Addressing the Challenges of Limited Textbook Resources in Sports Education: Strategies for Institutions to Overcome Current Issues in Study Programs

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges faced by sports education programs in delivering effective English language instruction due to a lack of specialized textbooks. Through qualitative interviews with department heads and English lecturers from STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh, Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, and Universitas Dharmas Indonesia, the research reveals that educators rely on general English textbooks, online articles, and multimedia resources to teach English for sports purposes. While these alternative materials provide relevant content, the absence of dedicated textbooks places a significant burden on lecturers, who must compile and adapt resources themselves. The findings underscore the need for institutions to prioritize the development of tailored textbooks that address the unique linguistic and communicative demands of the sports industry. This research highlights the importance of institutional support in creating comprehensive, relevant educational resources that enhance both teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes in sports education.

Keywords: Sports Education, English Language Instruction, Specialized Textbooks, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Introduction

Sports education plays a crucial role in developing both the physical and intellectual abilities of students, particularly those pursuing careers in athletic training, sports science, and physical education. However, many institutions face significant challenges, one of which is the limited availability of specialized textbooks and educational resources tailored to the needs of sports education programs (Metlzer, 2017; Kebritchi, Lipschuetz, & Santiague, 2017). This lack of materials not only hinders the depth of knowledge that students can gain but also limits the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes.

In developing countries or regions where educational budgets for sports programs are often constrained, the shortage of textbooks becomes even more pronounced. Kelly, Kelly, & Melograno (2004) and Spittle (2021) argue that many sports education programs rely heavily on practical training and hands-on experience, but without adequate theoretical resources, students may struggle to grasp foundational concepts or stay updated with current trends and research in the field. The absence of comprehensive textbooks specifically designed for sports education further exacerbates the gap between practical application and academic understanding.

Moreover, the dynamic nature of sports science, which constantly evolves due to new research and advancements in technology, requires institutions to provide up-to-date learning materials (Kinshuk et al, 2016; Ratten, 2019). However, Hew & Brush (2007), Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2007) as well as Hanson (2015) believe that with limited access to current textbooks, educators may find it difficult to integrate the latest knowledge into their curricula, thereby affecting the quality of education students receive.

This research aims to explore the challenges posed by the scarcity of textbook resources in sports education study programs and investigate the strategies institutions can adopt to overcome these limitations. By examining successful case studies, alternative educational resources, and innovative pedagogical approaches, this study seeks to provide practical recommendations for improving resource accessibility and enhancing the overall learning experience for sports education students.

Hult (2017) and Fazio Isidori, & Bartoll (2015) state the integration of English language instruction in sports education programs has gained increasing importance due to the global nature of the sports industry, where English serves as a lingua franca. Despite this, a persistent challenge faced by many institutions offering sports education is the scarcity of textbooks specifically designed for teaching English for sports purposes. Research indicates that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is essential in bridging the gap between general English skills and the specialized vocabulary, discourse, and communication strategies required in professional fields, such as sports (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

In the context of English for sports, learners need materials that not only cover general language proficiency but also emphasize technical vocabulary, sports terminologies, and real-world communicative situations relevant to the sports industry. However, the lack of published textbooks focusing on English for sports students creates a significant obstacle for educators. According to Basturkmen (2019) and Lustigová (2013), teachers in ESP contexts often face the challenge of creating their own materials due to the absence of commercially available resources tailored to their students' needs.

Studies show that in various ESP fields, including English for sports, teachers frequently rely on a combination of materials, such as general English textbooks, articles from the internet, and multimedia resources like videos, to provide a comprehensive learning experience (Belcher, 2006). This aligns with Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) recommendation that teachers adapt their teaching to fit the specific requirements of their learners, often becoming material developers themselves in the process.

In light of this, Stoszkowski & Collins (2022) argue that educators have turned to the internet as a valuable resource for authentic materials, such as journal articles, blogs, and videos, which can provide up-to-date content that reflects real-world practices in sports. The process of compiling and adapting these materials into cohesive teaching units, however, places additional pressure on lecturers who must balance content creation with their other academic responsibilities (Tomlinson, 2011).

Thus, this literature review highlights the pressing need for the development of English teaching materials specifically catered to sports students. It underscores the importance of supporting lecturers with appropriate resources to enhance the quality of language instruction in sports education programs, ensuring students are equipped with both the general and specialized English skills needed for their future careers.

Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, utilizing interviews as the primary method for data collection. The objective was to gather detailed insights from academic professionals about the availability and use of teaching materials for English language instruction within sports education programs. Specifically, the research targeted lecturers and department heads from three institutions: STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh, Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, and Universitas Dharmas Indonesia, all of which offer sports education programs where English is taught as a subject.

The participants of this study were carefully selected to provide relevant information based on their expertise and direct involvement in the teaching of English to sports students. The interviewees included the Head of the Sports Department from each institution, as well as English lecturers who are responsible for teaching English subjects tailored to sports students. These individuals were chosen because of their unique perspectives on both the academic structure of the programs and the practical challenges of teaching English without specialized textbooks.

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Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences while maintaining flexibility. The interviews focused on understanding the availability of English teaching materials, the strategies employed by lecturers to address the lack of sports-specific textbooks, and the types of resources they currently use in their lessons. The interview questions covered key areas such as the lecturers' reliance on general English textbooks, the use of online articles and multimedia, and the process of compiling and adapting materials to meet the needs of sports students. Each interview lasted between 20 to 30 minutes and was recorded to ensure accuracy during analysis.

Once the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed, and the data was analyzed using thematic analysis. This method allowed the researchers to identify common themes and patterns across the interviews, providing a clear understanding of the challenges faced by lecturers and the solutions they implement. Key themes included the impact of the lack of specialized textbooks on the quality of teaching, the types of supplementary resources used, and the role of lecturers as material developers who compile and adapt content from a variety of sources to fit the specific needs of sports students.

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they understood the purpose of the research and that their participation was voluntary. Participants were assured of their anonymity, and the data collected was used solely for research purposes. By adhering to these ethical standards, the research ensured the integrity and confidentiality of all participants, fostering an environment of trust and openness during the interviews.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that there is a significant lack of specialized English textbooks for sports education students across the three institutions studied: STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh, Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, and Universitas Dharmas Indonesia. This shortage was consistently noted by both the Heads of the Sports Departments and the English lecturers interviewed. They emphasized that despite the growing importance of English in the global sports industry, there are no widely available textbooks that focus specifically on teaching English to sports students.

As a result of this limitation, the lecturers reported that they have to rely on various alternative sources to provide relevant language instruction. The most common approach involved using general English textbooks, which do not specifically address sports-related terminology or contexts. Additionally, lecturers frequently resorted to online resources, such as articles about sports, videos, and other digital materials, to introduce students to the specific language and discourse of the sports field. These materials were typically sourced from the internet, where lecturers found a mix of sports-related articles, reports, interviews, and multimedia content that could be incorporated into their lessons.

Moreover, the lecturers noted that they often had to compile and adapt these materials themselves. This process of material development was seen as time-consuming but necessary in order to create a more relevant and meaningful learning experience for their students. The lecturers used their knowledge of sports and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to curate lessons that combined general language skills with the specialized vocabulary and communication strategies needed for students pursuing careers in sports. This personalized approach, while effective, placed a significant burden on lecturers, who were already managing other academic responsibilities.

The results highlight a critical issue in the teaching of English for sports students: the lack of specialized textbooks. This gap reflects a broader challenge in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education, where certain fields, such as sports, remain underserved by traditional textbook publishers. This finding aligns with existing literature, such as Basturkmen (2010) and Hutchinson & Waters (1987), which emphasize that many ESP teachers face a scarcity of appropriate teaching materials and must often develop their own resources.

The reliance on general English textbooks, while necessary, creates a mismatch between the course content and the specific needs of sports students (Đorić, 2020). General textbooks focus on broad language skills, but they fail to address the particular linguistic demands of the sports industry, such as sports commentary, coaching terminology, or sports management communication. This gap between

general English and English for sports hinders the students' ability to fully engage with the language as it applies to their future professional contexts.

In response to this challenge, the lecturers' strategy of sourcing materials from the internet and multimedia platforms offers a pragmatic solution. By utilizing authentic sports-related content, lecturers can provide students with more relevant language input. However, this process also presents challenges. Firstly, the quality and appropriateness of online materials vary, requiring lecturers to spend considerable time vetting and adapting resources. Secondly, the fragmented nature of these materials can lead to a lack of cohesion in the curriculum, as lecturers must work independently to integrate various sources into a coherent lesson plan.

The fact that lecturers have taken on the role of material developers demonstrates their commitment to providing quality education, but it also reveals the need for institutional support. Without dedicated textbooks, the burden of creating teaching materials falls disproportionately on individual educators, which can lead to burnout and reduced teaching effectiveness over time. Institutions could consider providing more structured support, such as training in materials development, access to ESP-specific content databases, or collaborative platforms where lecturers can share and refine materials.

These findings underscore the importance of developing textbooks and resources that cater specifically to English for sports students. Such materials would not only reduce the workload on lecturers but also enhance the learning experience by providing students with focused, relevant language instruction. In the absence of commercially available textbooks, it may be necessary for institutions to collaborate with ESP experts and sports professionals to create tailored materials that meet the unique needs of sports education programs.

Overall, the research confirms that the shortage of specialized English textbooks for sports students is a significant challenge, but one that can be mitigated through strategic use of alternative resources and institutional support. By addressing these gaps, sports education programs can ensure that their students are better prepared to navigate the global sports industry with the necessary English language skills.

Conclusion

This study examined the challenges faced by sports education programs due to the lack of specialized English textbooks, based on interviews with department heads and English lecturers from three institutions. The findings revealed that, in the absence of dedicated materials, lecturers rely on general English textbooks, online articles, and multimedia resources to teach English for sports purposes. While this approach allows for relevant content, it places a heavy burden on lecturers, who must compile and adapt materials themselves. The results highlight the need for institutional support and the development of tailored textbooks to improve the quality of English instruction for sports students and reduce the workload on educators.

Implications

The findings of this research have significant implications for the development of English language instruction within sports education programs. Given the identified gap in specialized textbooks, it is essential for educational institutions to prioritize the creation of dedicated resources tailored specifically for teaching English to sports students. Developing a comprehensive textbook that addresses the unique vocabulary, discourse, and communication strategies relevant to the sports field will not only enhance the quality of instruction but also ensure that students are equipped with the necessary language skills to succeed in their future careers.

Moreover, such a textbook should be designed collaboratively, involving input from educators, sports professionals, and ESP experts. This collaborative approach will help ensure that the content is relevant, up-to-date, and aligned with the specific needs of students in the sports industry. Additionally, providing supplementary materials, such as lesson plans, exercises, and multimedia resources, within the textbook could further support lecturers in their teaching efforts and reduce the burden of material development.

Furthermore, institutions should consider establishing resource-sharing platforms where educators can contribute and access a repository of teaching materials. This initiative would foster collaboration among lecturers across different programs, allowing for the exchange of effective teaching strategies and resources. Ultimately, these efforts will contribute to a more robust and effective sports education

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curriculum, enhancing students' engagement and proficiency in English while preparing them for the demands of the global sports industry.

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