

Business English as a Catalyst for Social Entrepreneurship Among Management Students at Makassar State University

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Abstract

Business English plays a strategic role in management education by enabling students to access global business knowledge and develop professional communication skills relevant to entrepreneurial contexts. However, limited research has examined how Business English contributes to social entrepreneurial orientation among management students in Indonesian higher education, where English is learned as a foreign language (EFL). This qualitative study explores the role of Business English as a catalyst for social entrepreneurship among 10 management students at Makassar State University. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis of course syllabi and materials, and were analyzed using thematic analysis with triangulation to ensure credibility. The findings reveal five key themes: prior entrepreneurial exposure, perceptions of Business English as a distinct professional communication tool, development of entrepreneurial competencies such as presentations and negotiations, increased awareness of social entrepreneurship through global case studies, and persistent EFL challenges like limited vocabulary and fear of grammatical errors that sometimes constrained participation. Theoretically, this study extends the application of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention theories to the specific domain of language learning. Practically, the findings suggest that integrating social entrepreneurship themes into Business English curricula could better prepare management students to create ventures that generate both economic and social value.

Categories: Entrepreneurship in developing nations, Sustainable entrepreneurship

Keywords: business english, entrepreneurial competencies, indonesian higher education, management students, english foreign language

Introduction

Management education at Indonesian public universities is increasingly focusing on developing entrepreneurial skills as well as managerial abilities. According to data from the Indonesian Higher Education Database ([PDDikti, 2026](#)) for the Management study program under the Economics cluster, the total number of graduates was 4,895,067, with a graduation rate of 50.29%, meaning that 50.29% of students who enrolled in the program successfully completed their studies and obtained their degree. This figure indicates that Management is one of the most populous study programs in Indonesia's higher education system. Given this substantial number of graduates, universities carry the responsibility of producing competent graduates who can meet future workplace demands. Management students are not only prepared for organizational employment but also expected to create economic and social value through entrepreneurial activities

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(Neck et al., 2014). This expectation is relevant for management students at Makassar State University (UNM) who may become future professionals and entrepreneurs contributing not only to regional and national development but also to the international arena.

In management and entrepreneurship studies, social entrepreneurship has become an important approach that links business competence with a social mission. Studies on social entrepreneurship competencies indicate that managerial abilities are essential for the successful operation of social enterprises (Amini et al., 2018) (Burga and Rezania, 2016). As students trained in business and management, undergraduate management students are a key group for developing social entrepreneurial orientation. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education research shows that students need not only knowledge, but also the confidence and intention to act entrepreneurially. Two competing models have been widely used to explain entrepreneurial intention: Ajzen's (Ajzen, 1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Shapero and Sokol's (Shapero and Sokol, 1982) Entrepreneurial Event Model.

In the context of this study, Ajzen's TPB is adopted as the primary framework, which explains that entrepreneurial intention is shaped by attitudes, perceived feasibility, and perceived desirability of starting a venture (Krueger et al., 2000). When students are able to communicate business ideas clearly and access global information, they may feel more confident about starting social enterprises. Effective communication enables them to present ideas persuasively, while greater entrepreneurial confidence encourages them to explore opportunities for creating social value (Abaci, 2022) (Costin et al., 2022). Students who are able to clearly communicate business ideas and access global information are more likely to feel confident in their capacity to start social enterprises. In addition, Business English learning activities may strengthen students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This concept, which is grounded in Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform entrepreneurial tasks.

At the same time, English plays an important role in management and entrepreneurship education because most business knowledge, case studies, and global social enterprise examples are available in English (Crystal, 2003) (Graddol, 2006). For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) management students, the ability to discuss social problems, propose business solutions, and present ideas in English may strengthen their confidence and intention to engage in social entrepreneurship activities. A study by Fayolle and Gailly (Fayolle and Gailly, 2015) indicates that entrepreneurship education is more effective when it includes experiential learning, real-world cases, and international perspectives. Then, previous studies also suggest that business and entrepreneurship education becomes more effective when it incorporates active, experiential, and inquiry-based learning approaches that encourage student engagement, creativity, and problem solving (Costin et al., 2022) (Getachew, 2024). Business English courses can provide such exposure by integrating authentic business materials, including global social enterprise case studies, business news, and entrepreneurial interviews.

Through reading, listening, and discussion activities in English, students may become more aware of social issues and possible business solutions. This exposure can help them link managerial knowledge with social mission, which is a key characteristic of social entrepreneurship orientation. However, in Indonesia, English is learned mainly as a foreign language. Management students at UNM generally use English only in academic settings, especially in Business English courses, and have limited use in everyday or professional contexts. In the management department, Business English is often treated merely as a communication skill or a tool for daily communication, rather than as a competence that supports entrepreneurial and social value creation.

Business English as part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) aims to develop communication skills needed in managerial work, such as presentations, negotiations, and professional communication (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). Although its role in improving employability is well known, its contribution to developing an entrepreneurial mindset and social entrepreneurship orientation among EFL management students is not well studied. There is limited research on how Business English supports students in recognizing opportunities, expressing business ideas, and understanding social entrepreneurship concepts. Literature on entrepreneurship education suggests that exposure to global perspectives and real-world business cases can strengthen students' entrepreneurial intentions and skills (Neck et al., 2014).

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Furthermore, the main goal of this research is to develop English communication and business skills for UNM management students. The reason is that English is a foreign language in Indonesia, not a second language, so students rarely use English in their daily lives. Emilia and Hamied described Indonesia as a tertiary EFL context, where English is learned in formal educational settings and translanguaging practices involving Indonesian and English are commonly employed in the classroom (Emilia and Hamied, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to find ways to make Business English more useful for students to speak, write, and present business ideas in English, which can help them become more confident in both workplace and entrepreneurial settings.

For management students at UNM, Business English may act as a catalyst by helping them access international social enterprise models, improve their entrepreneurial communication skills, and support socially oriented business thinking. Management graduates who are able to combine business competence, social awareness, and effective English communication may have greater potential to create social enterprises that address local problems while connecting with global markets and partners. Therefore, exploring the role of Business English as a catalyst for social entrepreneurship is significant both academically and practically. Academically, it contributes to the limited literature linking ESP, entrepreneurship education, and social entrepreneurship in EFL higher education contexts. Practically, the findings may provide insights for curriculum designers and lecturers to integrate social entrepreneurship elements into Business English teaching, so that students not only improve communication skills but also develop an entrepreneurial mindset and social responsibility needed in the globalized economy.

However, despite this potential, the connection between Business English and social entrepreneurship in EFL management education has not been widely studied. Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of Business English as a catalyst for social entrepreneurship among management students at UNM. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

What is the background and prior exposure of management students to entrepreneurship before taking the Business English course?

How do management students perceive Business English in the context of management education?

How does learning Business English contribute to the development of students' entrepreneurial competencies?

How does learning Business English influence students' awareness of social entrepreneurship?

What EFL challenges do students face in learning Business English, and how do these challenges impact their entrepreneurial confidence?

Literature review

Self-Efficacy Theory and TPB

Self-efficacy theory posits that individuals' beliefs in their capability to execute specific tasks influence their motivation, effort, and persistence in achieving goals (Bandura, 1997). In entrepreneurial contexts, self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in performing entrepreneurial tasks such as opportunity recognition, business planning, and resource mobilization. This theory is relevant to the present study because Business English learning activities such as presentations, negotiations, and business plan writing provide students with mastery experiences that can enhance their entrepreneurial self-efficacy. When students successfully communicate business ideas in English, they develop confidence in their ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks, which in turn increases their intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

The TPB explains that behavioral intention is shaped by three determinants: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Applied to this study, Business English learning can influence entrepreneurial intention by shaping positive attitudes toward social entrepreneurship through exposure to global case studies, building perceived behavioral control through practice in communication and business pitching, and reinforcing subjective norms through peer discussions and collaborative projects on social enterprise topics. For instance, Dong et al.

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(Dong et al., 2024) reported that foreign language self-efficacy did not directly predict entrepreneurial intentions; instead, it exerted an indirect positive influence through innovation and entrepreneurship training experience and other TPB antecedents, supporting the importance of language-related competencies in entrepreneurial development.

Social Entrepreneurship Concept

Social entrepreneurship has been widely discussed as an approach that combines business activities with a social mission. It focuses on solving social problems through innovative and sustainable business models. Research in the Journal of Business Venturing explains that social entrepreneurs identify opportunities, mobilize resources, and create social impact while maintaining financial sustainability (Zahra et al., 2009). This shows that social entrepreneurship is not only about charity, but also about applying managerial and entrepreneurial competencies to address community needs. Therefore, management students who learn business knowledge and social awareness are important potential actors in developing social enterprises.

In addition, Bacq and Janssen (Bacq and Janssen, 2011) describe social entrepreneurship as a field that connects economic and social goals. Their study in Small Business Economics highlights that social entrepreneurs create value for society while still using business logic and innovation. This perspective indicates that management education should not only focus on profit-oriented business skills but also include social value creation. As future managers and entrepreneurs, students need to understand how business activities can contribute to solving social issues in their communities.

Entrepreneurship Education and Experiential Learning

Entrepreneurship education literature shows that well-designed programs can improve students' entrepreneurial mindset, attitudes, and intentions. A systematic review was conducted in the Academy of Management Learning & Education and concluded that entrepreneurship education has positive effects when it includes experiential learning, real-world projects, and interaction with practitioners (Nabi et al., 2017). This suggests that learning should go beyond theoretical lectures and provide authentic experiences that connect students with actual business and social challenges.

Experiential learning can include case studies, project-based assignments, and community engagement. Through these activities, students can apply business knowledge to solve social problems. Research specifically addressing the intersection of social entrepreneurship and language education is still emerging. For management students in EFL contexts, Business English classes can integrate such experiential tasks by using global social enterprise cases, business simulations, and project presentations in English. These activities may help students connect language learning with entrepreneurial and social value creation.

ESP and Business English

ESP is designed to meet learners' academic and professional needs. Belcher in TESOL Quarterly explains that ESP courses should be closely related to students' disciplinary contexts and future careers (Belcher, 2006). For management students, Business English focuses on communication skills such as presentations, negotiations, meetings, and report writing. These skills are important for managerial work and entrepreneurial activities.

Anthony emphasizes that ESP course design should be based on needs analysis and contextual relevance (Anthony, 2018). Business English teaching should reflect real workplace demands, including discussing social impact, sustainability, and community development. When Business English materials include social entrepreneurship topics, students can learn language skills while also developing socially oriented business thinking. Thus, Business English can function not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for critical thinking and idea development related to social innovation.

Several empirical studies have examined how Business English education contributes to the development of entrepreneurial competencies. Research by Tuzlukova and Heckadon (Tuzlukova and Heckadon, 2020) found that integrating problem-based social entrepreneurship projects into a Business English classroom helped foster professional communication skills and greater awareness of social issues among students at Sultan Qaboos University,

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Oman. Similarly, a study by Quintero-González and Clavijo-Olarte ([Quintero-González and Clavijo-Olarte, 2022](#)) reported that engaging EFL students in social entrepreneurship projects encouraged them to critically examine community problems and design innovative, socially oriented business solutions within the English classroom.

English as a Global Business Language

English plays a crucial role in international business and entrepreneurship. Many global business reports, case studies, and social enterprise examples are published in English. Jenkins stated that English functions as a lingua franca that enables communication among professionals from different linguistic backgrounds ([Jenkins, 2015](#)). For future social entrepreneurs, English proficiency allows them to access global knowledge, build international networks, and communicate with partners or investors from other countries.

Exposure to global information can also enhance opportunity recognition, which is a core entrepreneurial skill. By reading international cases and discussing global social issues in English, students may develop broader perspectives on possible business solutions. This exposure can stimulate innovative thinking and help them adapt global social enterprise models to local contexts, especially in developing regions such as Indonesia.

Research Gap and Relevance to EFL Management Students

Although many studies discuss social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, and ESP separately, limited research examines their intersection in EFL higher education. Most studies focus either on entrepreneurship education outcomes or on language learning effectiveness, but rarely explore how Business English learning contributes to social entrepreneurship orientation. This gap is especially relevant for management students in Indonesian public universities where English is mainly used in academic settings and not widely practiced in daily or professional communication.

Therefore, understanding how Business English can support students' social entrepreneurial intentions, skills, and mindset becomes important. The reviewed literature shows that social entrepreneurship requires managerial competence, empathy toward social issues, opportunity recognition, and effective communication skills. Entrepreneurship education and ESP research both suggest that contextualized and experiential learning can enhance these competencies. However, empirical evidence on the role of Business English as a catalyst for social entrepreneurship among EFL management students is still limited. This gap justifies the need for the present study, which focuses on management students at UNM and explores how Business English learning may contribute to developing their social entrepreneurship orientation.

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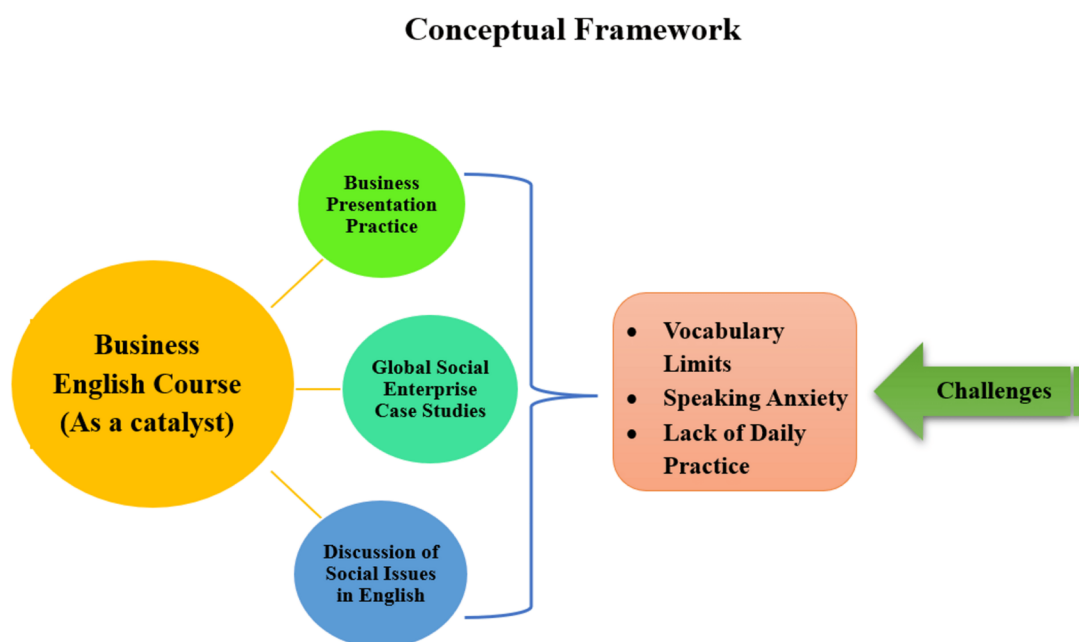


FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's creation

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework guiding this study. It illustrates how the Business English Course functions as a catalyst for social entrepreneurship orientation among EFL management students. The framework consists of three main components.

First, the Business English Course serves as the central catalyst in this study. Within this course, three key activities are expected to foster entrepreneurial skills and social awareness: (1) Business Presentation Practice, which involves students preparing and delivering business presentations in English to develop professional communication skills; (2) Global Social Enterprise Case Studies, which exposes students to international examples of businesses that address social and environmental problems; and (3) Discussion of Social Issues in English, which encourages students to critically engage with real-world problems and propose business solutions in English.

Second, these activities contribute to three interrelated outcomes: (1) Entrepreneurial Communication Skills, including presentation, negotiation, and business writing skills; (2) Awareness of Social Entrepreneurship, meaning students' understanding of how businesses can create social impact; and (3) Confidence to Propose Business Solutions, which refers to students' belief in their ability to articulate and present entrepreneurial ideas.

Third, the framework acknowledges three EFL challenges, Vocabulary Limits, Speaking Anxiety, and Lack of Daily Practice as moderating factors that may influence the effectiveness of the Business English Course in achieving the desired outcomes. These challenges represent the linguistic barriers that students face as EFL learners in an Indonesian university setting.

This framework integrates Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, Shapero and Sokol's (1982) Entrepreneurial Event Model, and Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, which collectively explain the psychological mechanisms through which Business English learning influences students' social entrepreneurship orientation.

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Research Method

This study used a qualitative research design to understand students' views, ideas, and experiences about Business English and social entrepreneurship. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to explore participants' experiences in depth and to understand meaning from their perspectives (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The population of this study was 40 undergraduate Management students at UNM who were enrolled in the Business English course in their second semester. All 40 students were interviewed. Data saturation was assessed after each interview by reviewing transcripts for new codes or themes. After the 10th interview, no new codes or themes emerged. To confirm saturation, we analyzed the 11th and 12th interviews, which also yielded no new information. Therefore, data saturation was achieved after analyzing the first 10 interviews, meaning that no new themes, codes, or insights emerged from the 11th to the 40th interviews. This study had only one male participant because the 2025 cohort in the Management Department at UNM is largely made up of female students. Therefore, the sample reflects the actual population, and this is not a case of sampling bias.

Therefore, only the data from the first 10 interviews were included in the final analysis. The inclusion criteria were: (1) active management students and (2) currently enrolled in the Business English course. All participants were willing to take part voluntarily. Some participants had shown interest in business and entrepreneurship activities. Data were collected from three sources. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted to learn students' opinions on the role of Business English for management and entrepreneurship skills. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and used open-ended questions, so students could freely share their thoughts. Second, focus group discussions were carried out to find shared views and deeper insights among students. Each focus group session lasted about 40 minutes. Third, Business English syllabi and course materials were analyzed to see how the content was related to entrepreneurship and social enterprise ideas. Document analysis was conducted on three types of documents: (1) the Business English course syllabus used during the 2026 academic year, (2) weekly lecture materials (12 modules), and (3) assignment guidelines and rubrics. These documents were selected because they represent the core instructional materials used throughout the course.

All interviews and focus group discussions were facilitated by the researcher. The sessions were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and English (Switching and Mixing) to help participants express their ideas more comfortably and clearly. All participants provided verbal informed consent before the interviews and focus group discussions. They were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. To protect their privacy, pseudonyms (P1-P10) were used in the final report.

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Code	Gender	Semester
P1	Female	2
P2	Female	2
P3	Female	2
P4	Female	2
P5	Female	2
P6	Female	2
P7	Female	2
P8	Male	2
P9	Female	2
P10	Female	2

TABLE 1: Participant Demographics

Source: Author's creation

The data were collected over 6 weeks and analyzed using thematic analysis following systematic coding procedures by Braun and Clarke with triangulation to ensure credibility (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher transcribed the interviews and discussions, coded the data, and grouped them into themes related to students' perceptions, entrepreneurial skills, and social entrepreneurship orientation. (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts; (2) generating initial codes by identifying meaningful segments related to Business English, entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship; (3) searching for themes by grouping codes into broader patterns; (4) reviewing themes to ensure consistency and distinctiveness; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the final report with representative quotes. Codes were developed inductively from the data, without predetermined categories, allowing themes to emerge organically from participants' responses. After reviewing and merging overlapping themes, five final themes were established: (1) prior entrepreneurial exposure, (2) perceptions of Business English in management education, (3) entrepreneurial competency development, (4) awareness of social entrepreneurship, and (5) EFL challenges and their impact on entrepreneurial confidence. To ensure credibility, data triangulation was applied by comparing findings from interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The researcher also conducted member checking by sharing preliminary findings with two participants to verify accuracy, and peer debriefing with a colleague experienced in qualitative research to review the coding process. Data saturation was reached after analyzing the 10 interview transcripts, as no new themes emerged from the data. Therefore, the researcher did not proceed with interviewing the remaining 30 students.

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Results And Discussion

Students' background and prior exposure to entrepreneurship

Based on the interview responses, most participants were undergraduate management students in middle semesters who had taken Business English as a compulsory course. Several students reported having basic exposure to entrepreneurship through small business activities, campus assignments, or family businesses. One participant stated "My experience includes selling food at school bazaars and also as a final entrepreneurship assignment" (P1), while the others noted "Somewhat, I am a freelance artist so I want to learn more about business, alongside wanting to help my dad with his photocopy business" (P10), "Honestly, I really want to have a business, so after graduating, I plan to start a business and also continue my parents' business" (P9).

These findings suggest that management students already possess initial awareness of entrepreneurship but still need structured academic support to develop entrepreneurial competencies. Previous research indicates that entrepreneurship education contributes to the development of students' entrepreneurial competences and self-confidence, which can serve as a foundation for their future entrepreneurial engagement ([Rosita, 2023](#)).

Moreover, entrepreneurship education literature highlights that early exposure to entrepreneurial experiences can increase students' readiness to engage in business creation and innovation activities. Active participation in entrepreneurship-related tasks enables students to enhance key entrepreneurial competences such as initiative, problem-solving skills, and self-confidence, which are essential for entrepreneurial development ([Purwati et al., 2020](#)).

Students' perceptions of Business English in management education

The interview data revealed that students generally perceived Business English as an important subject for management students, particularly for communication in professional and global business contexts. Many participants stated that Business English differs from general English because it focuses on business vocabulary, presentations, meetings, and professional correspondence. This perception is in line with the statement of participant 3, who said that "Business English is different from general English because it focuses more on work and professional situations. In my experience, Business English teaches us how to write emails, make reports, do presentations, and use business terms" (P3).

Participant 6 also added that "Business English focuses more on language use in professional and business contexts, such as meetings, presentations, negotiations, and report writing. In contrast, general English is more commonly used for daily conversations. In Business English, the vocabulary and situations are more specific to management and entrepreneurship" (P6). Similarly, Participant 10 explained, "Business English focuses more on technical office and business stuff, while general English focused more on sharpening the vocabulary" (P10). These views align with the concept of ESP, which emphasizes language learning tailored to professional needs and workplace communication ([Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998](#)). Students recognized that Business English supports their understanding of management concepts, especially when discussing marketing, business planning, and case studies.

In addition, Business English is viewed as a tool that can enhance employability and professional communication skills. When students are trained to use English in business contexts, they are better prepared to participate in global business interactions and cross-cultural communication. This indicates that Business English is not only a linguistic skill but also a professional competence required in modern management education.

Business English and entrepreneurial competency development

Regarding entrepreneurial competencies, most students reported that learning Business English helped them develop useful skills such as presenting business ideas, negotiating, and writing simple business plans. Presentation and discussion activities were frequently mentioned as the most beneficial components for entrepreneurship learning. Participant 7 mentioned that "Presentation and negotiation skills are the most useful for entrepreneurship. Presentation skills help me explain business ideas clearly and attract investors or customers, while negotiation skills help me make better deals and build strong business partnerships" (P7).

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Students also stated that using English in business case discussions increased their confidence in expressing ideas like the statement from participant 8, participant 2, and participant 6 "I think presentation and communication skills are the most useful for entrepreneurship. Being able to explain ideas clearly and confidently is very important when promoting a business or attracting customers. Additionally, negotiation skills help in building strong business relationships" (P8), "For me, all the skills are useful. But the most helpful one is presentation, because speaking is the hardest part for me. Presentations help me practice and make me more confident" (P2), "Yes, using English in business case studies or discussions can increase confidence. By getting used to discussing in English, I become more confident in sharing opinions and ideas. It also helps reduce the fear of making mistakes when speaking in public" (P6).

Entrepreneurship education studies emphasize that students' self-efficacy and confidence are important predictors of entrepreneurial intention. When students feel capable of performing entrepreneurial tasks, they are more likely to engage in business creation. Previous studies indicate that higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy strengthens students' perceived capability to perform entrepreneurial tasks, which in turn enhances their entrepreneurial intention and likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial behavior (Galvão et al., 2025). Thus, Business English appears to contribute indirectly to entrepreneurial competency development by strengthening communication skills, self-confidence, and exposure to global business knowledge.

Business English and awareness of social entrepreneurship

The findings indicate that many students had limited knowledge of social entrepreneurship before taking Business English. Participants 2 and 5 admitted it by saying "Before taking Business English, I only knew a little about social entrepreneurship. I had heard the term, but I didn't really understand how it worked" (P2), "No, before taking Business English, I didn't really know much about social entrepreneurship. I had heard the term before, but I didn't understand what it actually meant. After learning about it, I realized that it's about running a business while also helping society and solving social problems. It made me more interested in creating a business that has a positive impact" (P5).

However, some participants reported that discussions on global business cases and social issues during the course helped them understand the concept of businesses that solve social problems. According to participant 4, "Yes, learning Business English helps me understand global social business models through international sources and case studies" (P4). It is also similar to participant 8 perspective "Yes, learning Business English helps me understand global social business models because many examples and articles about social enterprises are written in English. This helps me learn how businesses in other countries solve social and environmental problems" (P8).

Students also explained that English materials, such as articles and case studies about international social enterprises, broadened their perspective on how business can address community challenges. Participant 9 stated that "Yes, I think learning Business English really helps me understand global social business models. Most of the information, articles, and case studies about international social businesses are in English. By learning Business English, I can understand the terms, concepts, and strategies more clearly. It also helps me follow global trends and learn how social enterprises in other countries solve social problems in creative ways" (P9). This suggests that Business English can function as a medium for introducing social entrepreneurship concepts in management education.

Previous research confirms that Business English learning that incorporates problem-based social entrepreneurship projects enables students to address real social, cultural, and environmental issues while developing professional communication skills, which in turn fosters awareness of social entrepreneurship (Tuzlukova and Heckadon, 2020). Through exposure to international examples, students become more aware that business is not only about profit but also about creating social impact. This awareness reflects the essence of social entrepreneurship, which combines economic sustainability with social mission.

EFL challenges in learning Business English and their impact on entrepreneurial confidence

Despite recognizing the benefits of Business English, students also reported several challenges as EFL learners. The main difficulties included limited vocabulary, fear of making grammatical mistakes, and lack of confidence when speaking English during discussions or presentations. Participant 2 explained that "As an Indonesian student, the challenges I face

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when learning Business English are vocabulary, speaking, and confidence. Some business terms are hard to understand, and speaking in English feels scary because I'm afraid of making mistakes" (P2). Participant 7 also added, "As an Indonesian student, one of the main challenges I face when learning Business English is understanding business terms and formal vocabulary. Sometimes the words are very different from everyday English. I also struggle with pronunciation and speaking confidently, especially during presentations. Another challenge is understanding fast conversations or different accents" (P7). These language barriers sometimes affected students' confidence in expressing entrepreneurial ideas. When students were unsure about their language ability, they tended to hesitate in sharing business opinions or proposing innovative ideas.

Such challenges are common in EFL contexts, where limited exposure to authentic English communication may reduce students' participation and confidence in academic and professional settings. However, supportive learning environments, interactive activities, and practice-oriented tasks can help overcome these barriers. Research on English for Business instruction in Indonesian higher education also notes that adaptive pedagogies and interactive learning strategies are needed to support students' engagement and communication confidence in hybrid Business English classes (Hamid et al., 2025). Therefore, while Business English has the potential to foster entrepreneurial competencies, language-related challenges must be addressed through appropriate pedagogical strategies to maximize its impact on students' entrepreneurial confidence and participation.

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No.	Theme	Key Findings	Representative Quote	Pedagogical Implication
1	Prior Entrepreneurial Exposure	Students had experience with small businesses, family businesses, or campus assignments	My experience includes selling food at school bazaars and also as a final entrepreneurship assignment" (P1).	Lecturers should design business simulation projects that build on students' existing entrepreneurial experiences
2	Perceptions of Business English	Students view Business English as distinct from general English, focused on professional communication	"Business English focuses more on language use in professional and business contexts, such as meetings, presentations, negotiations, and report writing. In contrast, general English is more commonly used for daily conversations. In Business English, the vocabulary and situations are more specific to management and entrepreneurship" (P6).	Syllabus should emphasize professional communication skills (presentations, negotiations, report writing)
3	Entrepreneurial Competency Development	Presentations and negotiations improved confidence and communication skills	"Presentation and negotiation skills are the most useful for entrepreneurship. Presentation skills help me explain business ideas clearly and attract investors or customers, while negotiation skills help me make better deals and build strong business partnerships" (P7).	Increase practice sessions for presentations, negotiations, and business pitching
4	Awareness of Social Entrepreneurship	Exposure to global cases increased understanding of social enterprise	"Before taking Business English, I only knew a little about social entrepreneurship. I had heard the term, but I	Integrate more global social enterprise case studies and problem-based projects

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			didn't really understand how it worked" (P2).	
5	EFL Challenges	Limited vocabulary and fear of mistakes reduced participation confidence	"As an Indonesian student, the challenges I face when learning Business English are vocabulary, speaking, and confidence. Some business terms are hard to understand, and speaking in English feels scary because I'm afraid of making mistakes" (P2).	Provide vocabulary workshops, supportive speaking environments, and peer learning activities

TABLE 2: Summary of Key Findings

Source: Author's creation

EFL, English as a Foreign Language

Discussion

The findings suggest that management students at UNM appeared to have initial exposure to entrepreneurship through small businesses, assignments, and family enterprises. This is consistent with the view that entrepreneurship education may contribute to building early entrepreneurial competencies and confidence among students. Previous studies note that experiential exposure to entrepreneurial activities helps students develop initiative and problem-solving skills, which are essential for future entrepreneurial engagement (Nabi et al., 2017) (Purwati et al., 2020). Therefore, the background experiences of the participants indicate that they have a basic foundation that can be strengthened through academic learning such as Business English courses.

Furthermore, the results reveal that students perceive Business English as an important subject in management education, especially for professional communication and global business interaction. Students reported that Business English differs from general English because it focuses on presentations, meetings, and professional correspondence. This perception is consistent with the concept of ESP, which emphasizes language instruction tailored to learners' professional and disciplinary needs (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998) (Belcher, 2006). Thus, Business English can be seen not only as a linguistic subject but also as a professional competence that supports management learning.

In relation to entrepreneurial competency development, students reported that Business English learning activities, such as presentations, negotiations, and business case discussions, helped them develop communication and idea-sharing skills. These findings align with entrepreneurship education research, which states that communication competence and self-efficacy are important predictors of entrepreneurial intention (Krueger et al., 2000) (Bandura, 1997). When students are confident in presenting business ideas and negotiating in English, they are more likely to perceive themselves as capable of performing entrepreneurial tasks. This suggests that Business English contributes indirectly to entrepreneurial readiness by strengthening students' confidence and communication abilities.

The study also found that students' awareness of social entrepreneurship was initially limited, but increased after engaging with Business English materials and discussions about global business cases. Many students stated that English articles and case studies helped them understand how businesses in other countries address social problems. This

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supports the argument that exposure to international cases and real-world problems can enhance students' understanding of social entrepreneurship concepts (Zahra et al., 2009) (Bacq and Janssen, 2011). Through Business English, students can connect managerial knowledge with social missions, which is the core of social entrepreneurship orientation.

Moreover, the findings indicate that English plays a significant role in enabling access to global business knowledge and social enterprise models. Since many business resources and case studies are published in English, students who develop Business English skills can explore broader perspectives on innovation and social impact. This is in line with the view that English functions as a lingua franca in global business communication and facilitates knowledge exchange across countries (Jenkins, 2015) (Graddol, 2006). Therefore, Business English learning can act as a gateway for students to understand global social entrepreneurship practices and adapt them to local contexts.

However, the discussion also highlights several challenges faced by students as EFL learners, such as limited vocabulary, fear of grammatical errors, and low confidence in speaking. These challenges sometimes reduced their willingness to share entrepreneurial ideas during discussions or presentations. This implies that language barriers can influence not only communication performance but also students' entrepreneurial self-confidence. Despite these challenges, the findings suggest that supportive and interactive pedagogical strategies can help students overcome language difficulties and actively engage in entrepreneurial learning. Entrepreneurship education literature emphasizes the importance of experiential learning, real-world cases, and collaborative activities in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and skills (Neck et al., 2014) (Fayolle and Gailly, 2015). Integrating such approaches into Business English classes, for example through case analysis, pitching projects, and group discussions, may enhance both language proficiency and entrepreneurial competencies simultaneously.

The findings suggest that Business English may function as a catalyst for social entrepreneurship among EFL management students. It appears to enhance professional communication skills, increase confidence in expressing business ideas, and expose students to global social enterprise models. At the same time, addressing EFL-related challenges through contextualized and experiential learning is necessary to maximize its impact. These findings contribute to the limited literature linking ESP, entrepreneurship education, and social entrepreneurship in EFL higher education, and suggest that integrating social entrepreneurship themes into Business English curricula can better prepare management students to create both economic and social value.

Based on the discussion above, this study offers three practical recommendations for education stakeholders.

First, for Business English lecturers, they should use more real-world case studies from social enterprises in developing countries. During speaking sessions, lecturers need to create a safe and supportive classroom environment. For example, they can run short group presentations and business pitching activities. This will help reduce students' fear of making grammatical errors and increase their confidence to share entrepreneurial ideas.

Second, for curriculum designers, they should integrate social entrepreneurship themes into the Business English syllabus. Specifically, they need to add specific topics about social business models from international contexts. The researcher suggests adding practical speaking sessions, such as negotiation simulations and case analysis, at least twice per semester. This will help students connect their English skills with social missions directly.

Third, for policy makers such as the university or faculty leaders, they should organize special training for Business English lecturers. This training should focus on how to use experiential and collaborative teaching methods in language classes. Moreover, the university should provide extra language support services, such as English vocabulary workshops or English meeting clubs. These services will help students overcome their vocabulary and speaking barriers, so they can participate more actively in entrepreneurial activities.

Limitation and future research directions

This study had several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample included only one male participant because the 2025 cohort in the Management Department at UNM is predominantly female. While this reflects the actual population, it means the findings mostly represent female students' views and cannot be generalized to male students or

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mixed-gender groups. Second, this research was conducted at only one university, so the results may not be applicable to other institutions with different student backgrounds, facilities, or teaching methods. Third, this was a qualitative study based on interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Therefore, the findings were based on participants' personal experiences and perceptions, and they cannot be statistically measured to represent larger populations.

To address these limitations, several directions for future research are suggested. Researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to track whether the entrepreneurial confidence and social awareness gained from Business English courses actually lead to real social enterprise creation after students graduate. In addition, comparative studies involving multiple universities across Indonesia will help determine whether these findings are consistent in different regional and cultural contexts.

Finally, future studies can use quantitative or mixed-methods approaches with larger and more gender-balanced samples to statistically test the relationship between Business English learning and social entrepreneurship orientation. By doing so, researchers can provide stronger evidence for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers in developing more effective Business English programs.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study indicates that Business English plays a meaningful role in supporting social entrepreneurship orientation among management students at UNM. Students were found to have initial exposure to entrepreneurial activities, but they still required structured academic support to develop stronger entrepreneurial competencies and social awareness. Business English courses can bridge this need by combining communication practice with business and social issue discussions, helping students connect managerial knowledge with real societal challenges. The findings also show that Business English contributes to students' confidence and readiness to express business ideas, which are essential for entrepreneurial action. Through presentations, negotiations, and case-based discussions, students gradually develop communication competence and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. At the same time, exposure to global articles and case studies in English helps them understand how businesses in other countries address social problems, thereby expanding their perspective on social entrepreneurship and encouraging more socially oriented business thinking. Theoretically, this study contributes to the limited literature at the intersection of ESP, entrepreneurship education, and social entrepreneurship in EFL higher education contexts.

However, language-related challenges such as limited vocabulary and fear of making mistakes still influence students' participation and confidence. This suggests that supportive and interactive pedagogical strategies are needed to maximize the impact of Business English learning. Overall, integrating social entrepreneurship themes into Business English curricula can make the course more relevant to management education, enabling students not only to improve their professional communication skills but also to develop an entrepreneurial mindset that values both economic and social impact. While this study provides valuable insights into the role of Business English in fostering social entrepreneurship orientation, it has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the sample was limited to 10 students from a single university, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples across multiple universities in different regions of Indonesia. Second, the study relied solely on qualitative data; future research could employ a mixed-method approach, combining surveys with interviews, to provide quantitative evidence supporting the qualitative findings. Third, longitudinal studies are needed to examine whether the entrepreneurial confidence and social awareness developed through Business English courses translate into actual social enterprise creation after graduation.

Appendices

Interview questions

A. Background Information

1. Can you tell me about your semester and your experience in the Business English class at UNM?

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2. Do you have any experience or interest in business or entrepreneurship activities? Please explain.

B. Perceptions of Business English in Management Education

1. In your opinion, what is the role of Business English for management students?
2. Do you think Business English is important for your future career? Why or why not?
3. How is Business English different from general English in your experience?
4. Do you think Business English helps you understand management concepts better? Please give examples.

C. Business English and Entrepreneurial Competencies

1. Do you think learning Business English helps you develop entrepreneurial skills? Why?
2. Which skills in Business English class are most useful for entrepreneurship (for example: presentation, negotiation, writing business plans)?
3. Does using English in business cases or discussions increase your confidence in sharing business ideas? Please explain.
4. Have you ever used English to search for business ideas, case studies, or international examples? How did it help you?

1D. Business English and Social Entrepreneurship

1. Before taking Business English, did you know about social entrepreneurship?
2. Do Business English materials or discussions include topics about social issues or social enterprises?
3. Do you think learning Business English helps you understand global social business models?
4. Has Business English influenced your interest in creating a business that also solves social problems? Why or why not?

E. EFL Challenges and Learning Experience

1. As an EFL student, what challenges do you face when learning Business English?
2. Do these language challenges affect your confidence in entrepreneurship? Please explain.
3. What kind of support or learning activities would help you improve both English and entrepreneurial skills?

F. Curriculum and Suggestions

1. Do you think Business English at UNM should include more entrepreneurship or social enterprise topics? Why?
2. What activities do you suggest for Business English classes to support social entrepreneurship (for example: pitching ideas, analyzing case studies, group projects)?
3. In your opinion, how can Business English become more relevant to management students at UNM?

Closing Question

1. Is there anything else you would like to share about Business English and entrepreneurship?

Additional Information

Author Contributions

All authors have reviewed the final version to be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Concept and design: Rostina ., Sri H. Mustari, Dien A. Ariyati

Acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data: Rostina ., Sri H. Mustari, Dien A. Ariyati

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Critical review of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Rostina ., Sri H. Mustari, Dien A. Ariyati

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Data Availability Statements

The datasets (and/or code) supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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