

# Lecturers' Perception in Integrating ICC Components in Teaching English as Foreign Language at University Level

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## Abstract:

This article explores lecturers' perceptions of integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in teaching English as a foreign language at the university level. The study was conducted in the Department of English Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. The participants consisted of two lecturers who taught English Speaking courses in the department. The research employed a qualitative methodology with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal three key insights: first, lecturers' perceptions of integrating ICC components are shaped by their teaching experiences, their awareness of a multicultural society, and their evaluation of students' language proficiency and motivation. The study underscores the importance of integrating ICC into English as a foreign language instruction, highlighting its critical role in fostering cultural understanding and effective communication. This research has implications for English language education, emphasizing the need to incorporate ICC into curricula to better prepare students for intercultural interactions in a globalized world.

**Keywords:** The lecture perception, Intercultural communicative competence, English language teaching, Perception of students language proficiency

## 1. Introduction

Intercultural Communicative Competence (henceforth ICC) refers to an individual's ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds [1,2,3]. This ability encompasses both linguistic competence and an understanding of the social values and norms of the language being used, enabling effective interaction with individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. Scholars agree that possessing ICC facilitates building respectful and meaningful relationships with others [4,5], as it equips individuals with the skills to behave and act appropriately when interacting with people from different cultures.

The importance of ICC has grown significantly in today's interconnected world. This necessity is driven by the phenomenon of global human interaction, which has become increasingly instantaneous and boundaryless due to rapid technological advancements. Myron, and Koester [6], citing McLuhan's term "global village," describe a world where individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact and connect. In this context, understanding and respecting cultural differences becomes crucial. ICC is considered a solution for navigating these complexities [3]. It is deemed essential in various domains, including human resources, business, teacher education, foreign languages, international education, social work, engineering, religion, and healthcare. In essence, every facet of modern life, which involves communication and interaction, is closely tied to ICC.

Advancements in information technology have also reshaped communication patterns, allowing people to interact across different places and times without physical presence [7,8,9]. Agreements and collaborations can occur virtually, necessitating effective and culturally appropriate communication. The skill enabling

such interaction is ICC [10,11,12,13].

Since ICC is deeply connected to communication, it is often incorporated into foreign language classrooms. Byram [14] emphasized that the goal of integrating ICC in foreign language teaching is to create intercultural speakers. According to him, an intercultural speaker is someone capable of engaging with diverse cultural and linguistic identities while avoiding the stereotyping often associated with viewing others through a single identity. To achieve this, foreign language teaching should include intercultural dimensions, fostering students' intercultural competence.

Byram [14] further explained that these intercultural dimensions help students acquire linguistic competence for speaking or writing appropriately and correctly while simultaneously developing their ability to ensure mutual understanding between people of different social identities. Moreover, they learn to interact with others as complex individuals with multiple identities and unique perspectives.

The English language serves as a prominent example of integrating ICC due to its status as a global lingua franca. It is used worldwide for communication by native speakers, second-language speakers, and foreign-language learners. The rapid development of information technology has significantly increased the number of English users. In 2000, 360 million people spoke English as a native language, 375 million as a second language, and 750 million learned it as a foreign language [15]. By 2023, the number of English users had risen to over 1.5 billion, encompassing native, second-language, and foreign-language speakers worldwide [16].

The integration of ICC in English language teaching has been extensively researched. For example, Nindya et al.[17] found that participants demonstrated a good understanding of ICC elements but rarely implemented ICC-related activities in EFL teaching. The study recommended further research, particularly involving experienced teachers and employing methods such as face-to-face interviews, observations, and teacher self-reports for more comprehensive findings.

Similarly, Ahangari [18] discovered a positive impact of ICC on students' communication skills and motivation in language learning. She suggested expanding research to the university level, involving more participants from countries like Indonesia, and exploring additional aspects of ICC. Atay et al. [1] observed that while teachers recognize the importance of ICC, they often fail to implement it in practice. They recommended investigating methods for integrating ICC into English teaching. Another study underscored the critical role of ICC in English language instruction [19].

Previous research highlights the significance of integrating ICC, primarily from teachers' or lecturers' perspectives. However, they also suggest extending research in this area. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring lecturers' perceptions of integrating ICC in teaching English as a foreign language. Unlike previous studies that employed quantitative or mixed methods, this research adopts a qualitative approach. Additionally, it differs in terms of participant demographics and aims to uncover lecturers' perceptions of ICC integration in English language teaching at the university level. The research question is: What are lecturers' perceptions of integrating ICC in teaching English as a foreign language at the university level?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Nature of ICC**

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has been referred to by various terms, including Transcultural Communication Competence (TCC), Intercultural Effectiveness (IE), Cross-Cultural Understanding (CCU), and Internationalization Competence (IC). Despite the differences in terminology, these terms share a similar essence. For the purposes of this research, the term Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is adopted.

In the context of foreign language education, ICC focuses on developing intercultural speakers. Byram [14], a key theorist in the field of intercultural competence in foreign language education, introduced the term "communicative" to emphasize the importance of communication. He stated that intercultural competence in foreign language teaching pertains to an individual's ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. This requires communicative competence, which encompasses both linguistic and social aspects of communication. Therefore,

intercultural competence in foreign language education is widely recognized as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Byram [14] further elaborated that the primary goal of integrating ICC in foreign language teaching is to develop intercultural speakers. These individuals possess the competence to engage with complex and diverse cultural and linguistic identities and are able to overcome the stereotyping that often accompanies perceiving others through a single identity. To achieve this, foreign language education must incorporate intercultural dimensions.

Intercultural dimensions play a crucial role in helping students acquire the linguistic competence required to communicate effectively, whether in speaking or writing. They empower students to express themselves accurately and appropriately while simultaneously fostering their intercultural competence. For instance, these dimensions enable students to ensure mutual understanding between individuals from different social identities and to interact with others as multifaceted human beings with unique identities and perspectives. This dual focus on linguistic and intercultural competence prepares students to communicate effectively in a globalized world, promoting both linguistic fluency and cultural sensitivity.

## **2.2 Urgency of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)**

The urgency of developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in language teaching has garnered significant attention among scholars, who argue that learners must not only master the grammatical and linguistic aspects of a language but also acquire the ability to use it in socially and culturally appropriate ways. This need is emphasized in the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which highlights the importance of intercultural awareness, skills, and existential competence in foreign language education. Three key phenomena encourage the integration of ICC components in English language teaching: the interconnectedness between language and culture, the impact of globalization, and the role of ICC in enhancing foreign language learning outcomes.

The first phenomenon, the interconnection between language and culture, underscores the importance of ICC in teaching. Language reflects a speaker's thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes, which are elements of culture. As such, learning a language inherently involves learning the culture of its speakers, making the inclusion of cultural components in foreign language teaching essential. Scholars propose integrating ICC to develop intercultural speakers—individuals who can navigate cultural complexities in communication. For example, Estaji and Rahimi [19] observed that ICC awareness enhances language teaching, learning, and teacher performance, while Funghomchoei and Kardkarnklai [20] found that although English teachers often recognize the importance of ICC, they lack sufficient knowledge about its practical implementation. While educators perceive a strong connection between language and culture, this perception does not always lead to ICC integration in teaching practices. Notably, Atay et al. [1] and Funghomchoei and Kardkarnklai [20] reported significant correlations between teachers' awareness of language-culture connections and their efforts to implement ICC, yet challenges remain in translating this awareness into actionable strategies.

The second phenomenon is globalization, which has created a world where people from diverse cultures and languages interact despite being geographically distant. Lustig and Koester [6] identified four imperatives for ICC in the global era: demographic, technological, economic, and peace imperatives. These factors highlight the need for effective intercultural communication to foster mutual understanding, flexibility, harmony, and empathy in a globalized society. ICC equips learners to communicate effectively in international environments by understanding cultural norms, rules of behavior, and appropriate communication strategies. This promotes cultural sensitivity, which is vital for harmonious international relations and effective global interactions.

The third phenomenon relates to the impact of ICC on foreign language teaching and learning. Research shows a significant correlation between students' ICC and their language proficiency, motivation, and interaction. For instance, Mirzaei and Forouzandeh [22] argued that cultural awareness and the desire to engage with speakers of a second language form the foundation for language learning success. Similarly, Basalama and Machmud [23] emphasized the importance of integrating local and target cultures to enhance learner motivation and engagement in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. Liu [24] and Achieng [25] found that ICC significantly improves learners' verbal communication and fosters a willingness to communicate, regardless of their proficiency levels. ICC integration also enhances classroom interaction, promoting open-mindedness, respect for cultural diversity, and enjoyment in multicultural

settings. Seven positive interactions observed among learners include their enjoyment of diversity, respect for cultural behaviors, open-mindedness, efforts to gather cultural information, rejection of cultural superiority, positive responses during multicultural interactions, and enjoyment in being among students from other cultures.

In conclusion, the interconnectedness of language and culture, the impact of globalization, and the role of ICC in enhancing language learning outcomes underscore the critical importance of ICC in English teaching. ICC not only prepares students for effective communication in diverse cultural contexts but also enhances their language proficiency, motivation, and classroom interactions. However, despite strong theoretical backing, practical challenges persist in implementing ICC, necessitating further exploration of educators' perceptions and strategies for integrating ICC into teaching practices.

### 3. Methods

This research employed a qualitative method with a case study design to examine the perceptions of lecturers regarding the integration of ICC components in teaching English. The participants were two English lecturers from the English Education Department at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo, selected based on specific criteria, such as a minimum of seven years of teaching experience and their practice of integrating cultural dimensions in their teaching. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interview sessions with the participants.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the data, the interview process was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, participants answered four open-ended questions in a face-to-face interview. The questions focused on their understanding, experiences, beliefs, and actions in teaching English-speaking courses. Afterward, the researcher transcribed the interview data. In the second stage, the transcriptions were confirmed with the interviewees, leading to some corrections and additional information. The third stage involved rechecking the interview results with the participants for further validation.

The interview data were analyzed using the triangulation technique, which includes three steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction phase, the researcher transcribed the interviews and highlighted key themes. These main ideas were then organized into categories during the data display phase. Finally, the categorized data were interpreted to draw conclusions about the findings.

The process of data analysis is illustrated in Figure 1, which visually represents the steps of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This figure helps clarify the analytical framework used in the study and underscores the systematic approach taken to ensure the reliability of the findings.

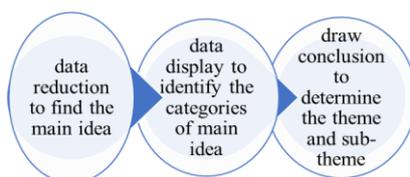
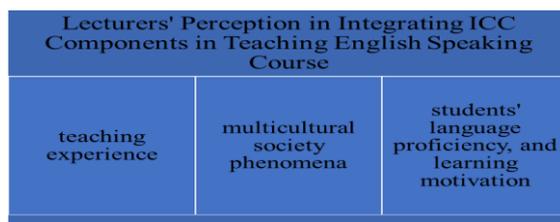


Figure 1: Flow of data analysis

### 4. Findings

This research identifies three primary factors shaping lecturers' perceptions regarding the integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) components into English-Speaking courses: teaching experience, multicultural societal phenomena, and students' language proficiency and motivation. First, the lecturers' years of teaching experience, combined with their exposure to various cultural and linguistic contexts, significantly influence their perception of the importance of ICC integration. Their professional backgrounds and teaching practices help them recognize the need to prepare students for effective communication in diverse cultural settings. Second, the multicultural nature of society and the globalized communication landscape heighten lecturers' awareness of the critical role ICC plays in education. They perceive that students must be equipped to navigate cultural differences and engage in intercultural dialogue effectively. Finally, the lecturers observed that integrating ICC components into English-Speaking courses enhances students' motivation and improves their language proficiency. By incorporating cultural dimensions, they believe students are more engaged and better prepared to use the language appropriately in various contexts. These interconnected factors are visually represented in Figure 2, which illustrates the

dynamic interplay between teaching experience, societal influences, and student characteristics in shaping lecturers' teaching practices.



**Figure 2:** Lecturers' Perception in Integrating ICC Components in Teaching English-Speaking Course at Islamic Higher Education

#### 4.1 Teaching Experience

Lecturers in the English Education Department at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo, possess significant teaching experience. Takbir, with nine years of experience, shared: *"Since I began teaching at the English Education Department in 2016, I have consistently taught English Speaking courses."*

Similarly, Rindu, with seven years of experience, noted: *"Since joining IAIN Sultan Amai in 2018, I have been teaching English Speaking courses."*

Through their years of teaching, both lecturers have identified several challenges their students face in speaking English. Takbir observed: *"Students lack vocabulary mastery and tend to be textbook-oriented, which limits their ability to contextualize vocabulary in conversations. They also struggle with idiomatic expressions."* Rindu added:

*"Students face difficulties using English in context, such as employing formal expressions appropriately. They also lack an understanding of the cultural nuances in English conversations."* The lecturers emphasized the interconnectedness of language and culture. Takbir explained: *"Language and culture are deeply intertwined. Language reflects societal norms, values, and traditions, making it a cultural artifact. Teaching language means recognizing its cultural roots and social functions."*

Rindu echoed this sentiment: *"Language is both a communication tool and a reflection of culture. Effective language teaching involves helping students understand grammar, vocabulary, and the cultural context of the language's usage. For instance, understanding idioms, gestures, and formality requires cultural awareness."* Both lecturers emphasized that culture shapes language features, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, and provides context for effective communication. They noted: *"Culture influences language features and helps speakers understand the appropriate context for words or expressions. For example, cultural habits guide when, where, and how to use idioms or expressions."*

#### 4.2 Influence of Multicultural Society

The lecturers also recognized the growing need for cultural competence due to globalization and multicultural interactions. Takbir highlighted: *"Global interactions in business, politics, education, and other fields necessitate fluency and cultural competence. Students must be prepared to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries to avoid misunderstandings."* Rindu elaborated: *"In today's globalized world, effective communication requires not only linguistic skills but also an understanding of cultural nuances. This competence is crucial for students aiming to work in multicultural environments."*

The lecturers observed that English serves as a lingua franca, further necessitating the integration of ICC components in teaching. Takbir noted: *"English is widely used for communication among native and non-native speakers globally."*

Rindu added: *"Cultural integration in language teaching fosters respect for cultural differences and enhances intercultural communicative competence, which is essential in today's globalized era."*

#### 4.3 Students' Language Proficiency and Motivation

The integration of ICC components in English-Speaking courses has positively impacted students' language proficiency. According to the lecturers: *"Incorporating ICC components expands students' vocabulary and*

helps them understand the contextual use of language. It also improves their nonverbal communication skills and ability to interact authentically." Additionally, the integration of ICC components boosts students' learning motivation. Takbir stated:

*"When ICC is integrated, students gain confidence, reduce language anxiety, and improve their vocabulary usage and sentence authenticity. This motivates them to perform better."* Rindu highlighted: *"Learning culture alongside language fosters critical thinking, open-mindedness, and tolerance towards cultural differences. It also makes learning more engaging and relevant, inspiring students to strive for opportunities such as studying or working abroad."*

The lecturers' perceptions are supported by theoretical frameworks in language teaching. Takbir referred to David Brown's theory: *"Brown emphasizes that foreign language learning should include cultural components to enhance understanding."* Rindu referenced Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis: *"Krashen's theory highlights the importance of cultural context in providing comprehensible input, which accelerates vocabulary acquisition and understanding in the target language."* The integration of ICC components in English-Speaking courses benefits both language proficiency and intercultural sensitivity. By addressing linguistic and cultural elements simultaneously, students are better equipped to navigate global interactions. The lecturers' teaching experiences and their observations of multicultural phenomena further reinforce the necessity of embedding ICC components in language teaching, fostering not only communication skills but also global citizenship.

## 5. Discussion

This research found that lecturers have positive perceptions regarding the integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) components into teaching English-Speaking Courses. These positive perceptions are influenced by their teaching experience, the phenomena of multicultural society, and students' language proficiency and motivation. The lecturers, who have 7 to 9 years of teaching experience in Speaking Courses, stated that this experience has enabled them to analyze and identify challenges in their teaching. Based on their experience, the lecturers identified that students often struggle with understanding the context of speaking due to their limited knowledge of the cultural aspects of English conversation.

The lecturers' teaching experience has strengthened their belief in the significant correlation between language and culture. They emphasized that language is not just a communication tool for social interaction but also a reflection of the culture of its speakers. This belief aligns with Jarosz et al. [26], who stated that language and culture are intertwined and cannot be achieved independently, as the contexts of situation and culture are crucial for understanding utterances or texts appropriately. Furthermore, Brown and Eisterhold [27] cited Clifford Geertz's assertion that language serves as the primary tool for expressing cultural meaning, encompassing societal ideas, beliefs, values, and norms. Similarly, Dell Hymes, as quoted in 21.

Kusumaningputri and Widodo [21], argued that understanding how language is used in social contexts requires understanding the culture itself, as norms of communication, ethics of interaction, and speaking styles are deeply influenced by culture.

This study revealed that the lecturers feel confident about integrating ICC components in their teaching, as they interpret and apply theories from Brown and Krashen. According to the lecturers, Brown's theory emphasizes that foreign language teaching must include cultural components. Meanwhile, Krashen's theory highlights that cultural context facilitates faster and easier comprehension of target language meanings and vocabulary. Their statements are also supported by Kramch's theory [28], which posits that learning a language cannot be separated from learning its associated culture, as language and culture are inseparable and must be taught together to create competent EFL learners.

The lecturers' positive perceptions are also shaped by their perspective on the globalized, multicultural society. They strongly believe that foreign language education must incorporate ICC components to prepare students for global interactions where diverse cultures meet in shared spaces. The findings reflect their belief that the modern world necessitates cross-cultural collaboration skills, as many projects and jobs involve international teams. This perspective aligns with [6], who described the dramatic increase in multicultural interactions in the 21st century, referring to McLuhan's concept of the "global village"—a world where different ethnicities and cultures coexist and collaborate in shared social spaces. The lecturers stressed that multicultural society encourages the integration of ICC into English teaching since English is widely used in global communication for professional, educational, and humanitarian purposes, as noted by [29,30].

Additionally, this research found that lecturers' positive perceptions stem from their observations of students' language proficiency and motivation. The lecturers believe that including ICC components in teaching helps students expand their vocabulary by becoming more aware of contextually appropriate words and expressions. They also noted that integrating ICC enhances students' motivation to learn. This aligns with [24], who found that students' English proficiency is significantly related to improved acquisition of ICC, and [25], who reported that ICC components in English classes enhance students' verbal communication skills. Similarly, Mirzaei and Forouzandeh, Basalama and Machmud [22,23] highlighted that integrating ICC components stimulates English learners' motivation to engage in their studies.

This finding adds to the existing body of knowledge by identifying teaching experience as a factor influencing lecturers' approaches to integrating ICC components. Previous research focused on the strong correlation between language and culture [31,32,33], the role of multicultural society [34,20], and the impact of students' language proficiency and motivation [35]. However, this research provides new insights into how lecturers' teaching experience contributes to their positive perceptions of ICC integration in English teaching.

## 6. Conclusion

The lecturers' perception of integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) components in teaching English is deemed urgent, based on three key beliefs: their teaching experience, the phenomena of multicultural society, and the impact on students' language proficiency and motivation. The lecturers recognize that culture and language are inseparable, asserting that teaching a language should inherently include its cultural dimension. This perspective aligns with established theories of language teaching, particularly English language teaching, which emphasize the integration of cultural aspects.

The growing interaction within multicultural societies further reinforces the lecturers' belief in the importance of integrating ICC components. They perceive this integration as vital for preparing students to adapt and thrive in multicultural environments, fostering effective cross-cultural communication. Additionally, the lecturers believe that incorporating ICC components enhances students' language proficiency and learning motivation. By promoting open-mindedness and critical thinking, students become more actively and progressively involved in the teaching and learning process. Based on these findings, this research suggests that integrating ICC components into English teaching is essential. However, to gain a deeper understanding of lecturers' perceptions, it is recommended to increase the number of participants and expand the scope of future research.

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Heritage, Tourism, and Language Learning. Her academic expertise and teaching contributions reflect a commitment to enhancing professional communication and promoting the interplay between language, culture, and tourism.



**Moon Hidayati Otoluwa** is a lecturer in the Applied Linguistics Study Program at Gorontalo State University with a robust academic and professional background. She earned her Bachelor's degree (Doktoranda) in 1984 from the Institute of Teacher Training and Education (IKIP) Manado. She continued her education, obtaining a Master of Humanities (M.Hum) in 1996 from Gadjah Mada University and a Doctorate (Ph.D.) in 2007 from Universitas Negeri Jakarta. Dr. Otoluwa has an extensive teaching portfolio, specializing in applied linguistics and English language education. During the 2022/2023 academic year, she taught Writing III: Scientific Writing, Qualitative Research on Language, and Issues and Seminar on English Language Teaching. In the 2023/2024 academic year, her teaching focus includes Qualitative Research on Language, Literary Criticism, and Issues and Seminar on English Language Teaching. With her expertise in research and language teaching, Dr. Otoluwa continues to contribute significantly to the advancement of linguistics and English language education.



**Rahman Taufiqrianto Dako** is a lecturer in the English Education Study Program at Gorontalo State University. He completed his higher education at prominent universities in Indonesia. In 1999, Rahman earned a Bachelor of Arts (S.S.) degree from Sam Ratulangi University. Subsequently, in 2005, he completed his Master of Humanities (M.Hum.) degree at Gadjah Mada University. He continued his education to the doctoral level and obtained a Doctorate (Dr.) from Gadjah Mada University in 2017. In his academic career, Rahman has taught various courses in linguistics and English studies. During the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year, he taught Sociolinguistics, Semantic-Pragmatics, and Psycholinguistics. In the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, he is teaching Sociolinguistics, Semantic-Pragmatics, and English Morphology. Rahman's research interests are deeply rooted in the fields of linguistics, particularly sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and psycholinguistics, which align closely with the courses he teaches.



**Karmila Machmud** is a lecturer in the Applied Linguistics Study Program at Gorontalo State University. She pursued her education at distinguished institutions both domestically and internationally. In 1998, Karmila earned her Bachelor of Education degree (S.Pd.) from Gorontalo State University. She continued her studies and, in 2003, obtained a Master of Arts (MA) in English Language and Linguistics from The University of Sydney. In 2011, she completed her Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) at Ohio University. As an academic, Karmila teaches various courses in English language studies and applied linguistics. During the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year, she taught TOEFL Preparation Class, Speaking for Professional Context, and Public Speaking. In the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, she is teaching TOEFL Preparation Class, Speaking for Professional Context, and Quantitative Research on Language. Karmila's research interests focus on English language education, applied linguistics, and quantitative methods in language research, reflecting her academic background and teaching expertise.



**Moh. Syahrudin Ibrahim** is a lecturer in the English Education Study Program at Gorontalo State University. He completed his higher education at esteemed institutions both in Indonesia and abroad. In 2004, Syahrudin earned his Bachelor of Education (S.Pd.) degree from Gorontalo State University. He then pursued his Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree at Flinders University in 2009 and completed his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) at Monash University in 2021. Syahrudin is actively involved in teaching courses related to English education and research methodologies. During the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year, he taught English in Administration and Management and Issues and Seminar on English Language Teaching. In the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, he is teaching Quantitative Research on Language, Qualitative Research on Language, English in Administration and Management, and Issues and Seminar on English Language Teaching. Syahrudin's academic interests lie in English language teaching, research methodologies in linguistics, and administrative uses of English, which align closely with his teaching and research endeavors.