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## **HARMONIZING UNIVERSITY ENGLISH INSTRUCTION WITH STUDENT PREFERENCES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL ALIGNMENT IN EFL CONTEXTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Despite the global importance of English, many university students still struggle to achieve expected English proficiency. This study explores the gap between lecturer teaching methods and student learning preferences in English courses at a university in Cilegon, Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Affective Filter Theory, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 students and 5 lecturers. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke. The findings show a clear mismatch between teaching methods and student preferences. While 80% of lecturers used theory-focused teaching, 87% of students preferred practical and communicative activities. Differences were also found in the use of technology, where lecturers mainly used digital tools for delivering materials, while students preferred learning through songs and films. These differences increased students' anxiety about making grammar mistakes. The study shows that learning difficulties are influenced more by teaching approaches than by students' motivation to learn.*

*Keyword: English language pedagogy, teaching methodologies, student perspectives, pedagogical alignment*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English has become the global lingua franca in the 21st century. It is widely used in academia, scientific research, international business, and technology, making it not only a subject to study but also an important skill for global communication and opportunities. In this context, higher education institutions are expected to help students develop English proficiency that goes beyond basic understanding and enables them to communicate effectively in international settings (Canagarajah, 2014). For many universities, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language, this responsibility places significant

pressure on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or general English courses to provide meaningful and lasting learning outcomes.

In Indonesian higher education, English is a compulsory subject (Mata Kuliah Umum) across all disciplines. However, despite years of English instruction, many graduates still have low levels of proficiency. This challenge is especially common among non-English major students, who often see English as a difficult academic requirement rather than a practical skill (Dardjito et al., 2023). The problem is made worse by large class sizes and the continued use of grammar-focused teaching methods, which often do not match the needs of students preparing for a globalized workplace (Halim et al., 2025). Despite the large amount of time and resources invested in English instruction, there is still a noticeable gap between the goals of English programs and the actual competence and confidence of many graduates (Hidayat, 2024).

This issue suggests a mismatch between the teaching methods used in the classroom and the real needs, preferences, and expectations of students (Saint, 2021). While traditional teaching approaches may help students understand grammatical rules, they often do not develop the communicative skills needed in real-life situations such as international meetings, conferences, or understanding global media (Yusupalieva, 2024). Therefore, the main issue lies in the relationship between teaching methods and student learning needs. On one side are the lecturers, who are responsible for designing and delivering lessons. Their teaching methods are influenced by their educational background, beliefs about language learning, institutional demands, and practical challenges such as class size and limited resources (Phuong et al., 2023). They must consider how to make lessons relevant, how to use technology effectively, and how to assess students' abilities as well as their knowledge. The lecturer's perspective is important because it reflects the intended learning experience designed for students (Akram et al., 2022).

On the other side are the students, who are the main participants in the learning process. Their needs include not only academic achievement but also professional preparation and personal development (Romadhon, 2024b). Their expectations are shaped by their previous learning experiences, their perceived strengths and weaknesses, and their reasons for learning English. Importantly, their preferred learning styles may differ from the teaching methods used in the classroom (Yang et al., 2022).

Recent studies support the issues identified in this research, particularly the gap between traditional teaching methods and student expectations in university English courses. Ghaleb

(2024) critically reviews exam-oriented and teacher-centered approaches, arguing that these methods can limit creativity, critical thinking, and learner independence while also increasing stress and disengagement. Similarly, Sattarova (2024) compares traditional grammar-translation methods with communicative and student-centered approaches and concludes that a balanced combination of both methods is more effective. More recently, Guaña-Moya et al. (2024) found that interactive technologies such as gamification, augmented reality, and multimedia tools can improve motivation by around 23% and knowledge retention by 31%. has demonstrated that interactive technologies such as gamification, augmented reality, and multimedia tools can raise motivation by approximately 23% and improve knowledge retention by 31%. Meanwhile, Asrifan & Heriyanti (2023) examined EFL students' evaluations of classroom teaching methods. Overall, these studies highlight three main points: the limitations of teacher-centered and exam-focused teaching, the benefits of communicative and student-centered learning, and the potential of technology to support language learning. However, most studies discuss these factors separately rather than examining how they interact with one another.

It is within this gap that the present research situates itself. By foregrounding the comparative experiences of both stakeholders, the study moves beyond critique to provide a holistic diagnosis of the gap itself. This difference in scope, methodology, and context is significant, as it allows for actionable insights into how universities can better align teaching strategies with evolving student expectations, ultimately contributing to more effective and motivating English language education at the tertiary level.

This study is grounded in the contrast between the Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) model and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Traditionally, Indonesian EFL instruction has leaned towards the PPP model (Hamid et al., 2025), which prioritizes structural accuracy and teacher-led transmission of knowledge. In contrast, CLT posits that language learning is most effective when learners are engaged in meaningful interaction and authentic tasks (Kołsut & Szumilas, 2023). Additionally, the study draws upon Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Luo, 2024), which suggests that emotional barriers such as anxiety and lack of motivation can impede language acquisition. By analyzing the alignment between these pedagogical theories and actual classroom practices, this research identifies the specific 'gaps' hindering student proficiency.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform more effective and harmonious curriculum design and teaching practices. By giving voice to both stakeholders,

the findings can provide valuable insights for educators seeking to refine their methods, for university program directors aiming to enhance course effectiveness, and for policymakers concerned with improving graduate outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the alignment between teaching methodologies and student preferences in English courses at an Indonesian university, to analyze the factors contributing to the observed pedagogical gap, and to investigate what specific affective and linguistic barriers are identified by both stakeholders in achieving communicative competence.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the alignment between teaching methodologies and student needs in English language courses at the university level. A qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and suggestions of both lecturers and students, providing rich, descriptive data to answer the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The research was conducted at a university in Cilegon, Banten, Indonesia, encompassing a diverse student body from five academic departments: Economics, Islamic Family Law, Industrial Engineering, Islamic Religious Education (PAI), and Informatics Engineering. The five specific departments were selected to represent a cross-section of both social science and technical disciplines, allowing for a comparative analysis of student needs across diverse academic backgrounds. The total population from these departments consisted of 209 students. From this population, a sample of 15 students was recruited, representing approximately 7.2% of the total. The student participants were aged 18–20 and were currently in their second semester, having successfully completed the English subject in their first semester. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who could provide insightful and relevant information about the phenomenon being studied (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). Rather than randomized sampling, participants were specifically chosen to ensure a homogeneous level of competence, determined by their Grade Point Average (GPA) and, specifically, their English subject scores from the first semester.

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. This method was chosen for its flexibility, allowing the researcher to ask predetermined open-ended questions while also permitting the exploration of emergent themes through probing follow-up questions (Adams, 2015). Two interview protocols were developed for this study. The Lecturer Protocol focused on questions regarding teaching philosophies, the perceived

importance of English, chosen methodologies such as the use of technology and consistent language use, challenges faced in the classroom, and strategies for supporting diverse learners. Meanwhile, the Student Protocol centered on questions about students' perceptions of the importance of English, their learning preferences, the challenges they encounter during their studies, their reactions to current teaching methods, and their suggestions for improvement. Prior to the study, the interview protocols were pilot-tested with two non-participant students to ensure question clarity and relevance. Data collection took place in September 2025. Interviews were conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia* to minimize language barriers and allow participants to express complex psychological and pedagogical concepts freely and then quotes were translated into English for this study. Sessions lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully briefed on the study's objectives and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all personal identifiers were removed; participants are referred to by codes (e.g., S1 for Student 1, L1 for Lecturer 1) in the final report.

The transcribed interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase process outlined by Braun & Clarke (2021). The coding process was conducted manually using color-coded highlighting and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to organize and sort data segments. The process involved an inductive approach, where codes were derived directly from the data rather than fitting them into a pre-existing frame. The coding was primarily conducted by the lead researcher. To ensure rigor and trustworthiness in the absence of multiple coders, two key strategies were employed. First, intra-coder reliability was established by re-coding a random sample of 20% of the transcripts two weeks after the initial analysis; a comparison revealed a high degree of consistency in code application. Second, peer debriefing was utilized, where academic colleagues experienced in qualitative research reviewed the finalized codebook and a selection of coded transcripts to audit the logical connection between the raw data and the generated themes, ensuring that the findings were not biased by a single perspective.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

This section presents the findings from the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 15 students and 5 lecturers across five academic departments. Following the

six-phase process outlined by Braun & Clarke (2021), the analysis identified four principal themes that illuminate the complex interplay between pedagogical practices and student experiences in university English courses. These themes are: (1) a shared consensus on the instrumental and intrinsic value of English proficiency; (2) a significant pedagogical disconnect between theory-focused instruction and students' desire for practical application; (3) the role of technology and multimedia as a vital yet underutilized bridge for engagement; and (4) the prevalence of affective and linguistic barriers that impede language acquisition.

**Table 1: Participant Demographics and Coding**

Code	Department	Gender	Role
L1	Islamic Family Law (HKI)	M	Lecturer
L2	Computer Science / Economics	M	Lecturer
L3	Islamic Religious Education (PAI)	M	Lecturer
L4	Industrial Engineering	F	Lecturer
L5	Economics & Business (FEB)	M	Lecturer
S1	Islamic Religious Education (PAI)	F	Student
S2	Islamic Religious Education (PAI)	F	Student
S3	Islamic Religious Education (PAI)	F	Student
S4	Islamic Family Law (HKI)	F	Student
S5	Islamic Family Law (HKI)	M	Student
S6	Islamic Family Law (HKI)	M	Student
S7	Computer Science	M	Student
S8	Computer Science	F	Student
S9	Computer Science	F	Student
S10	Management (FEB)	F	Student
S11	Accounting (FEB)	F	Student
S12	Accounting (FEB)	F	Student
S13	Industrial Engineering	M	Student
S14	Industrial Engineering	M	Student
S15	Industrial Engineering	M	Student

Codes (L1-L5, S1-S15) are used throughout to facilitate tracking of individual perspectives across themes while maintaining organizational clarity. Participants represented gender distribution (11 female, 9 male) and five distinct academic departments, ensuring disciplinary diversity.

*Theme 1: A Consensus on Value: The Instrumental and Intrinsic Importance of English*

The most interesting initial result was that all participants (20/20, 100%) agreed that English competence was extremely important. This agreement demonstrated that a lack of

motivation is not a barrier in this situation, across departmental borders, participant roles, and skill levels. However, beneath this surface agreement lay distinct differences in how value was articulated.

All five lecturers (100%) and all fifteen students (100%) framed English as essential for professional and academic advancement. Lecturers presented this instrumentality in structural terms. L1 described English as a "really useful 'extra skill'" for graduates, particularly in "the Cilegon area, where there are lots of multinational companies." L2 emphasized English's role in enhancing "the ability to compete in the job market" and its necessity for "standardized tests like TOEFL." L3 positioned English as critical because "almost all important information; both in the world of education, technology, or even global trends... use English."

Students articulated instrumental value with greater discipline-specific detail. Economics student S8 highlighted English as essential for "enhancing employability across global sectors." Computer Science student S9 deemed it "essential" for "interpreting documentation often written in English." HKI student S4 noted English would be "super effective for future careers, especially if they have to handle international legal cases." Accounting student S12 recognized it as "an important consideration in the hiring process."

While instrumental motivation dominated lecturer discourse (5/5 lecturers), intrinsic motivations were more prevalent among students. Twelve out of fifteen students (80%) cited personal interest in global media and cultural engagement as key drivers, compared to only one lecturer (L3, 20%).

Students frequently mentioned "watching English movies" (9 students, 60%), listening to "English-language songs" (7 students, 47%), and reading novels (4 students, 27%). S13 articulated a common goal: "if we can speak English we can watch movies without looking at subtitles." S11 expressed hope "to one day be able to understand movies without the help of subtitles." L3 was the only lecturer acknowledging this dimension, encouraging students to "watch movies without subtitles, listen to western music, (and) listen to foreign podcasts."

This universal agreement on English's importance (100% of participants) establishes that motivation deficits do not explain learning difficulties in this context. However, the consensus showed important variations: lecturers emphasized predominantly instrumental rationales while students combined instrumental (100%) with strong intrinsic motivations (80%). This pattern suggests pedagogical challenges lie not in generating motivation but in harnessing existing motivation through appropriate instructional design, a theme explored in subsequent sections.

## *Theme 2: The Pedagogical Divide: Theory-Driven Instruction vs. Practice-Oriented Learning*

The study's most important finding is the apparent mismatch between the teaching strategies that instructors claim to employ and the learning preferences that students express. This gap represents the central tension in the university English course experience, where traditional, didactic approaches clash with a student-led demand for practical, communicative learning.

Four out of five lecturers (L1, L2, L3, L5—80%) described methodologies characterized by structured content delivery, teacher-controlled interaction, and institutional compliance. L2 explicitly stated his methods were "aligned with the guidelines I have structured in the *Rencana Pembelajaran Semester (RPS)*," emphasizing "question-and-answer sessions, interviews, and lectures." L3 described providing "learning materials in English" and "light discussions," using a gradual approach: "we try to push them slowly... so that they are not surprised."

Three lecturers (L1, L5, L3—60%) reported using mixed Indonesian-English instruction. L1 explained his "mix language approach... helps students understand better, considering most HKI students don't have an English background." L5 differentiated by course type, using "more English" in conversation classes "even though students don't always fully understand."

L4 uniquely claimed to use "the communicative approach," yet stated she "does not use English consistently on campus because her students' abilities are not yet ready" and "does not require Industrial Engineering students to use English," contradicting core CLT principles of target language immersion.

Thirteen out of fifteen students (87%) explicitly requested more practical, application-based learning, with many criticizing current theory-heavy instruction.

PAI students (S1, S2, S3—100% of PAI participants) voiced unanimous critique. S1 stated: "in class, she and other students are only taught through theory and teachings orally and in writing. Mona hopes that there will be more practice in teaching English. According to her, practice is much more effective because there are direct activities. Such as speaking with native speakers and role-playing." S2 reinforced: "if taught in theory, many students still have difficulty understanding the material given."

Business/FEB students (S10, S11, S12—100%) emphasized "fun" and interactive methods. S10 suggested "methods that are fun and not boring, such as playing while learning, or using English songs," concluding "hands-on practice... can train students' courage in

speaking." S11 advocated for "language games or quizzes, to make students more enthusiastic."

Industrial Engineering students (S13, S14, S15—100%) praised interactive technology: "More interactive teaching methods and the use of Kahoot media make it easier for me to understand the material and more interested in following the lesson."

The critical exception: S5 (HKI student) alone expressed satisfaction with current methods, stating he "doesn't really have significant problems learning English because he already has a basic foundation," suggesting theory-first instruction may serve students with pre-existing proficiency but not developing learners.

**Table 2: The Pedagogical Divide**

Pedagogical Orientation	Lecturers (n=5)	Students (n=15)
Theory-first, structured, teacher-centered	4 (80%)	2 (13%)
Practice-first, communicative, student-centered	1 (20%)	13 (87%)

This gap shows a fundamental misalignment between the supply of instructional materials and the demand from students, and it is the most significant discovery that the study has uncovered.

### *Theme 3: Multimedia and Technology as Bridges for Engagement*

Another important, albeit complex, area of difference was the influence of multimedia and technology. While both groups acknowledged the use of technology, their perceptions of its purpose and potential differed greatly. For lecturers, technology is primarily a tool for instructional delivery. For students, it is an immersive and highly effective environment for authentic language acquisition.

All five lecturers (100%) reported using technology, but descriptions centered overwhelmingly on presentation aids rather than interactive learning environments. Five lecturers (100%) mentioned PowerPoint, slides, or projection equipment as primary tools. L1 noted he "often uses an in-focus projector" and that "conversation examples can be taken from platforms like YouTube," but critically added: "he hasn't directly used technology like apps or online platforms in class yet, even though he believes they're super effective for learning outside of class."

L5 expressed explicit reservations: "the use of technology sometimes makes students confused, so he chooses to use applications selectively." Only L2 mentioned platforms beyond presentation tools, referencing "Google Classroom or artificial intelligence-based

resources," though emphasizing their role in "supporting comprehension" rather than interactive engagement.

Notably absent from lecturer descriptions: interactive quiz platforms (Kahoot, Quizizz), language learning apps, collaborative digital tools, multimedia creation tasks, or social media for authentic communication.

Twelve out of fifteen students (80%) reported self-directed multimedia use for English learning outside class, revealing a robust parallel learning ecology. Students described technology as powerful, authentic, and highly effective.

Interactive quiz platforms: Four students (S11, S13, S14, S15—27%) specifically praised Kahoot or Quizizz. Notably, all three Industrial Engineering students (100% of IE students) mentioned Kahoot. S14 and S15 stated: "More interactive teaching methods and the use of Kahoot media make it easier for me to understand the material and more interested in following the lesson."

Songs and music: Seven students (47%) endorsed using English songs. S7 explained: "songs help facilitate easier language acquisition due to their repetitive nature and memorable melodies." S13 noted songs help "vocabulary sticks better."

Films and videos: Nine students (60%) cited watching English movies or videos. S10 described strategic scaffolding: "she can see the subtitles while listening to the correct pronunciation." S12 demonstrated proficiency-matched content selection: "she prefers... English cartoon movies - for example Peppa Pig - because it uses simple language."

Educational games: Six students (40%) advocated for games, linking them to motivation. S11 recommended "language games or quizzes, to make students more enthusiastic in learning."

Students also demonstrated sophisticated self-directed technology use: S4 used "ChatGPT to find out the correct pronunciation," while S13-S15 "often use Google Translate" for vocabulary.

**Table 3: Preference**

Technology Type	Lecturers Using (n=5)	Students want (n=15)
PowerPoint/Projection	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
Interactive quizzes (Kahoot/Quizizz)	1 (20%)	4 (27%)
Songs/Music	0 (0%)	7 (47%)
Films/Videos	2 (40%)	9 (60%)
Educational games	1 (20%)	6 (40%)

The largest gap (47 percentage points) was for songs, nearly half of students validated songs through personal use, yet zero lecturers reported using them in instruction. The technology lecturers used most universally (PowerPoint 100%) received zero student endorsement as a preferred learning tool.

Theme 3 reveals technology as a significant missed opportunity: students are already leveraging multimedia for self-directed learning (80%) and explicitly desire classroom integration (53% praise specific tools), yet most lecturers use technology primarily for content delivery. The gap for songs and gaps for videos and games suggest substantial untapped potential for aligning classroom practices with student-validated learning strategies.

#### *Theme 4: Navigating Affective and Linguistic Barriers*

The final theme addresses obstacles participants identified as impeding English learning, revealing two distinct but interrelated barrier categories: affective/psychological (anxiety, low confidence, fear of mistakes) and linguistic/systemic (vocabulary, grammar, institutional factors). Critically, lecturers and students sometimes attributed these barriers differently

Ten out of fifteen students (67%) explicitly expressed feelings of anxiety, low self-confidence, or fear related to English learning. Two lecturers (L3, L4—40%) recognized affective challenges in their students.

L3 observed: "many students feel inferior or have difficulty because they are not used to English from the start," encouraging students that "the most important thing is not to be afraid of making mistakes, because learning is a process." Students confirmed these observations. S1 stated: "she still feels inferior when speaking English because she is afraid of making mistakes." S9 "struggle[s] with motivation" and uses self-talk: "I remind myself that delaying action may result in falling behind my peers."

Six students (S1, S2, S3, S4, S8, S10—40%) explicitly mentioned the importance of "not being afraid" or overcoming fear. S4 advised: "not to be afraid to learn and not to be afraid to make mistakes, because we can learn from our mistakes." S8 encouraged learners "not to be discouraged by grammatical rules, often referred to jokingly as 'grammar police.'"

Six students (S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15—40%) requested "fun" or "not boring" methods. These requests can be interpreted as calls for pedagogical approaches that reduce anxiety and create psychological safety. S6 preferred methods "because it's more enjoyable

and he doesn't have to focus too much on grammar," linking enjoyment to reduced grammatical pressure and lower anxiety.

Eleven out of fifteen students (73%) and three out of five lecturers (L2, L4, L5—60%) identified concrete linguistic challenges.

Vocabulary was the most frequently cited barrier, mentioned by nine students (60%). S2 explained: "there are really good materials or journals to learn, but because the language is English, it is difficult to understand if you are not used to it." Industrial Engineering students (S13, S14, S15—100% of IE students) reported: "They find it difficult to learn English because of their lack of English vocabulary and to find out the vocabulary, they often ask or use Google Translate." L2 cited students' "limited vocabulary" and uses "memorization tasks and set concrete learning targets" as his response.

Grammar was mentioned by eight students (53%) as challenging. S10 stated "grammar is the biggest challenge for her, and she overcomes it by studying harder and deepening the material." S11 admits "difficulty understanding grammar" and makes "small notes as reminders."

Pronunciation was cited by three students (S4, S10, S11—20%), yet zero lecturers mentioned it. S4 identified "the difference in accents or pronunciation in English conversations between native speakers and Indonesians" as her main problem, using "ChatGPT to find out the correct pronunciation."

A critical finding emerged regarding how difficulties were explained. L4 attributed challenges to student mindset: "Industrial Engineering students assume that English is only about studying grammar and is not important to learn, the problem is in their mindset."

However, this attribution directly contradicts actual Industrial Engineering student data. Not a single IE student (S13, S14, S15) suggested English was unimportant or "only about grammar." Instead, S13 stated "English is very interesting to learn" and all three praised interactive methods enthusiastically. This represents a lecturer misattribution, where pedagogical challenges are externalized onto student attitudes rather than examined as instructional design issues.

Only L5 identified systemic rather than individual barriers: "the lack of resources as well as a campus culture that has yet to develop... the active use of English."

Despite facing multiple barriers, students demonstrated remarkable agency in developing personalized solutions. For vocabulary: Google Translate (S13-S15), personal notes (S11, S12), reading (S2, S3, S12). For grammar: Reviewing notes (S11, S12), studying

harder (S10). For pronunciation: ChatGPT (S4), listening to others (S4), subtitled media (S10, S11). For anxiety: Gradual exposure through entertainment (S1-S3, S10-S12), peer practice (S1, S11, S12), reframing mistakes (S4, S8).

This extensive self-directed problem-solving reveals a highly motivated, resourceful learner population, contradicting attributions of difficulties to lack of effort or motivation. Barriers to English learning are prevalent (67% affective, 73% linguistic) and multidimensional, with vocabulary (60%), grammar (53%), pronunciation (20%), and anxiety (67%) operating concurrently. Students frame barriers as surmountable challenges requiring better strategies, while some lecturer attributions (L4's "mindset problem") appear empirically unsupported. Students' extensive self-initiated coping strategies suggest barriers are pedagogical and systemic rather than motivational.

## **Discussion**

The findings presented through established second language acquisition theories, examining how the four themes interact to explain the persistent gap between student and learning outcomes in university English courses. Theme 1 established universal consensus on English's importance, with students demonstrating both instrumental motivations linked to career prospects and intrinsic motivations driven by cultural media engagement. This finding aligns with Ushioda & Dörnyei (2017) framework showing that global English learners maintain strong motivation across diverse contexts. However, the subsequent three themes reveal that high motivation alone is insufficient when pedagogical practices fail to harness it effectively. The contradiction in finding indicates that learning challenges are explained by instructional design rather than motivational deficiencies.

The gap between theory-first instruction and practice-first preferences reflects a fundamental misalignment between pedagogical paradigms. Lecturers' approaches, emphasizing explicit grammar instruction, controlled practice, RPS compliance, and accuracy-focused correction, align with the Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) model, a traditional form-focused methodology. Students' requests for "direct activities," "role-playing," "speaking with native speakers," and methods that don't require excessive grammar focus implicitly advocate for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles emphasizing meaning over form and fluency before accuracy. This misalignment is not merely philosophical but has measurable consequences. Research by Long (2014) and Ellis et

al. (2019) demonstrates that adult learners acquire language most effectively through meaning-focused interaction rather than form-focused instruction.

Theme 4's finding that 67% of students report anxiety and fear of mistakes can be understood through Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Luo, 2024), which posits that negative emotions create psychological barriers blocking language acquisition. Students' repeated discourse about needing to "not be afraid" and requests for "fun" methods represent intuitive attempts to lower this filter. The pedagogical divide in Theme 2 likely raises the affective filter: when instruction emphasizes grammatical accuracy (as in theory-first approaches), students become hypersensitive to errors, increasing anxiety and paradoxically impeding the very grammatical accuracy being taught. S6's preference for methods where he "doesn't have to focus too much on grammar" reveals awareness that grammar-heavy approaches create affective barriers.

The technology divide in Theme 3, especially the disparity between songs and the students who use multimedia on their own, shows that students are active innovators creating their own learning environments outside of the classroom. This self-directed learning aligns with autonomy principles in SLA (Benson, 2016), where learners who control their learning demonstrate greater persistence and achievement. Students have already validated effective strategies through personal experimentation: songs for vocabulary retention through melodic memory, videos with subtitles for multimodal input, and interactive quizzes for immediate feedback. The knowing-doing gap suggests barriers are systemic rather than individual: inadequate institutional support, limited training, or conflicting curricular demands prevent lecturers from adopting student-validated approaches.

The Findings across departments revealed striking variations in pedagogical preferences, technology use, and affective experiences, suggesting that English learning is shaped by disciplinary cultures and career trajectories. PAI students demonstrated the strongest pedagogical critique and highest intrinsic motivation through cultural media, possibly reflecting their field's emphasis on textual interpretation and narrative engagement. In contrast, Industrial Engineering students showed unanimous enthusiasm for gamified but lowest affective barrier reports, potentially reflecting engineering culture's comfort with competitive, technology-mediated learning and technical problem-solving orientations.

Business/FEB students uniquely emphasized "fun" and "not boring" as evaluative criteria, linking affect directly to learning effectiveness, which aligns with business education's focus on engagement and persuasion. HKI students contextualized English within

professional legal communication, requesting practice in "public speaking" and "Q&A" formats relevant to courtroom contexts.

These patterns suggest one-size-fits-all pedagogy inadequately serves diverse disciplinary needs. Effective instruction should be discipline-responsive: narrative-based media for PAI, gamified platforms for engineering, business-contextualized interactive activities for FEB (Romadhon, 2024a), and professional communication simulations for HKI, aligning pedagogical methods with disciplinary epistemologies and career-specific communicative demands

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study found a clear gap between the teaching methods used by lecturers and the learning preferences of students in university English courses. Most lecturers focused on theory and grammar, while students preferred practical and communicative activities that helped them use English in real situations. Although students were motivated to learn English, many still felt anxious and lacked confidence when speaking because of the teaching approaches used in class. The study also found that students often improved their English independently through songs, films, and other multimedia, but these methods were rarely included in classroom learning. Therefore, lecturers are encouraged to use more communicative and interactive activities, integrate multimedia into lessons, and create a more supportive learning environment. Future studies should involve more universities and participants to provide a broader understanding of effective English teaching in Indonesian higher education.

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