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Outcome-Based English Learning for Islamic Economics Students in Indonesian Universities

Muthia Rahman[1], Widya Syafitri[2], Yulia Laila[1], Reni Febrina[3], Rika Widianita[4]

[1] Perbankan Syariah Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi Syariah Manna Wa Salwa Tanah Datar, Indonesia
[2]Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia
[3]Ekonomi Syariah Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi Syariah Manna Wa Salwa Tanah Datar, Indonesia
[4]Ekonomi Islam UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia
muthiarahman@mannawasalwa.ac.id*

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Abstract

This study addresses the need for Islamic Economics graduates to acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also practical English communication skills, in order to meet the challenges of global economic integration and the Islamic finance industry. The research aims to redesign English for Economics courses by applying principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE). Using a qualitative descriptive design, this study analyzes curriculum documents, previous research, and case examples from Islamic universities to examine the integration of communicative competence, critical thinking, and contextual understanding into course design. The findings indicate that OBE-based instruction enhances students' linguistic proficiency, professional readiness, and international engagement by aligning learning outcomes with industry requirements. The study contributes to curriculum development by offering a framework for implementing OBE in English for Islamic Economics. Its novelty lies in positioning OBE as a strategic approach to bridge the gap between traditional reading-focused instruction and the real-world communicative demands of Islamic economics education.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of global communication, particularly in economics and business, has reshaped the role of English in higher education. Today, English functions as a lingua franca in academia, trade, finance, and policy-making. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) prioritizes mutual intelligibility over native-speaker norms, reflecting the pragmatic use of English among non-native speakers in international contexts (Jenkins, 2014). For economics graduates, this shift requires not only the ability to comprehend academic texts but also the capacity to participate actively in negotiations, presentations, and collaborative research.

Despite this reality, English for Economics instruction in Indonesia remains traditional, mainly focusing on vocabulary memorization, translation, and reading comprehension. While these practices offer passive knowledge, they seldom equip students with communicative competence for professional settings. English for Specific Purposes (ESP), however, is most effective when grounded in learners' needs and authentic contexts, integrating speaking, writing, and problem-solving skills.(Robinett et al., 1988). Without such reform, graduates risk being underprepared for the increasingly globalized workplaces of the future.

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) provides a framework for addressing these challenges by emphasizing measurable outcomes that align with professional and industry requirements. OBE is an approach that organizes education around what students must be able to achieve upon completing their learning experiences(Spady, 1994). Applied to English courses, OBE calls for a shift from theoretical exercises toward performance-based outcomes, such as report writing, public speaking, and international debate. However, research in Indonesia shows persistent challenges: while OBE clarifies learning objectives, lecturers often struggle to design authentic communicative assessments. (Katawazai, 2021).

The urgency of this reform is particularly pronounced in Islamic Economics programs. The global expansion of Islamic finance—spanning Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North America—requires graduates to master both technical concepts (e.g., riba, sukuk, zakat) and the ability to present these ideas persuasively to international stakeholders. (Fadilah, 2020). Effective English communication is therefore not just a linguistic skill but a strategic competency that underpins professional credibility, market integration, and sustainable development outcomes. (Abasimel, 2023).

While prior studies have examined ESP and OBE in general education, little research has addressed their integration within Islamic Economics programs. Existing literature has not sufficiently explored how OBE principles can be adapted to meet the communicative demands of Islamic finance and economics. This study advances the field by explicitly linking OBE-based English instruction with the global requirements of Islamic economics, offering a framework that bridges traditional ESP practices with professional, outcome-oriented competencies. Its novelty lies in positioning OBE as a strategic response to the unique linguistic and professional challenges of Islamic Economics education—a perspective largely absent in the literature. Accordingly, this study seeks to: Analyze the current limitations of English for Economics instruction in Indonesian Islamic universities, Explore how OBE principles can inform the design of communicative and outcome-oriented English courses for Islamic Economics students, Propose a framework that aligns English learning outcomes with the professional and international demands of the Islamic finance industry. By achieving these objectives, the study contributes to theoretical debates on ESP and OBE while offering practical reforms to enhance curriculum design in Islamic Economics programs.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, focusing on conceptual analysis and curriculum-oriented reflection.(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012). It is situated within the framework of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), emphasizing how English for Economics can be integrated into Islamic Economics programs. Unlike experimental studies, this research is grounded in the examination of curriculum documents, published literature, and practical case examples from Islamic universities.

The data consist of (1) curriculum documents from five Islamic universities in Indonesia that offer Islamic Economics programs, (2) peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2015 and 2024 on OBE and ESP in higher education, and (3) case studies and reports from international institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank and Islamic finance associations. These sources were selected purposively, based on their relevance to OBE implementation, English for Economics pedagogy, and the professional requirements of the Islamic finance industry.

The study employed thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns, strategies, and gaps in the integration of OBE into ESP. The analysis proceeded in three stages:

1. Initial coding of documents to extract key themes related to learning outcomes, instructional practices, and assessment models.
2. Categorization of codes into broader thematic clusters, such as “outcome formulation,” “authentic materials,” “task-based learning,” and “assessment alignment.”
3. Interpretation, linking these themes with the communicative and professional needs of Islamic Economics graduates.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, multiple strategies were applied. Triangulation was achieved by comparing insights across curriculum documents, academic literature, and industry case studies.(Bhandari, 2023). Additionally, coding procedures underwent peer debriefing with two colleagues specializing in ESP and curriculum design to minimize researcher bias. Reliability was enhanced through iterative re-coding and cross-checking of emerging themes until consensus was reached.

Based on this approach, four methodological strategies were identified for reforming English instruction in Islamic Economics: (1) redefining learning outcomes to reflect measurable communicative competencies, (2) using authentic materials such as case studies and reports from Islamic finance institutions, (3) applying task-based learning (TBL) to simulate real-world professional practices, and (4) aligning assessment with performance-based outcomes. These strategies represent an integrated model of OBE and ESP that prepares students for professional, academic, and international engagement.

Overall, this methodology combines systematic document and literature analysis with curriculum reflection to propose a framework for OBE-based English teaching in Islamic Economics. By explicitly linking instructional strategies to both theoretical principles and industry needs, the study ensures that its findings are academically rigorous and practically relevant.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Core Strategies Identified

This study analyzed curriculum documents from five Islamic universities, 45 peer-reviewed articles (2015–2024), and case studies from international institutions (e.g., IsDB, AAOIFI, BSI). Thematic content analysis revealed four core strategies for integrating OBE into ESP in Islamic Economics programs:

Redefining Learning Outcomes

A central finding of this study concerns the urgent need to redefine learning outcomes in English for Islamic Economics courses. Existing curricula in many Islamic universities remain heavily oriented toward grammar instruction and general vocabulary building, which, while helpful, do not adequately prepare students for the communicative and professional demands of the Islamic finance industry.y (Hanafi, 2020) . In line with Outcome-Based Education (OBE), learning outcomes must be reformulated to reflect measurable, authentic, and industry-relevant competencies rather than abstract knowledge acquisition.

Redefinition begins with the articulation of graduate learning outcomes (GLOs) that explicitly connect language ability to professional performance. For example, instead of stating that graduates "understand Islamic finance terminology," a redefined outcome would specify that graduates "can draft an executive summary of a sukuk prospectus in English with 85% terminological accuracy." Similarly, rather than aiming for "presentation skills in English," the outcome should indicate that students "can deliver an eight-minute investor pitch on an Islamic microfinance product in English, achieving a minimum score of three out of four on an analytic rubric assessing clarity, persuasiveness, and accuracy." These formulations not only describe what learners should know, but also what they should be able to do, thereby enabling assessment that is transparent, performance-based, and directly aligned with workplace realities.

The redefinition of outcomes also requires vertical and horizontal alignment.(Mujianti et al., 2021). Graduate outcomes (GLOs) must be systematically mapped onto course-level learning outcomes (CLOs) and further broken down into instructional-level outcomes (ILOs). This constructive alignment ensures consistency across the curriculum. For instance, a GLO requiring graduates to "participate effectively in international forums" can be operationalized into course outcomes, such as writing policy briefs on Islamic fintech, and unit-level tasks, such as debating ethical financial issues in class. Through this cascading structure, every unit makes a tangible contribution to the broader graduate profile.

Equally important, the outcomes must be benchmarked against international standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)(Le, 2018). Given that professional communication in Islamic finance often takes place at regional or global levels, a minimum of CEFR B2 proficiency is recommended for graduates who intend to enter cross-border markets. Embedding these benchmarks into learning outcomes provides clarity for both instructors and students regarding the expected levels of proficiency and performance.

Redefining learning outcomes also reshapes assessment practices. Instead of relying predominantly on written exams, assessments must involve authentic performance tasks, such as drafting compliance reports, role-playing Shariah-compliant contract negotiations, or presenting sustainability reports for Islamic banks. Analytic rubrics are central to this process, as they provide objective criteria for evaluating complex performances across dimensions such as content accuracy, language use, and delivery. This approach not only enhances the validity of the assessment but also increases transparency, allowing students to understand precisely how their competencies will be measured.

Finally, the redefinition of outcomes carries significant implications for both theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by embedding outcome-driven, professional competencies into curriculum design. Practically, it equips graduates with demonstrable skills that align with employer expectations in the Islamic finance sector, thus narrowing the gap between academic preparation and industry readiness. By shifting from abstract knowledge goals to concrete, measurable, and authentic learning outcomes, English instruction in Islamic Economics can transform from a supplementary skill-building exercise into a strategic driver of employability and global engagement.

Use of Authentic Materials

The second strategy emphasizes the use of authentic materials, which are indispensable for bridging the persistent gap between classroom practices and professional communication in Islamic Economics. Authenticity in ESP contexts is defined as the use of real-life texts and artefacts that are initially produced for professional purposes, rather than those simplified or adapted for pedagogical use.(Luo, 2019). This approach responds to one of the core critiques of traditional English instruction in Islamic universities—that students may be able to define terms or translate passages. However, they struggle when confronted with real industry documents such as sukuk reports, regulatory guidelines, or investor presentations.

The data analysis revealed that, across the five Islamic universities studied, over 70% of English course syllabi rely heavily on textbooks and teacher-prepared notes, with only limited incorporation of industry documents or case studies. (Haryanto et al., 2021). By contrast, international best practices in ESP emphasize that exposure to authentic genres accelerates students' professional readiness by familiarizing them with the conventions, rhetorical patterns, and specialized terminology used in their target fields (Tsou & Chen, 2014; Saher et al., 2022). This finding suggests that a more systematic adoption of authentic materials could significantly strengthen the alignment between university training and workplace expectations.

Several genres of authentic materials are particularly relevant for Islamic finance students:

a. Sukuk prospectuses and offering memoranda provide training in financial and legal precision. They expose learners to technical vocabulary (e.g., maturity period, risk disclosure, Shariah compliance clauses) and help them practice summarizing complex documents for investor audiences. A case study from BSI (2023) revealed that employees entering the sukuk division often require six months of intensive on-the-job English training precisely because such exposure is absent during their studies(Pratiwi et al., 2023).
b. Investor presentations or pitch decks model persuasive communication and the strategic use of visual data(Jalalabadi et al., 2018). They teach students how to condense complex financial information into digestible, visually supported narratives. Such materials are particularly valuable in preparing learners for professional tasks, such as international roadshows, where Islamic financial products are promoted to global investors.

c. Shariah advisory opinions (fatwas) and compliance reports serve a dual purpose: they strengthen technical terminology while also embedding ethical reasoning within financial discourse(Compliance, 1997). For example, the Shariah Advisory Council of Malaysia regularly issues bilingual reports that demonstrate how Islamic legal reasoning is articulated in both English and Malay. Analyzing these texts helps students develop critical reading skills and the ability to communicate Islamic principles persuasively in global forums.
d. Policy briefs and regulatory guidelines (e.g., from the Islamic Financial Services Board or national central banks) exemplify concise, policy-oriented communication(Uddin & Halim, 2015). They train students to adapt their language to policy audiences, emphasizing clarity, brevity, and authority. In fact, a review of Islamic Development Bank policy briefs reveals that the average length of such documents is 3–5 pages, requiring students to practice distilling technical content into concise and focused arguments.

Beyond providing professional exposure, authentic materials also play a crucial role in shaping professional identity. By working with genres central to the Islamic finance industry, students begin to envision themselves not just as learners of English but as emerging professionals in the global Islamic economics discourse. This supports what Wenger describes as the process of becoming part of a "community of practice."(Hunter et al., 2007)

Nevertheless, integrating authentic materials presents its own challenges. The complexity of texts such as sukuk prospectuses can overwhelm students, particularly those at lower proficiency levels (CEFR A2–B1). Without careful scaffolding, students may become disengaged or overly dependent on translation. To address this, the study recommends a staged approach:

a. Pre-reading support, such as glossaries of key terms and collocations (e.g., "profit-sharing ratio," "Shariah-compliant asset").
b. Annotated exemplars, where instructors highlight structural features like executive summaries, risk disclosures, or persuasive appeals.
c. Staged release of texts, beginning with simplified excerpts or short policy statements before progressing to full-length reports.
d. Collaborative analysis, encouraging group work where students divide sections of complex documents, then share insights with peers.

Students exposed to authentic materials with scaffolding demonstrated a 25–30% improvement in their ability to perform domain-specific writing tasks compared to those who studied with traditional, adapted texts. (Musa et al., 2021). This underscores the dual importance of both authenticity and careful pedagogical mediation.

In short, authentic materials serve as the linguistic and cultural bridge that connects classroom instruction to industry realities. They expose learners to the genres, terminology, and rhetorical conventions they will encounter in professional life, while also cultivating a sense of belonging in the global Islamic finance community. With appropriate scaffolding strategies, their integration into OBE-based ESP courses can transform English learning from abstract language practice into a direct rehearsal for real-world communicative performance.

Applying task-based learning (TBL)

The third strategy identified in this study is the adoption of Task-Based Learning (TBL), which plays a crucial role in transforming English instruction for Islamic Economics from theory-driven coursework into practice-oriented, performance-based learning. (Sholeh, 2023). Unlike traditional approaches that focus on memorization and decontextualized grammar drills, TBL emphasizes the use of language as a tool for achieving real-world communicative goals. Simulating professional practices ensures that students rehearse the very types of interactions they will encounter in the Islamic finance industry.

In practice, TBL activities mirror workplace communication scenarios and create authentic conditions for language use. For example, students may be tasked with role-playing a Shariah board meeting, where they must defend the compliance of an Islamic fintech product, thereby practicing both technical terminology and persuasive reasoning. Another common task is drafting a sustainability report for a hypothetical Islamic bank, which requires integrating quantitative data, financial vocabulary, and ethical framing aligned with Shariah principles. Additional examples include negotiating the terms of a sukuk issuance with potential investors, writing a policy brief on Islamic microfinance for regulators, or preparing an investor pitch deck for an international roadshow. Each of these activities situates English learning within meaningful professional contexts, thereby enhancing students' confidence and communicative competence.

The analysis of curriculum documents revealed that while 80% of syllabi surveyed include oral presentations or group projects, fewer than 30% explicitly design these activities around authentic professional tasks. This discrepancy underscores the need for a systematic adoption of TBL, where tasks are not generic (e.g., "give a presentation") but directly aligned with industry practices (e.g., "deliver an investor presentation on a sukuk-backed project"). By shifting the focus from artificial academic exercises to authentic tasks, TBL ensures that communicative competence is both observable and measurable, in line with OBE principles.

Research evidence strongly supports the effectiveness of the TBL approach. Students in an ESP program who engaged in task-based simulations demonstrated a 20–25% improvement in oral fluency and accuracy compared to peers in lecture-based courses.(Tsou & Chen, 2014). Similarly, Indonesian pre-service teachers exposed to task-based English training displayed significantly higher levels of motivation and classroom engagement.(Lie et al., 2022). These findings suggest that incorporating TBL into Islamic Economics English courses could yield measurable gains in both linguistic proficiency and professional preparedness.

Effective implementation of TBL also requires scaffolding, which provides structured support before, during, and after tasks. Instructors can use pre-task scaffolding (e.g., vocabulary glossaries, model investor pitches, or annotated samples of compliance reports) to prepare students for performance. During tasks, teachers can facilitate group collaboration, encourage role distribution, and provide real-time feedback to support effective learning and learning outcomes. Post-task reflection then allows learners to evaluate their performance critically, compare it against the rubric, and identify areas for improvement. This cycle enhances not only fluency and accuracy but also metacognitive awareness, empowering students to self-regulate their learning.

Furthermore, TBL fosters 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving, which are increasingly valued by employers in Islamic finance. For instance, in a TBL simulation of a cross-border sukuk negotiation, students must integrate knowledge of financial instruments, legal compliance, and persuasive language, thereby demonstrating interdisciplinary competence. Such tasks align with the ASEAN Economic

Community (AEC) vision of workforce mobility, where graduates are expected to compete not just locally but regionally and globally.

In summary, Task-Based Learning provides a dynamic pedagogical bridge between academic study and professional practice. By embedding real-world communicative tasks into the curriculum, TBL equips Islamic Economics students with the linguistic, cognitive, and professional skills necessary to thrive in international finance environments. When coupled with authentic materials and outcome-based assessments, TBL ensures that English instruction is not an abstract academic exercise but a direct preparation for global professional engagement.

Aligning assessment with performance-based outcomes

A critical step to ensure that the evaluation reflects not only theoretical knowledge but also the ability to communicate effectively in professional contexts. Current assessment practices in many Islamic universities remain dominated by traditional written exams, which often test vocabulary recall, translation accuracy, or short-answer comprehension(Rasyid, 2022). While these methods may capture some aspects of language proficiency, they are insufficient for measuring higher-order skills such as negotiation, investor pitching, report drafting, or policy communication—competencies that are indispensable in the global Islamic finance industry.

The analysis of syllabi and assessment documents revealed that over 65% of English for Economics courses in the surveyed universities still rely on mid-term and final written exams as the primary evaluation method, with only 15–20% incorporating oral or project-based assessments. This finding highlights a significant gap between what is taught and what is assessed, as professional communicative competence—arguably the most crucial outcome—remains unmeasured mainly.

To address this, the study advocates for the systematic use of authentic, performance-based assessments that replicate real-world communicative tasks. Examples include:

a. Oral investor pitches simulating international roadshows, where students present Islamic financial products to a global audience.
b. Executive summaries of sukuk prospectuses, testing students' ability to distill technical and legal information into concise, accurate, and accessible English.
c. Policy brief writing, where learners synthesize regulatory guidance or Shariah board rulings for policymakers.
d. Simulated compliance negotiations, requiring students to argue and justify financial structures in line with Islamic principles.
e. Annual and sustainability report presentations, where students interpret financial and non-financial disclosures and present them to stakeholders.

These assessments not only measure language proficiency but also demonstrate the integration of professional knowledge and communication skills, providing a more accurate reflection of workplace readiness.

A key feature of performance-based assessment is the use of analytic rubrics. Unlike holistic grading, analytic rubrics break down performance into specific dimensions such as:

a. Content Accuracy – correctness of financial concepts, Shariah compliance terms, and data interpretation.
b. Language Clarity – grammar, vocabulary range, cohesion, and register appropriateness.

c. Persuasiveness – ability to structure arguments, support claims with evidence, and adapt to audience needs.
d. Professionalism – delivery style, use of visuals, time management, and adherence to professional conventions.

Rubric-based assessments increase grading consistency by over 30% compared to subjective instructor judgment, while also improving student understanding of evaluation criteria.(Saher et al., 2022). Moreover, the use of rubrics encourages formative feedback, allowing students to track their progress against specific performance indicators rather than receiving only a numerical grade.

Evidence from other ESP contexts supports this shift.(Dashtestani & Stojković, 2015). For instance, in a CEFR-informed curriculum at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, the integration of authentic tasks and rubric-based assessments resulted in a significant increase in students achieving B2 proficiency levels within two semesters. (Musa et al., 2021). Similarly, a study in Afghanistan (Katawazai, 2021) found that while OBE clarified learning objectives, authentic assessments were the missing link in achieving actual communicative competence. These findings suggest that the adoption of performance-based evaluation methods is not only theoretically sound but also empirically validated.

Beyond improving accuracy and fairness, performance-based assessment also reframes students' perception of evaluation. Rather than viewing exams as abstract academic hurdles, students see tasks like pitches, reports, and negotiations as direct rehearsals for professional responsibilities. This enhances motivation, reduces assessment anxiety, and strengthens the link between classroom performance and career readiness. In the long term, such assessments contribute to producing graduates who are immediately deployable in professional roles, reducing the need for costly post-hire training by employers in the Islamic finance sector.

In sum, aligning assessment with performance-based outcomes transforms evaluation from a backward-looking measure of memorization into a forward-looking preparation for global employability. By embedding authentic, rubric-based tasks into English for Islamic Economics programs, universities ensure that graduates not only possess knowledge of terms and concepts but also develop demonstrable skills to communicate, persuade, and perform effectively in international financial arenas.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study both confirm and extend prior research in the fields of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE). While existing studies provide important insights into learner-centered instruction, authentic assessment, and curriculum alignment, few have directly examined their integration within the unique disciplinary demands of Islamic Economics. This study addresses that gap by applying and refining established principles in a new and highly specialized context.

The results confirm that ESP instruction is most effective when it is grounded in authentic, contextualized tasks.(Robinett et al., 1988) (Tsou & Chen, 2014). Previous research has emphasized the importance of situating language learning within the communicative practices of professional communities, such as those in engineering, medicine, or business. This study advances that discussion by demonstrating how the same principle applies to the domain of Islamic finance, a context that remains underrepresented in ESP scholarship. For example, while Tsou and Chen (2014) highlight how Taiwanese ESP students benefited from task-based projects linked to local industries, the present study shows that Islamic Economics students require exposure to particular genres such as sukuk prospectuses, Shariah advisory opinions, and regulatory policy briefs. This adaptation expands ESP research into an emerging global sector, demonstrating its flexibility in accommodating specialized disciplinary needs.

The findings also resonate with the work of Damayanti et al. (2021) and Musa et al. (2021), who argue that OBE provides clarity in articulating learning objectives but is often undermined by implementation difficulties at the classroom level. These studies caution that while OBE has been widely adopted in policy discourse, it frequently remains a rhetorical commitment rather than a transformative pedagogical practice. The current research contributes by moving beyond diagnosis to offer concrete strategies for operationalization, such as benchmarking student proficiency against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), embedding scaffolding strategies for lower-proficiency learners, and adopting rubric-based assessments to evaluate complex communicative tasks. By doing so, it not only reaffirms earlier concerns but also provides actionable pathways for addressing them.

At the same time, this study directly addresses the challenges noted by Katawazai (2021), who documented the difficulties lecturers face in designing and administering authentic assessments within OBE frameworks. Such challenges often stem from limited training, lack of access to authentic teaching resources, and institutional constraints.(Katawazai, 2021). The present study proposes analytic rubrics and cross-departmental collaboration—particularly between English instructors and Islamic finance lecturers—as practical solutions to overcome these barriers. Analytic rubrics enhance transparency and objectivity, while interdisciplinary collaboration ensures that assessment tasks remain both linguistically appropriate and professionally relevant. This approach enriches the OBE–ESP literature by offering context-sensitive and implementable strategies within Islamic universities.

Furthermore, the study engages with findings by Suwandi (2023), who identified a persistent gap between the expectations of English proficiency among Islamic Economics students and their actual communicative abilities.(Suwandi, 2023). According to Suwandi, many graduates exit university with only passive knowledge of finance-related vocabulary, leaving them underprepared for professional communication in global contexts. The current research addresses this gap by recommending a system of progressive outcome benchmarks, where students advance from CEFR B1 toward B2 proficiency through structured scaffolding and staged exposure to authentic tasks. This progression model ensures that learning outcomes are both realistic and incremental, thereby narrowing the expectation–reality gap highlighted in prior studies.

Taken together, these comparisons demonstrate that the present study not only replicates earlier research but also extends the theoretical and practical discourse into a new disciplinary context. By integrating ESP and OBE principles within the field of Islamic Economics, the study offers a structured model for implementation that is sensitive to both linguistic demands and industry expectations. In doing so, it contributes to broader discussions on how higher education can better prepare graduates for participation in globalized professional communities, while also strengthening the relevance of Islamic universities in shaping internationally competitive and ethically grounded professionals.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study build on, confirm, and extend earlier research in the fields of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE). While much of the existing literature provides strong theoretical foundations, its application to the specific context of Islamic Economics remains underexplored. By situating ESP and OBE within this domain, the present research not only validates prior insights but also introduces new perspectives that enrich both theory and practice.

First, in line with Robinett et al. (1988) and Tsou & Chen (2014), this study reaffirms that ESP achieves its most significant impact when embedded in authentic, contextualized tasks. Robinett and colleagues emphasized the need for learning-centered approaches that respond directly to the communicative needs of learners. At the same time, Tsou and Chen demonstrated the value of authentic program evaluation frameworks in enhancing ESP effectiveness. The present study advances this discussion by applying these principles to Islamic finance, a sector that has received limited attention in ESP research despite its significant global economic impact. For instance, whereas Tsou and Chen examined how authentic tasks supported Taiwanese university students in fields such as engineering and science, this study illustrates how Islamic Economics students can engage with specialized genres, including sukuk prospectuses, Shariah advisory reports, and policy briefs. By doing so, it extends the ESP literature into a highly specialized and ethically grounded professional field, showing that authentic-task-based ESP is transferable and adaptable across domains.

Second, echoing the observations of Damayanti et al. (2021) and Musa et al. (2021), the results confirm that OBE offers clarity in setting learning objectives but faces persistent challenges in practical implementation. Damayanti et al. noted that many Indonesian universities formally adopt OBE principles without fully embedding them in classroom practice. At the same time, Musa et al. highlighted the importance of aligning OBE with CEFR-informed curricula in Malaysia. This study contributes to the debate by proposing concrete strategies for bridging the policy–practice gap. These include benchmarking students' progress against CEFR proficiency levels, embedding scaffolding for learners with weaker English skills, and using rubric-based performance assessments to evaluate authentic tasks. Such measures not only reaffirm the value of OBE as a guiding framework but also demonstrate how it can be operationalized effectively in Islamic Economics programs.

Third, the study engages with the concerns raised by Katawazai (2021), who found that lecturers often struggle with designing and administering authentic assessments under OBE frameworks due to limited training and institutional constraints. The current findings address this issue by recommending the use of analytic rubrics that break down communicative competence into measurable components such as content accuracy, clarity, persuasiveness, and professionalism. Additionally, the study recommends cross-departmental collaboration between English instructors and Islamic finance lecturers to ensure that tasks and assessments remain both linguistically valid and professionally relevant. This recommendation advances the discourse by offering not just critique but also practical solutions to a recurring challenge in OBE implementation.

Finally, the study responds to the findings of Suwandi (2023), who identified a persistent gap between expectations and reality in the English proficiency of Islamic Economics students. According to Suwandi, many graduates possess passive vocabulary knowledge but cannot use English effectively in professional communication. The present study proposes a solution through progressive outcome benchmarks, enabling students to move from CEFR B1 toward B2 proficiency by engaging in staged, scaffolded learning experiences. This incremental model ensures that learners build competence step by step, making the goals of professional communication both realistic and attainable.

Taken together, these comparisons demonstrate that the present research not only validates earlier findings but also extends the discussion into a new disciplinary context. By integrating ESP and OBE principles within Islamic Economics, the study offers a structured, practical, and context-sensitive model that addresses long-standing challenges in both fields. It shows that outcome-based, authentic, and task-driven approaches can be successfully applied to specialized domains, thereby enhancing graduates' communicative competence, professional readiness, and international competitiveness.

Theoretical Contributions

This study makes significant contributions to theory by extending the conversations in both English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE) into the specialized field of Islamic Economics. While ESP and OBE have been extensively discussed in broader educational contexts, their integration within faith-based economic disciplines has been largely overlooked. By positioning English instruction not only as a linguistic exercise but also as a strategic tool for professional readiness, this research offers new theoretical insights that enrich both fields.

First, the study contributes to ESP theory by refining the scope of genre-based pedagogy. Traditionally, ESP has been conceptualized as an approach that equips learners with the specialized vocabulary and discourse practices required in professional settings. Earlier models, such as those proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and later refined by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), emphasized needs analysis, genre familiarity, and functional language use. While these foundations remain crucial, the findings of this study suggest that ESP must go further by embedding outcome-based frameworks that explicitly connect linguistic competence with measurable professional performance(Robinett et al., 1988) (Hyland, 2000). For example, tasks such as drafting an executive summary of a sukuk prospectus or delivering an investor pitch are not only linguistic exercises but also markers of professional identity formation, as students begin to see themselves as participants in the global Islamic finance discourse. This integration broadens ESP theory by demonstrating that it is not merely about acquiring specialized vocabulary or mastering professional genres, but about cultivating global communicative competence and professional self-positioning.

Second, the study contributes to OBE theory by demonstrating how outcome-based education can move beyond generic skill orientation toward domain-specific competencies tailored to industry needs. Much of the OBE literature (e.g., Spady, 1994) focuses on clarifying learning outcomes and aligning instruction with measurable performance indicators. However, it often remains general, addressing skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, or communication in abstract terms. This research advances OBE theory by showing how outcomes can be contextualized within a specialized discipline. For instance, rather than aiming for broad objectives such as "effective communication," outcomes in this framework specify that graduates should be able to "deliver an eight-minute investor pitch on an Islamic microfinance product in English" or "draft a Shariah compliant compliance report with 85% terminological accuracy." These outcomes are both industry-relevant and performance-driven, illustrating how OBE can be adapted to serve highly contextualized domains. In doing so, the study offers a template for contextualizing OBE that other specialized disciplines such as medicine, engineering, or environmental science could adopt to align language education with industry specific demands.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the theoretical integration of ESP and OBE, fields that have often been discussed in parallel but rarely in direct conjunction with each other. By demonstrating how genre-based ESP pedagogy can be operationalized through OBE's emphasis on measurable outcomes, the research provides a conceptual bridge between the two traditions. This integration opens up new theoretical possibilities: ESP can benefit from OBE's systematic outcome-driven orientation, while OBE gains practical depth from ESP's attention to disciplinary specificity and authentic communication needs.

In summary, the theoretical contributions of this study lie in redefining ESP as a pathway for professional identity and global communicative competence, and in repositioning OBE as a framework for domain-specific, industry-aligned competencies. By connecting these two approaches in the context of Islamic Economics, the study advances both theories. It lays the groundwork for future research that seeks to embed language learning within specialized professional and ethical domains.

Practical Implications

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this study carries several practical implications for key stakeholders in Islamic Economics education. The proposed four-strategy model—redefining learning outcomes, integrating authentic materials, applying task-based learning, and aligning assessment with performance-based outcomes—serves as a comprehensive framework that can be adapted to strengthen English instruction in Islamic universities.

For curriculum designers,

The framework provides a blueprint for integrating OBE principles into ESP syllabi. By mapping graduate learning outcomes (GLOs) to course-level (CLOs) and instructional-level outcomes (ILOs), curriculum developers can ensure constructive alignment between what students are expected to learn and how they are taught and assessed. This alignment is crucial in the context of Islamic Economics, where professional communication is not merely an ancillary skill but a strategic competency essential for participation in the global Islamic finance sector. For example, rather than structuring syllabi around generic units such as "financial vocabulary" or "business correspondence," curriculum designers can create modules centered on industry-specific genres, including sukuk prospectuses, Shariah advisory reports, or investor presentations, with corresponding learning outcomes and assessments.

For Lecturers

The study highlights pedagogical tools that make OBE feasible in classrooms with varied proficiency levels. Many instructors report challenges in implementing OBE due to the heterogeneity in students' English abilities and the lack of authentic teaching resources. This research offers concrete strategies, including task-based learning (TBL) activities, scaffolded exposure to authentic materials, and rubric-based assessments. For instance, a lecturer might begin by introducing students to simplified excerpts from a policy brief (scaffolding), then assign a group task where students draft their own brief on Islamic fintech (TBL), and finally evaluate their work using a rubric that measures accuracy, conciseness, and clarity. Such tools provide lecturers with a structured yet flexible pedagogy that accommodates diverse learner needs while staying aligned with professional realities.

For Students

The framework creates structured pathways toward achieving internationally recognized proficiency benchmarks such as CEFR B2. Currently, many Islamic Economics graduates demonstrate only passive vocabulary knowledge, leaving them underprepared for real-world communication. By progressively embedding authentic tasks and performance-based assessments, students can develop not only linguistic competence but also the professional confidence needed to participate in global forums. For example, students who practice investor pitches and compliance negotiations during their studies will be better equipped to engage in professional interactions immediately upon graduation. Achieving CEFR B2 proficiency is particularly critical, as this level is often cited as the minimum threshold for effective international workplace communication. Thus, the model enhances both academic outcomes and employability.

For the Islamic finance industry,

The practical impact is the preparation of graduates who are ready for professional communication in high-stakes contexts such as investor relations, Shariah compliance discussions, and international collaboration. Industry reports indicate that one of the significant barriers to the expansion of Islamic finance is the shortage of professionals who can effectively communicate Shariah-compliant financial concepts in English to global stakeholders. By producing graduates who are proficient in these areas, Islamic universities make a direct contribution to industry competitiveness and sustainability. Employers benefit from reduced training costs, while graduates gain quicker entry into professional roles. This synergy strengthens the bridge between academia and industry, ensuring that Islamic universities are not only centers of knowledge but also engines of workforce development.

In short, the practical implications of this study are wide-ranging. For curriculum designers, it provides a clear framework; for lecturers, it offers feasible teaching tools; for students, it ensures pathways to international proficiency; and for industry, it promises graduates who are linguistically equipped and professionally competent. Together, these contributions reinforce the central claim of the study: that English instruction in Islamic Economics, when aligned with OBE principles, can transform from a supplementary subject into a strategic enabler of employability and global engagement.

Conceptual Model

To synthesize the findings, this study proposes an OBE–ESP Integration Model that illustrates how the four strategies interact as a coherent framework for reforming English instruction in Islamic Economics. The model is cyclical, showing how inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes align to support professional readiness and global engagement.

Inputs consist of authentic professional materials, including sukuk prospectuses, Shariah advisory opinions, policy briefs, investor presentations, and case studies from institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI). These materials serve as the foundation for instruction, ensuring that students are exposed to the same genres and discourses they will encounter in their professional careers. Unlike adapted textbook content, authentic materials embed students within the communicative realities of Islamic finance, preparing them for both technical accuracy and ethical reasoning.

Processes are operationalized through task-based learning (TBL) supported by scaffolding and interdisciplinary collaboration. Students engage in professional simulations—such as pitching Islamic microfinance products, negotiating Shariah compliance in board meetings, or drafting sustainability reports—while receiving structured support in the form of glossaries, annotated exemplars, and feedback cycles. Collaboration between English lecturers and Islamic finance faculty ensures that tasks remain both linguistically appropriate and professionally valid. This process not only develops fluency and accuracy but also fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and identity formation as emerging professionals.

Outputs take the form of performance-based assessments that are aligned with redefined learning outcomes. Instead of relying solely on traditional exams, students are evaluated through authentic tasks such as oral investor pitches, executive summaries, and policy brief writing. These outputs are measured using analytic rubrics that assess multiple dimensions: content accuracy, language clarity, persuasiveness, and professionalism. The assessment system thus validates learning achievements in ways that are both observable and transferable to real-world professional settings.

Outcomes represent the ultimate goals of the model: graduates who demonstrate communicative competence, professional identity, and international readiness. Competence is not limited to linguistic accuracy but extends to the ability to adapt communication for diverse audiences, negotiate persuasively, and produce professional documentation. Professional identity emerges as students learn to position themselves within the discourse community of Islamic finance. At the same time, international readiness is achieved through benchmarking against global standards such as CEFR B2, enabling graduates to participate effectively in international conferences, cross-border negotiations, and collaborative research.

This model underscores the systemic alignment of the four strategies identified in the study. Inputs provide the content, processes transform learning into practice, outputs measure performance authentically, and outcomes ensure alignment with industry and international demands. By adopting this framework, Islamic universities can transform English for Economics courses from supplementary language instruction into a strategic driver of employability, global engagement, and intellectual contribution.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that English for Economics in Islamic universities requires a significant paradigm shift from passive knowledge acquisition to a model centered on measurable, authentic, and industry-relevant communicative competencies. By integrating Outcome-Based Education (OBE) with English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the research proposes a coherent framework built on four strategies: redefining learning outcomes, using authentic professional materials, applying task-based learning (TBL), and aligning assessment with performance-based outcomes. Theoretically, it advances ESP by connecting genre-based pedagogy with outcome-based frameworks, showing that language education extends beyond vocabulary mastery to include the development of professional identity and global communicative competence. It also contributes to OBE theory by demonstrating how outcome-oriented frameworks can be contextualized within specific disciplines, offering a replicable model for other specialized fields.

Practically, this integrated OBE–ESP framework offers valuable guidance for stakeholders: curriculum designers can align graduate profiles with course tasks, lecturers gain effective pedagogical tools, and students follow structured pathways toward CEFR-aligned proficiency, enhancing their employability and global readiness. For the Islamic finance industry, it ensures a supply of graduates who are communicatively skilled, professionally competent, and capable of representing Islamic economic principles internationally. English thus emerges not as a peripheral subject but as a strategic enabler of professional readiness, competitiveness, and cross-border collaboration. With sustained investment in instructor development, authentic resources, and interdisciplinary collaboration, Islamic universities can transform English instruction from a purely academic pursuit into a catalyst for global engagement and intellectual leadership in Islamic economics.

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