



The Role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)-Based English Textbooks in Training Higher-Order Thinking Skills in Law Faculty Students

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Abstract

The mastery of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become an essential need for Law Faculty students in facing the challenges of globalization and an increasingly competitive job market. This study aims to determine the role of ESP-based English textbooks in developing higher-order thinking skills in Law Faculty students. The research employed a qualitative method. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and observations involving students and lecturers teaching ESP courses in several Law study programs. The results of the study show that the English for Specific Purposes (ESP)-based English textbooks used are effective in training students' higher-order thinking skills during the learning process, strengthening their reading skills within the context of legal studies, and fostering critical and collaborative thinking abilities. The feasibility test indicates that the Legal English textbook received a "highly appropriate" rating from material and media experts, with an average score of 92%. The role of this Legal English textbook is considered effective in improving students' English language competence in the Law Faculty. Therefore, the ESP-based English textbook used can serve as an innovative reference for English language learning at Prof. Dr. Hazairin, SH University.

Keywords: Textbooks, Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), Law, English, ESP

Introduction

In the era of globalization, English proficiency has become one of the essential competencies that university students, including those in the Faculty of Law, must possess. Students' English skills represent a human resource that must be managed interactively and professionally. Therefore, students need to master English both in spoken and written forms. English is not only used as a means of international communication but also serves as the primary language of global legal literature, international regulations, and diplomatic forums. Consequently, English holds an important position in higher education, particularly in the field of law, which is increasingly connected to international legal systems. Law students at Universitas Prof. Dr. Hazairin, SH are expected to be able to understand and use English effectively in both academic and professional contexts. However, general English instruction often fails to

meet these specific needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emerges to bridge this gap by emphasizing language use according to particular fields of study.

ESP is a language teaching approach designed to meet the specific needs of a certain discipline (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In the context of the Faculty of Law, ESP focuses on Legal English, which includes mastery of legal terminology, the structure of contractual texts, and the ability to argue within the framework of international judicial contexts (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Therefore, English instruction in the Faculty of Law should be tailored to students' needs so that they can acquire legal English proficiency upon graduation. For instance, English courses should be closely related to legal English, incorporating vocabulary and expressions relevant to the field of law. In this regard, English instruction plays a crucial role in equipping graduates with English proficiency that contributes to the development of high-quality human resources. Hence, English knowledge and skills relevant to the legal field will provide students with the necessary understanding to interpret English materials within their discipline.

On the other hand, the demands of the 21st century emphasize the importance of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), which include the abilities to analyze, evaluate, and create (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In English learning, the integration of ESP and HOTS is essential to develop students who are not only linguistically proficient but also capable of critical and argumentative thinking within their professional contexts. HOTS encompasses three main cognitive skills according to the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001): analysis, evaluation, and creation. In the context of language learning, HOTS can be developed through activities that require students to comprehend the deeper meaning of texts, assess the validity of arguments, and produce new solutions based on case studies. Therefore, this study aims to describe the role of ESP-based English textbooks in developing higher-order thinking skills among law students at Universitas Prof. Dr. Hazairin, SH.

Accordingly, English instruction in the Faculty of Law should be adapted to students' academic and professional needs, rather than focusing merely on general grammar proficiency. The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach serves as a solution to bridge these needs. An ESP-based textbook focuses on the use of English within specific academic and professional contexts—in this case, the field of law (Legal English). An effective textbook not only presents linguistic materials but also integrates disciplinary context, case studies, and reflective activities. In legal education, an ESP-based textbook designed with a HOTS-oriented approach will help students understand legal terminology while sharpening their ability to analyze legal issues critically. Besides improving academic communication skills, ESP textbooks also have the potential to enhance students' higher-order thinking skills through activities such as legal text analysis, meaning interpretation, and legal argument construction.

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method through library research. Data were obtained from ESP textbooks, scholarly journals, and academic documents discussing the integration of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in English language learning for law students. Data analysis was conducted by examining the content, learning objectives, and teaching strategies used in ESP textbooks to evaluate their contribution to the development of HOTS (Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S.:2014). The analysis was carried out in three stages: *First*, Identification of key concepts – reviewing the theories of ESP and HOTS from existing literature. *Second*, Content analysis of ESP textbooks – examining the structure, objectives, and learning activities that support the development of HOTS. *Third*, Synthesis of findings – connecting the results with the pedagogical implications for law students.

Findings and Discussion

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method through library research. Law students are exposed to various types of reading texts such as *case law*, *contracts*, *legal opinions*, and *international treaties*. Understanding these texts requires advanced analytical and interpretative thinking skills. ESP textbooks provide authentic materials that connect language learning with legal contexts, enabling students to become familiar with analyzing the structure of legal texts and international legal terminology in depth. This includes aspects of analysis, evaluation, creation, as well as reflection and discussion in the application of HOTS to Legal English textbooks. The study examines the integration of ESP and HOTS within English textbooks designed for law students. The findings indicate that ESP-based textbooks play a significant role in enhancing students' analytical, evaluative, and creative skills through law-related, context-based learning (Blooms:1956). These textbooks function not only as language learning media but also as instruments for developing critical and argumentative thinking skills that are highly relevant to the legal profession in the global era.

Findings

Based on the results of the study on the role of ESP-based textbooks in the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), four aspects were identified: analysis, evaluation, creation, and reflection and discussion. The following presents the role of ESP-based Legal English textbooks in the development of HOTS (Conceptual Percentage) based on the synthesis of literature.

Table 1: The role of ESP-based Legal English textbooks in the development of HOTS (Conceptual Percentage) based on the synthesis of literature

Development Aspect	Role of ESP Textbook (%)	Description
Analysis	32%	Helps students examine the structure and legal terminology within texts.
Evaluation	28%	Trains students to assess legal arguments and the validity of information.
Creation	22%	Encourages students to produce new legal texts such as contracts or legal opinions.
Reflection & Discussion	8%	Develops reflective and collaborative skills within the legal context.

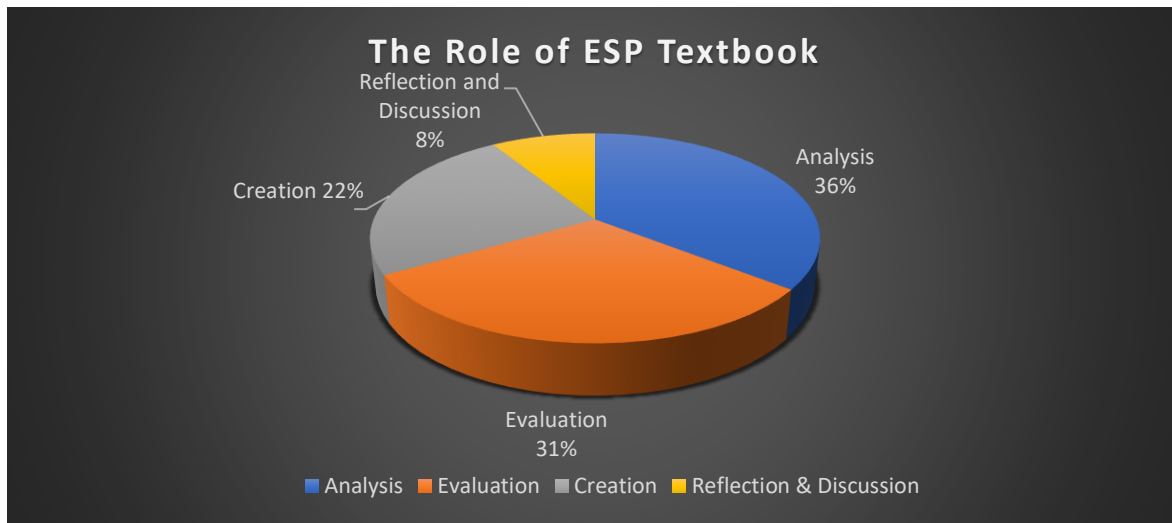


Figure 1. Diagram of the Role of ESP-Based Textbooks in the Development of HOTS (Conceptual Percentage) (based on literature synthesis, not empirical quantitative data)

Based on the diagram above, the *Analysis* aspect accounts for 32% in helping students examine the structure and legal terminology within texts. The *Evaluation* aspect represents 28% in training students to assess legal arguments and the validity of information. The *Creation* aspect constitutes 22% in encouraging students to produce new legal texts, such as contracts or legal opinions. Finally, the *Reflection and Discussion* aspect accounts for 8% in developing reflective and collaborative skills within the legal context.

a. The Need for English in the Legal Context

Law students need to understand various types of legal texts, such as *case law*, *contracts*, and *legal opinions*. Mastery of these texts requires advanced analytical and interpretative skills. ESP textbooks provide authentic and relevant materials, enabling students to engage with complex texts and think critically in articulating meaning.

b. Integration of HOTS in ESP Textbooks

ESP textbooks designed with a HOTS approach feature activities such as analyzing legal cases in English, evaluating legal arguments in texts, and creating simple legal documents, such as lawsuits or legal memoranda. These activities stimulate students to apply higher-order thinking skills in real-world contexts.

c. The Role of Lecturers as HOTS Facilitators

Lecturers play a vital role in guiding students toward reflective thinking. Through open-ended questions and case-based discussions, lecturers can lead students not only to understand language but also to evaluate the meaning and legal implications contained in texts.

d. Impact of ESP Textbooks on Students' Thinking Skills

The implementation of ESP textbooks has been proven to enhance students' abilities to critically understand English legal texts and to construct logical and well-structured legal arguments. It also helps connect linguistic concepts with global legal practice.

The findings indicate that ESP textbooks have a strategic function in developing law students' HOTS. Materials presented in authentic legal contexts allow students to practice critical thinking regarding international legal issues, evaluate arguments, and formulate opinions based on legal texts. This approach aligns with the constructivist learning perspective, where students actively build knowledge through real-world experiences and contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Thus, ESP textbooks serve not only as linguistic resources but also as tools for developing reflective and analytical thinking skills. Moreover, the integration of ESP and HOTS has the potential to enhance law students' legal literacy, i.e., the ability to understand and use legal language in professional communication across countries. This is increasingly important as the global legal system demands professionals capable of communicating in English with precision and strong argumentation.

Conclusion and Suggestion

ESP-based English textbooks play a strategic role in training higher-order thinking skills among law students. By integrating legal knowledge contexts with a HOTS-based learning approach, students not only acquire functional English proficiency but also develop the ability to analyze, evaluate, and create legal solutions in an international context.

Therefore, the development of ESP textbooks should continue, taking into account the specific needs of the legal field and 21st-century learning principles. Based on the findings and discussion above, the researchers suggest that future module development research should proceed to the effectiveness stage

across two universities. This will ensure the textbook's practical benefits are more tangible in improving students' learning outcomes. Additionally, subsequent researchers are encouraged to make Legal English textbooks more engaging and accessible so they can be widely accepted and utilized by the general audience.

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