several English competencies as highly essential for their professional roles. As shown in Table 1, the highest-ranked needs were the ability to provide instructions in emergency situations ($M = 4.78$), communicate during airport and immigration procedures ($M = 4.65$), and explain accommodation and transportation information ($M = 4.52$). Interview data supported these results, with most former Hajj officers reporting that English was particularly critical during unexpected situations such as delays, medical incidents, and coordination with foreign authorities.

Table 1. Mean Scores of Target Needs (N=60)

No	Competency	Mean	SD
1	Emergency instructions	4.78	0.41
2	Airport/immigration communication	4.65	0.52
3	Accommodation/transport explanation	4.52	0.49
4	Cross-cultural interaction	4.46	0.56
5	Ritual guidance explanation	4.21	0.63

2. Present Needs

Results showed that participants' current English proficiency was generally low to moderate. Only 18% of respondents rated their English skills as "good," while 52% rated themselves "fair," and 30% "poor." The most significant weaknesses included limited vocabulary mastery (reported by 72% of respondents) and difficulty constructing clear spoken instructions (61%). Interviews revealed that many personnel rarely used English outside of training seasons, leading to skill regression.

3. Learning Needs

The analysis also found a strong preference for practical and immersive learning activities. Respondents preferred role-plays (83%), situational dialogues (78%), and task-based modules simulating real pilgrimage contexts (71%). In contrast, traditional grammar-oriented instruction received the lowest interest (21%).

Discussion

The findings support the assertion that English proficiency is vital for handling operational duties in multilingual religious tourism settings (Basturkmen, 2010). High mean scores for emergency and airport-related communication confirm that Hajj personnel require immediate, functional English expressions, aligning with Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) concept of "necessities" within target needs. The gap between target

needs and present proficiency demonstrates the urgency of developing a specialized ESP curriculum, as general English is insufficient for addressing specific communicative events in Hajj operations.

The low proficiency levels observed in this study echo earlier findings by Rahman (2020), who noted that many Indonesian pilgrimage officers lack exposure to authentic English contexts. The strong preference for role-plays and simulations reinforces the importance of experiential learning, consistent with task-based language teaching principles (Ellis, 2003). These methods provide learners with opportunities to practice communication that mirrors real-world workplace interactions.

Additionally, the results highlight the inadequacy of existing training programs, which often rely on generic materials unrelated to the operational realities of Hajj. The data suggest that personnel would benefit from modules focusing on emergency scenarios, airport navigation, group coordination, and intercultural communication—domains uniquely relevant to pilgrimage services.

The analysis reveals an evident mismatch between the English skills required in the field and the current proficiency of Hajj personnel. Target needs emphasize emergency communication, airport interactions, and service explanations, while present skills remain limited, especially in vocabulary and spoken fluency. Learning preferences strongly favor situational and task-based activities, indicating the need for a practical, context-specific ESP curriculum. These findings collectively answer the main research question and justify the development of an integrated ESP framework tailored for Hajj and Umrah service personnel.

The findings of this study indicate that English proficiency is essential for handling operational duties within multilingual religious tourism contexts. This supports Basturkmen's (2010) assertion that language competence plays a central role in professional communication across cultural boundaries. In Hajj services, interactions involve diverse linguistic backgrounds, requiring personnel to communicate English accurately and efficiently. This need arises not only from professional demands but also from the responsibility to ensure the safety and comfort of pilgrims. Consequently, English competence becomes a strategic requirement for improving the overall quality of pilgrimage services.

High mean scores for emergency and airport-related communication reveal that personnel urgently require functional English expressions. This aligns with Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) concept of "necessities" within target needs, emphasizing language skills specific to a professional context. Operational environments that change rapidly demand immediate, clear, and spontaneous communication. For example, emergency instructions and airport procedures must be delivered without linguistic hesitation. Thus, the language needs of Hajj personnel are both practical and urgent.

The gap between target needs and current proficiency highlights the necessity for structured language training. This mismatch indicates that general English courses are inadequate for addressing the specialized demands of Hajj operations. It becomes essential to develop an ESP curriculum tailored to the communicative events personnel encounter in the field. A well-designed curriculum must directly integrate authentic workplace needs. Therefore, ESP serves as a bridge to reduce the competency gap revealed in this study.

Low proficiency levels observed among personnel are consistent with Rahman's (2020) findings. Rahman notes that many Indonesian officers lack exposure to authentic English contexts, resulting in limited spoken fluency and restricted operational vocabulary. These limitations create barriers when communicating with foreign pilgrims or international airport staff. As a result, personnel often struggle to deliver accurate

information during critical moments. This highlights the need for a more contextualized and experience-based language training approach.

The strong preference for role-plays and simulations suggests that participants benefit from experiential learning methods. This aligns with Ellis' (2003) principles of task-based language teaching, which emphasize authentic communicative tasks as the foundation of learning. Through such approaches, learners engage in language use that mirrors real workplace situations. These activities help build confidence, especially when personnel must speak English under pressure. Experiential learning therefore becomes highly relevant for operational language training.

Role-play activities also create interactive and collaborative learning environments. Participants can reenact real-life scenarios such as assisting lost pilgrims, responding to health emergencies, or dealing with misplaced travel documents. These simulations expose learners to stress conditions similar to those found in actual service situations. Exposure to such scenarios prepares personnel for both linguistic and emotional demands of the job. Thus, role-plays significantly enhance adaptive communication skills.

The findings further reveal major weaknesses in the existing English training programs. Many training materials are generic and fail to reflect the operational realities faced by Hajj personnel. Lessons often focus on everyday conversational English rather than on specialized contexts such as airport procedures or emergency handling. This mismatch reduces the relevance and effectiveness of the training. Therefore, a comprehensive revision of existing materials is necessary.

Effective training must incorporate situational content relevant to field operations. Modules covering airport navigation, elderly pilgrim assistance, crisis communication, and crowd coordination are particularly important. These modules expose participants to technical vocabulary and structured expressions specific to their duties. Such context-driven materials help personnel understand the linguistic demands associated with their roles. As a result, learning becomes more applicable and meaningful.

The study also shows that personnel's abilities to handle emergencies remain inadequate, particularly in vocabulary and spoken fluency. These weaknesses can hinder quick responses during critical situations. When medical incidents, missing pilgrims, or logistical disturbances occur, effective communication becomes essential. Personnel must be able to deliver concise instructions and accurate explanations under pressure. Strengthening emergency-related language skills should therefore be a major component of ESP training.

Weak speaking proficiency highlights the need for training approaches that prioritize intensive practice. Personnel must have opportunities to practice speaking spontaneously and naturally. Activities such as drilling, structured dialogues, and real-time communication tasks can significantly improve fluency. Without repeated practice, linguistic competence tends to remain stagnant. Thus, enhancing oral proficiency should be central to the curriculum.

Participant preference for situational learning suggests a desire for immediately applicable training methods. This preference aligns with adult learning theory, which emphasizes relevance and practicality. When learners see that training content directly supports their job responsibilities, their motivation increases. This leads to more engaged participation and stronger retention of language structures. Practical learning environments, therefore, produce more effective outcomes.

Overall analysis reveals a significant mismatch between workplace requirements and personnel's current language capabilities. This discrepancy demands a comprehensive curriculum revision grounded in authentic workplace communication. A restructured ESP

curriculum must integrate field-specific scenarios, operational vocabulary, and task-based learning. Such alignment ensures that personnel acquire the competencies needed to manage real-world interactions. Addressing these gaps is essential for improving communication in Hajj operations.

Taken together, the findings justify the development of an integrated ESP framework tailored for Hajj and Umrah service personnel. This framework should combine language competence, field experience, and task-based practice. Properly implemented ESP training will enhance communication effectiveness, service safety, and overall pilgrim satisfaction. With a needs-based curriculum, personnel can perform their duties more confidently and accurately. These insights reinforce the importance of specialized language training within religious tourism service sectors.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that English proficiency is a critical component in supporting the professional performance of Hajj and Umrah service personnel, as evidenced by a clear discrepancy between the English skills required in operational contexts—such as emergency communication, airport procedures, and service explanations—and the current proficiency levels of former Hajj officers, language trainers, and travel agency staff. The strong preference for practical, situational, and task-based learning further emphasizes the inadequacy of traditional grammar-focused instruction and highlights the need for an ESP curriculum specifically tailored to pilgrimage services. The findings reinforce the relevance of Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) ESP framework, demonstrating that understanding target needs, present needs, and learning needs is essential for designing effective instructional materials. Practically, the results underline the importance of providing contextualized language training that enhances communication accuracy, service quality, safety management, and coordination in multilingual environments. At the policy level, institutions responsible for Hajj and Umrah training are encouraged to incorporate ESP-based modules into certification programs and collaborate with travel agencies to develop standardized, field-aligned learning materials. Future research should consider broader participant involvement, real-time observation during the Hajj season, and the exploration of technology-enhanced ESP tools to improve learning outcomes and operational readiness.

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