



Personalized ESP in Islamic Business Management: A Narrative Study of Novice Practice

Endah Kurtianti^{1*}

Universitas Doktor Nugroho Magetan¹
endahkurtianti@udn.ac.id¹

Nurdani Yulian Ahmad²

Universitas Doktor Nugroho Magetan²
nurdaniyulianahmad@udn.ac.id²

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***Corresponding author:**
Endah Kurtianti,
Universitas Doktor
Nugroho Magetan,
Indonesia.

Abstract

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Islamic higher education is important because general English does not prepare students to communicate discipline-specific business content while maintaining Islamic values and professional norms. In Islamic Business Management programs, students need English that supports workplace genres and sharia-aligned communication. Although prior studies have examined ESP needs and personalized learning separately, little research explains how novice lecturers interpret and enact personalized ESP under real classroom constraints. This narrative inquiry investigated how a novice ESP lecturer understood and implemented personalized ESP in one face-to-face Islamic Business Management class at an Islamic higher education institution over one semester. Data were collected through reflective teaching journals, classroom observation field notes, and teaching artifacts, and analyzed through chronological re-storying and thematic analysis. Findings show that the lecturer's understanding developed from confidence-oriented differentiation, to structured choice within shared workplace genres, and finally to responsive teaching through staged support and targeted feedback. Personalization was constrained by mixed readiness, uneven participation, syllabus demands, assessment deadlines, workload, and culturally and sharia-appropriate communication. The study contributes theoretically by conceptualizing personalized ESP as bounded, responsive, genre-based pedagogical judgment rather than full individualization, with implications for ESP course design, novice lecturer support, and value-based English instruction.

Keywords: genre-based pedagogy; Islamic Business Management; narrative inquiry; novice lecturer; personalized ESP

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become increasingly important because general English often does not adequately prepare learners for the communicative demands of academic and professional contexts. This limitation is especially visible when learners must use discipline-specific genres and interactional practices rather than everyday language (Hyland, 2022). The issue is particularly significant in business and management education, where students need to master workplace genres such as emails, reports, presentations, and negotiations, all of which are closely linked to employability and professional success (Husmia et al., 2025; Hyland, 2022). The need for ESP is even more urgent in Islamic higher education, where students must communicate not only specialized business content but also concepts grounded in Islamic economic principles. In these settings, communication must also remain aligned with Islamic values and cultural norms, giving ESP academic, professional, and ethical importance (Amalia & Susanti, 2025; Hillalliyati, 2022; Musdalifah et al., 2025).

Previous studies show a shift from general English to ESP in Islamic business-related programs. Needs-analysis research indicates that students in Islamic Banking, Management, and Islamic Accounting need discipline-specific, workplace-oriented English supported by authentic tasks (Hillalliyati, 2022; Husmia et al., 2025; Liza & Andriadi, 2024; Musdalifah et al., 2025). In ESP, needs analysis helps teachers identify language demands and design relevant materials, tasks, and objectives (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Ismagilova & Polyakova, 2014). Personalized learning has been proposed as a response to learner diversity through differentiated pathways, adaptive tasks, and personalized feedback, including AI-supported learning experiences (Hidayati et al., 2025; Quang, 2025; Rafiq et al., 2021; Rahmawati et al., 2025; Subkan et al., 2025; Umar, 2024; Xu et al., 2018). However, ESP in Islamic higher education still often retains features of general English, while personalized learning remains broadly defined and unevenly implemented (Bernacki et al., 2021; Hidayati et al., 2025; Hillalliyati, 2022).

Despite the growing literature on ESP needs analysis and personalized learning, three gaps remain insufficiently addressed. First, many ESP studies in Islamic business-related programs identify learner needs but stop short of explaining how those needs are transformed into day-to-day classroom decisions. Second, personalized learning is often discussed as a broad ideal of flexibility, autonomy, or technology-supported adaptation, but less attention is given to how personalization can remain pedagogically coherent when learners share the same syllabus, assessment tasks, and workplace genres. Third, the Islamic Business Management context adds a normative dimension that has rarely been theorized: lecturers must personalize learning while preserving disciplinary accuracy, workplace relevance, fairness, and sharia-aligned communication. These gaps are especially important for novice ESP lecturers, whose professional knowledge is still developing and who must make instructional judgments under real constraints.

To address these gaps, the present study investigates how a novice ESP lecturer in an Islamic Business Management program understands and implements personalized ESP. Using a narrative inquiry approach, the study examines three questions: (1) how the lecturer's conceptions of personalized learning evolve, (2) how contextual constraints shape day-to-day personalization decisions, and (3) what strategies, dilemmas, and professional learning emerge over time. Theoretically, the study extends ESP and personalized learning scholarship by proposing personalized ESP as bounded, responsive, genre-based pedagogical judgment rather than as unrestricted individualization. Practically, it offers insights for designing ESP tasks, feedback, and

lecturer development programs that respond to learner diversity while maintaining workplace relevance and Islamic value alignment.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design to examine how a novice ESP lecturer in an Islamic Business Management program understood and enacted personalized ESP. Narrative inquiry was selected because the study focused on lived experience, pedagogical change, and professional meaning-making over time. It was particularly suitable for exploring how the lecturer's conceptions of personalized learning evolved, how contextual constraints shaped instructional decisions, and what strategies, dilemmas, and forms of professional learning emerged across one semester. In line with Clandinin (2022), experience was treated both as the object of inquiry and as the basis for understanding that object. This design also aligns with narrative research in language education, which emphasizes teacher identity, reflexivity, and professional development (Barkhuizen et al., 2025; Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021).

The study was conducted at an Islamic higher education institution in Indonesia, where English is a compulsory subject for second-semester students in the Islamic Business Management program. The focal setting was a face-to-face ESP course taught over one semester. The study involved one purposively selected participant, a novice ESP lecturer who also served as the first researcher. She was recruited because she had limited teaching experience and no prior experience teaching ESP in higher education, making her a relevant case for examining novice ESP practice (Kitchen et al., 2020). The primary data sources were reflective teaching journals, classroom observation field notes, and teaching artifacts, including lesson plans, worksheets, assessment tasks, rubrics, and feedback samples.

Data were collected over one semester to capture pedagogical change over time, in line with narrative inquiry's emphasis on temporality (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Three data sources were used. Reflective teaching journals recorded lesson planning, instructional decisions, personalization attempts, and the lecturer's professional reflections. Classroom observation field notes documented enacted practices, interaction patterns, and moments when personalization was attempted, adjusted, or constrained. Teaching artifacts, including lesson plans, worksheets, assessment tasks, rubrics, and feedback samples, provided documentary evidence of how personalization appeared in planning, instruction, and assessment (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis combined chronological re-storying and thematic analysis. First, the data were organized chronologically to identify key events, shifts, and turning points across the semester. Second, the data were coded using deductive categories based on the research questions and inductive themes that emerged from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Clandinin, 2022). Initial codes were then compared across early, middle, and late-semester data to examine whether the themes reflected sustained patterns of development rather than isolated classroom events.

Theme validation was conducted through several procedures. First, each candidate theme had to be supported by evidence from at least two data sources. For example, a theme identified in the reflective journal was checked against classroom field notes or teaching artifacts. Second, analytic memos were used to compare evidence across different stages of the semester, ensuring that the themes captured change over time. Third, negative or less consistent cases were reviewed to refine theme boundaries and avoid overgeneralization. Fourth, the second author reviewed the coding matrix, theme

labels, and selected representative evidence. This peer review process helped confirm whether the themes were clearly grounded in the data and aligned with the research questions. Trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation, constant comparison, peer review of themes, analytic memos, an audit trail, and sustained reflexivity. Anonymity was protected through pseudonyms and the removal of identifying details (Barkhuizen et al., 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017)

Results and Discussion

Result

Evolving conceptions of personalized learning in Islamic Business Management ESP

The findings show that the lecturer's understanding of personalized learning changed across the semester. In the early stage, personalization appeared as differentiated materials, flexible task formats, and support for student confidence. In the middle stage, it shifted toward structured choice within a shared workplace genre, especially in email-writing tasks. In the final stage, personalization appeared as responsive teaching through staged support and targeted feedback. Overall, the pattern moved from broad differentiation to a more bounded form of personalized ESP.

In the early weeks, the lecturer associated personalization with adapting tasks to students' varied proficiency levels, confidence, and interests, as reflected in her Week 2 journal:

"In the early weeks of teaching, I understood personalization mainly as providing different materials and task options for students with varied English proficiency and career interests. This view influenced my initial lesson planning, including a mini-vlog task in which students described a tourist resort in Central Java. I chose this activity because it allowed students to prepare their language before speaking and reduced the pressure of spontaneous classroom performance. Allowing students to complete the task in groups also helped less confident learners receive peer support in vocabulary and pronunciation. At that stage, I viewed personalization as flexibility in task format and learning comfort. However, I was also unsure how far personalization could be applied within a fixed syllabus and limited semester schedule."

(Lecturer's reflective journal, Week 2)

Early observation data supported this pattern. In the mini-vlog task, students described tourist destinations in Central Java and were allowed to choose topics that matched their interests. This format reduced the pressure of spontaneous speaking and encouraged more confident performance. Students selected diverse topics, such as historical sites, markets, reservoirs, and local culinary places. This was also reflected in the Week 5 journal:

"One group used a drone to capture the beauty of a reservoir, while another student described Pasar Gede, a market known for local snacks and connected to his own spicy-snack business. Allowing students to choose topics they were interested in seemed to improve their English-speaking performance." (Lecturer's reflective journal, Week 5)

A teaching artifact from this stage further supported the finding. In the "Pasar Gede Solo" script, the lecturer gave feedback on transitions, pronoun use, repetition, pronunciation, and delivery, showing how personalization was combined with language-focused guidance. Figure 1 presents the lecturer's feedback on a student group's vlog script before the final video production.

Figure 1. The lecturer's feedback on students' vlog draft

PASAR GEDE SOLO

- Hello everyone, let's introduce ourselves (mention group name). Here, we'll introduce you to Pasar Gede Solo (Solo Grand Market).

Pasar Gede Hardjonagoro or Pasar Gede is the oldest traditional market in Solo, built in 1927. It was officially inaugurated on January 12, 1930, by Pakubuwono X. The market is named Pasar Gede because its building resembles a fortress with an entrance resembling a grand and majestic palace. It covers an area of 6,623 square meters with two two-story market buildings located opposite each other, separated by Sudirman Street.

Located in the city center, Pasar Gede is easily accessible on Urip Sumoharjo Street, Sudiroprajan, Jebres, Solo, Central Java. It is situated directly across from the Surakarta City Hall, or at the intersection of streets formerly known as Jalan Ketandan, Cokronegaran, and Warung Pelem.

A : Pasar Gede can't be separated from the influence of Chinese culture, that's why there are many temples here. Let's follow us to explore this market and try out a few culinary types here!

A : Now we're in the main building, many traders sell daily needs, such as vegetables, meat, and spices. And many vendors sell traditional drinks such as dawet and traditional foods such as lenjongan.

B : Now, we wanna taste this beverage, namely dawet. It has been around for a long time and no wonder many tourists are willing to queue just to try this legendary dawet.

B : This is a traditional Javanese drink made from rice flour served with grated ice, liquid brown sugar, and coconut milk. In addition, there are many more fillings. It only cost 8.000 rupiahs.

A : Next, there is a traditional food called lenjongan. We'll try it!

A : Lenjongan Bu Sum. It is a market snack made mostly from cassava. It consists of various foods (gendar, klepon, sawut, jongkong, gatot, tetuk, tiwul, cenil, sticky rice) then sprinkled with grated coconut and liquid brown sugar on top. For a portion, you only need to spend 6.000 rupiahs.

B : We're now outside of the market, in the second building. Here we wanna try kembang tahu.

B : Kembang Tahu is a traditional food made from soybean juice, like a soft jelly with ginger sauce. To try this delicious food you only need to spend 8.000 rupiahs.

Commented [1]: singkatan dr let us, km utk berbicara mk disingkat sj

Commented [2]: singkatan dr we will, cara bacanya: will

Commented [3]: kita ganti dgn spy tdk mengulang2 Pasar Gedhe

Commented [4]: km ini speaking (berbicara) mk disingkat. Cara bacanya: kan

Commented [5]: singkatan dr want to

Commented [6]: kita ganti it, spy tdk mengulang2 this beverage atau dawet

Commented [7]: kita ubah spt ini spy kalimat lebih efektif atau tdk bertele2.

Commented [8]: kita ganti it, spy tdk mengulang2 kata lenjongan

Commented [9]: sambil dishoot makanannya

The observation notes and teaching artifact indicate that early personalization was enacted mainly through student-interest choices, confidence-building support, and individual guidance for speaking, rather than through strongly discipline-specific ESP tasks.

The findings revealed that the lecturer's understanding of personalized learning (PL) evolved over the semester. Initially, she viewed personalization as differentiated materials, flexible task formats, and confidence-building support. By mid-semester, her view shifted toward structured choice within shared workplace genres. By the end, she understood personalization as responsive teaching through staged scaffolding and targeted feedback rather than full customization. This shift shows that her conception of PL moved from broad individualization to a more practical, context-sensitive form of ESP teaching. The following figure shows that the lecturer gave students the freedom to choose the type of email they wanted to write as practice for developing their writing skills.

Figure 2. Task variation presented in the lesson plan

3.	DESKRIPSI TUGAS III	
	a. NAMA TUGAS	MEMBUAT EMAIL
	b. TUJUAN TUGAS	Membangun kemampuan mahasiswa dalam membuat beragam surat elektronik dengan berbagai macam topik.
	c. BATASAN Pengerjaan tugas	Mahasiswa membuat email dengan tema <i>Saying thank you, Congratulating, Invitation, Declining invitation, Asking for information about employment, and Applying for a position/job.</i>
	d. METODE/CARA DAN ACUAN TUGAS	Tugas ini dikerjakan secara mandiri maksimal 1 minggu dan selanjutnya dikirim via email kepada dosen dan temannya minimal 5 orang untuk dipresentasikan di kelas untuk dikritisi, dievaluasi, dan diapresiasi. Selanjutnya mereka mengunggah hasil karyanya setelah direvisi ke sosmed yang mereka miliki untuk direspon oleh publik.
	e. DESKRIPSI LUARAN TUGAS	Surat elektronik (e-mail) tentang <i>Saying Thank You, Congratulating, Invitation, Declining invitation, Asking for Information About Employment, and Applying for a position/job yang di upload di sosmed para mahasiswa.</i>

This development was shaped by several connected factors. At the beginning, the lecturer's limited experience in ESP led her to associate personalization with flexibility, confidence-building, and varied task formats. As the semester progressed, she became more aware of the need to align teaching with workplace genres and communicative purposes. The shift was also influenced by mixed proficiency, limited time, and the difficulty of sustaining fully individualized pathways within a fixed syllabus. These

conditions led to more manageable forms of personalization within shared instructional goals.

The findings indicate that novice lecturers may not begin with a stable model of personalized ESP. Instead, their understanding may develop through experience, classroom reflection, and repeated adjustment to instructional demands. At the classroom level, personalization became more workable when it was linked to shared genre goals and staged support. At the institutional level, the findings point to the importance of support systems that help novice lecturers connect learner diversity with discipline-specific communication.

Contextual constraints shaping day-to-day personalization decisions

The findings indicate that day-to-day personalization decisions were shaped by several interacting constraints. These included mixed learner readiness, uneven participation, rigid syllabus demands, assessment deadlines, lecturer workload, and the requirement to maintain sharia-aligned and culturally appropriate communication. In practice, these constraints limited the extent to which personalization could be enacted. Open-choice tasks often benefited more confident students, whereas others hesitated and needed clearer guidance. As a result, personalization often appeared in smaller and more manageable forms, such as topic choice, templates, grouping arrangements, and adjusted support.

A key challenge was uneven learner readiness. Observation notes and journals showed that open-choice tasks supported more confident students, while lower-proficiency students often hesitated, requested clearer instructions, or depended on peers. This concern appeared in the Week 15 journal.

"Students' proficiency and participation were very uneven, making personalization difficult to manage fairly. Higher-proficiency students performed well in open-choice tasks, but several lower-proficiency students hesitated and asked what answer was expected. I kept questioning how to personalize learning without widening gaps or making assessment unfair." (Lecturer's reflective journal, Week 15)

This excerpt indicates that giving students choices did not necessarily empower all learners. In this class, choice could increase participation gaps when it was not accompanied by clear scaffolding and explicit assessment criteria.

These constraints emerged through the interaction of learner, classroom, and institutional conditions. Uneven learner readiness made open tasks more difficult to manage fairly because students did not begin with the same level of language ability or confidence. At the same time, fixed syllabus coverage and assessment timelines reduced opportunities for repeated practice, revision, and individualized feedback. The lecturer's workload also shaped decisions, especially when task options had to be checked for disciplinary accuracy, correct terminology, and Islamic cultural fit. Personalization was therefore shaped by the combined effects of readiness, time, workload, and value-based appropriateness.

The findings show that personalized ESP in this setting was influenced not only by teaching goals, but also by the practical conditions of implementation. At the individual level, students with lower readiness required stronger scaffolding. At the classroom level, unequal participation increased when learner choice was introduced without sufficient support. At the institutional level, rigid course structures reduced the flexibility needed for sustained personalization. At the normative level, personalized ESP in Islamic Business Management needed to remain attentive to workplace relevance as well as cultural and religious appropriateness.

Strategies, dilemmas, and professional learning emerging over time

The findings show that personalization became feasible through a limited set of practical routines rather than through full curricular redesign. Three strategies were especially important: one genre with multiple contexts, layered scaffolding, and personalized feedback supported by a stable rubric. These routines allowed students to work toward shared communicative goals while still receiving varied forms of support. At the same time, they revealed recurring dilemmas, including relevance versus syllabus coverage, personalization versus fairness, choice versus readiness, and Islamic value alignment versus authentic workplace discourse. The following reflective journal excerpt demonstrates how the lecturer began to view personalization not as full curricular redesign, but as the use of practical routines within a shared ESP genre:

"Today I realized that personalization in ESP became more manageable when I used one shared genre with different contexts. All students practiced writing business emails, but they could choose situations such as inviting, congratulating, and asking information about employment. This helped me keep one communicative goal while still responding to students' interests. I also found that students needed different levels of support. Some could write after seeing a model email, while others needed sentence starters, vocabulary lists, and guiding questions. Using the same rubric helped keep assessment fair, but I still adjusted my feedback based on each student's progress. This meeting made me understand that personalized ESP is not full individualization, but a balance between choice, scaffolding, fairness, workload, and Islamic value alignment."
(Lecturer's reflective journal, Week 14)

These strategies and dilemmas were shaped by the lecturer's effort to balance several competing demands. Shared genres helped maintain curricular coherence, while contextual variation made tasks more relevant to students' interests and career goals. Layered scaffolding emerged because students needed different levels of support even when working on the same task. Personalized feedback became necessary because the lecturer had to respond to individual development without undermining fairness or increasing workload too far. Across the semester, these pressures shaped the lecturer's professional learning as a process of deciding when to allow flexibility, when to set limits, and how to keep personalization workable within institutional and ethical boundaries.

The findings indicate that personalized ESP in this context was most workable as a bounded, responsive, and genre-based pedagogy. At the individual level, these strategies supported student confidence, participation, and workplace-oriented communication. At the instructional level, they helped the lecturer maintain coherence while still responding to learner difference. At the institutional level, the results suggest that sustainable personalization requires flexible assessment tools, pedagogical resources, and professional development opportunities. More broadly, the findings show that novice lecturer development involved learning to make context-sensitive judgments under real classroom conditions.

Discussion

These findings suggest that personalized ESP should be understood not as full individualization, but as a situated pedagogical process shaped by learner readiness, workplace genres, institutional demands, and Islamic value alignment. Instead, it developed gradually through three related patterns. First, the lecturer's understanding moved from differentiation for confidence-building, to structured choice within shared workplace genres, and finally to responsive teaching through staged support and targeted feedback. Second, everyday personalization was shaped by learner readiness,

uneven participation, syllabus demands, workload, and sharia-aligned communication. Third, personalization became workable through bounded routines, especially one genre with multiple contexts, layered scaffolding, and personalized feedback supported by stable rubrics.

These patterns can be explained by the conditions of novice ESP teaching in Islamic higher education. The lecturer worked in a setting where learner needs were diverse, but the course structure and semester timeline were fixed. As a result, personalization could not be enacted as an open-ended principle. In the early phase, the lecturer relied on confidence-oriented flexibility because it was more manageable within her level of experience. As the semester progressed, personalization became more structured because she needed approaches that connected learner diversity with workplace relevance while maintaining classroom coherence.

From an interpretive perspective, the findings suggest that personalized ESP is best understood as context-sensitive pedagogical judgment. The lecturer did not personalize instruction by creating fully separate pathways for each learner. Instead, she developed shared tasks with bounded variation, staged support, and selective feedback. This approach supported confidence and participation at the individual level, while preserving coherence at the instructional level. It also suggests that personalization becomes more feasible when teaching conditions allow flexibility, repetition, and contextual relevance. In this sense, responsiveness was more workable than full individualization.

The findings both align with and extend previous research. They support earlier ESP studies showing that students in Islamic business-related programs need discipline-specific, workplace-oriented, and contextualized English instruction (Hillalliyati, 2022; Husmia et al., 2025; Liza & Andriadi, 2024; Musdalifah et al., 2025). They also align with personalized learning research that emphasizes responsiveness, learner readiness, and flexible support (Quang, 2025; Rahmawati et al., 2025; Watson & Watson, 2016). However, the study differs from stronger models of PL that emphasize full individualization and extensive learner control (Bray & McClaskey, 2015). Its main contribution lies in showing how a novice lecturer gradually turned broad personalization ideals into workable ESP practice.

More specifically, the lecturer's conception of personalization became more sustainable when it moved closer to ESP principles. In the early weeks, personalization was linked mainly to flexible task design and adjusted expectations, reflecting common associations between PL, differentiation, and learner support (Bray & McClaskey, 2015; Kerr, 2016; Watson & Watson, 2016). Later, personalization was enacted through bounded options within shared goals, especially by maintaining common genre targets while allowing variation in contexts and purposes. This shift supports ESP theory that instruction becomes more relevant when it is anchored in workplace genres and communicative demands rather than generalized language coverage (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2022; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013).

The discussion also indicates that personalized learning may support learner autonomy, motivation, and engagement when meaningful choices are combined with adequate support. In this study, students were not given unrestricted freedom, but they were allowed to make bounded decisions within shared tasks. This pattern is consistent with research suggesting that personalized learning can foster learner autonomy when students are given choices over topics, goals, strategies, and materials, while teachers act as facilitators of learning (Khotimah et al., 2023; Khulaifiyah et al., 2023). Such support

may also strengthen intrinsic motivation, engagement, and academic achievement (Dja'far et al., 2016; Fujii, 2024; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Pontual Falcão et al., 2018).

At the same time, the lecturer's everyday personalization decisions were constrained by structural conditions and classroom realities. Heterogeneous proficiency, limited time, and fixed curricular requirements repeatedly narrowed the range of personalization that could be maintained, which supports earlier research on workload and institutional barriers in higher education (Quang, 2025; Rahmawati et al., 2025). The Islamic Business Management setting added further demands because personalization had to remain appropriate to sharia-informed communication and Islamic cultural norms. Each contextual option therefore required disciplinary accuracy and value-based appropriateness. These findings show that personalization was not constrained by one factor alone, but by the interaction of readiness, time, workload, and ethical expectations.

Personalized feedback, supported by common criteria, balanced fairness and learner development. These strategies also revealed recurring dilemmas, including relevance versus syllabus coverage, personalization versus fairness, and choice versus readiness. This suggests that professional learning developed not simply as the acquisition of techniques, but as the growth of context-sensitive pedagogical judgment under real classroom conditions (Barkhuizen et al., 2025; Clandinin, 2022). In this regard, Hasibuan & Dewi (2025) also suggested the need for workshops or other professional development programs that can strengthen teachers' feedback practices, making them more focused, meaningful, and responsive to students' needs. This need becomes more understandable when viewed alongside classroom observations showing that the depth of personalization was constrained by the teacher's workload and her developing confidence with ESP-sharia content, reflecting the interaction of economic, disciplinary, and sociocultural frames (Pennington, 2014).

These findings lead to several recommendations. Conceptually, personalized ESP should be framed as a bounded, responsive, and genre-based pedagogy rather than as full individualization. Practically, institutions should provide contextualized task banks, genre models, vocabulary resources, and flexible assessment tools to support novice lecturers. Teacher development programs should also strengthen genre-based instruction, feedback practices, and the integration of Islamic value alignment into ESP teaching. Methodologically, future research should involve multiple lecturers, institutions, or longer observation periods to examine whether similar developmental patterns appear in other ESP settings.

Conclusion

This study shows that personalized ESP in an Islamic Business Management program did not emerge as a fixed or fully individualized teaching model. Instead, it developed gradually as the novice lecturer moved from differentiation for confidence-building, to structured choice within shared workplace genres, and finally to responsive teaching through staged support and targeted feedback. The findings also indicate that personalization was shaped by learner readiness, uneven participation, rigid syllabus demands, assessment deadlines, lecturer workload, and the need to maintain sharia-aligned and culturally appropriate communication. Even under these constraints, personalization remained feasible through three practical routines: one genre with multiple contexts, layered scaffolding, and personalized feedback supported by stable rubrics. Overall, personalized ESP in this context was most feasible as a bounded, responsive, and context-sensitive pedagogy rather than as full individualization.

The study contributes conceptually, methodologically, and practically. Conceptually, it clarifies that personalized ESP can be understood as context-sensitive pedagogical judgment grounded in workplace relevance, learner diversity, and value-based appropriateness. Methodologically, it shows the usefulness of narrative inquiry for tracing how personalization is interpreted, negotiated, and enacted over time. Practically, the findings suggest that novice lecturers need stronger support in genre-based instruction, feedback practices, and the integration of Islamic value alignment into ESP teaching. These insights are relevant for ESP course design, teacher education, and institutional policy in Islamic higher education.

This study is limited by its focus on one novice lecturer in a single institutional context over one semester. As a result, the findings are context-specific and cannot be generalized broadly. The participant's dual role as lecturer and researcher also required ongoing reflexivity and may have influenced interpretation. Future research could involve multiple lecturers, different ESP programs, or longer observation periods to examine whether similar developmental patterns appear across contexts. Further studies could also combine narrative inquiry with interviews, student perspectives, or mixed methods approaches to deepen understanding of how personalized ESP develops in practice.

Author Contribution Statement

Author 1 acted as the initiator and concepthor of the article; contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data; Author 2 served as the validator of the data and analysis results; contributed to the data collection and critical revision of the article. All authors approved the final content of the article and are responsible for all aspects of this research.

Statement of Interest

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