

EOP DEMAND IN INDUSTRIAL CORPORATIONS: A STEPPING STONE TO A WORK WONDERS ESP TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to unearth the English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) demand in industrial corporations. The findings are then aimed at providing insight to schools and universities about EOP needed in workplace, so that schools and universities preparing qualified work power can create an effective ESP teaching.

This research uses employees of some industrial corporations and the personnel of Human Resource Department in Bontang, East Kalimantan as the subject. This research attends field observation, needs assessment, and needs analysis as the procedure. Data collected in this research are analyzed descriptively. In the field observation, present situation data picturing the situation of the present English for Specific Purposes (ESP) mastery of the research subjects are gathered. In order to do so, the researcher builds cooperation with one of prominent English courses in Bontang in which the research subjects study English. The teachers and manager of the English course are brought in as the sources of information to complete data gathered from an ESP classroom observation and personal experience. The teachers are interviewed and given a set of questionnaires related to the ESP classes and the research subjects' proficiency in English. Upon the data collection, the data are then inferred to find the problems related to the class.

The needs assessment and needs analysis are aimed at revealing the needs of EOP in the industrial corporation. Therefore, target needs data are collected from the research subjects. The data consist of information about the operators' necessities, lacks and wants in learning English. To get the intended data, the research subjects are given a set of questionnaires and some of them are interviewed, while the personnel of the Human Resource Department of the industrial corporations are interviewed. Once the data are collected, they are grouped into the operators' necessities, lacks, and wants. The needs analysis results on the findings that the research subjects' necessities in learning English is to be able to communicate orally about topics related to their job both in a casual conversation and in delivering a presentation. English is also used when they read manuals and journals, and write reports related to their job. It is also revealed that vocabulary mastery is the main problem, while improving their knowledge about English related to their job and improving their confidence in using English are their wants.

Finally, an ESP syllabus containing general and specific objectives of the course, schema of the topics, and list of materials can be derived from the findings to provide a work wonders ESP teaching in schools and universities.

Keywords: industrial corporations, ESP, EOP.

Introduction

As the world is going global, employees of industrial corporations need to keep in pace for the sake of competitiveness. As a consequence, the demand of ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:19) comes from various fields of work of several industrial corporations such as shipping, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, logistics and many more. The ESP demands do not only push for mastering technical terms related to the field, but many times also relates with English as means of communication and also English to deliver presentation of specific field discussion. Thus, general English mastery as well as EOP mastery is unavoidable, not only for those who are bounded up with language studies, but also for those working on any fields in order to be globally recognized.

Learning from personal experiences, casual and formal observations as well as formal and informal interviews with other teachers teaching English for Specific Purposes – henceforth ESP-, it is revealed that teaching English for Occupational Purposes, henceforth called as EOP- as part of ESP to fulfill the need of EOP in Industrial Corporation is none of a simple job. Aside from mastering language teaching, an EOP teacher needs not only to have sufficient knowledge on English as means of communication, but also English as a subject-matter. As all teachers are material developers in that they are involved everyday in matching material to the needs and wants of their learners (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2004:ii), EOP teacher needs to have adequate knowledge on learners' field of work which come from areas outside the

teachers' primary areas of expertise (Wu and Badger, 2009) and their need of English related to the field. The teacher also has to bridge the EOP needed in the work place and the learner's proficiency in English. Dudley-Evans (2001:131) points out a similar idea by arguing that teaching ESP is not a simple job as it is a materials-led field. In addition to it, the students' proficiency in English is varied. Some of them already have good proficiency, while others have just begun to get to know English. Dudley-Evan (2001:132) concludes that ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. The availability of an appropriate syllabus, proper materials and qualified EOP teachers are main conditions to run a good EOP teaching. Dudley-Evans (2001:133) asserts that for ESP the key defining feature is its teaching and materials development on the basis of the results of needs analysis. Chen (2006) also concludes that any course designers of any ESP courses should firstly explore the potential learner's actual and various needs, wants, shortfall and requirements. This argumentation leads to other challenges to ESP classes as the materials used should be specific materials developed based on the result of needs analysis aimed at accommodating all the learner's needs.

The Study

In order to achieve the purpose of this research that is to unearth the English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) demand in industrial corporations, needs assessment and needs analysis to the industrial corporations is conducted. In order to be specific, this study is focused on EOP needed by operators who work in an Industrial Corporation as in the operational level, employees are demanded to be able to understand every work order given and to perform appropriate responses toward the

order. The work order is in English as most of the time it has relation with either machines or chemical substances with their English terms. Furthermore, higher managerial levels are called for their sufficient proficiency in English for they have to deal with international business.

It is highly expected that the result of this study becomes insight to schools and universities about EOP needed in workplace, so that schools and universities preparing qualified work power can create a qualified ESP syllabus that leads to an effective ESP teaching.

Research Participants

In this study, the operators as well as the personnel of the Human Resource Department of two industrial corporations in Bontang, East Kalimantan become the subject of the study whose participation is on voluntary basis. The industrial corporations are chosen based on the consideration that one of them is a prominent state-owned-corporation, and the other one is a well-established joint venture company in which EOP is unavoidably needed.

The information from the operator is needed as they are the learners whose needs are one of the major considerations in setting the objective of the course. Another party whose needs also become the determining points in setting the objective is the industrial corporation. One of the ways to get information of what the industrial corporation needs in relation to the use of English for their employees in particular and for the corporation in general is through its personnel of human resource department. It is assumed that the personnel of the human resource department are not only realized, but also aware of what the corporation's needs are and how to find best ways to

fulfill the needs. The involvement of the personnel of the human resource departments is on voluntary basis.

There were 18 operators taking part in this study. 15 of whom participated by responding to questionnaires given to them while 3 others were interviewed. Other interviews were conducted to two human resource department's personnel of the two industrial corporations.

Needs Assessment

Needs assessment is needed to collect all necessary information related to participants' needs and the sponsor's requirements. In gathering the information Hutchinson and Waters (1987:58) remark that questionnaires, interviews, observation, text gathering, and informal consultation with related party are the most frequently used ways. Data collected in the needs assessment are further analyzed in the needs analysis.

In order to collect the intended data from the research subjects in this study, an interview guide for the personnel of human resource department of industrial corporations and a set of questionnaires and interview guide for operators are employed as the research instruments.

The interview guide for the personnel of the Human Resource Department of the industrial corporation is aimed at getting information about the necessities, lacks, and wants of the operators related to their EOP. The operators' necessities are mainly determined by the companies' targets and goals. Therefore, the interview guide contains some points, namely; the importance of English for operators, the use of English for operators, policy related to English for operators, operators' English competence for their job, operators' job

description, and targets for English mastery for operators as well as language skills emphasized.

The basis of the development of the questionnaire for the operator is to disclose the students' view and purposes of learning English, the students' satisfaction of studying English, the match of the material they need and the material they get, the teaching method that enhance their learning process, the media that facilitate their learning process, the evaluation that motivates them, and the obstacles that they face during their study. These points are elaborated into several questions that make the subject of the research easy in understanding the questions.

The interview guide for the operators is constructed to get a more complete picture about the operators' needs. The needs is rooted from the importance and the use of English for operators, their target in learning English, the match between the materials they get and the EOP needs fulfillment, the time allotment and distribution for the class, the learning time and the problem related to the class. In addition, some information about the operators' opinion about learning English, their reason, preference, and place of learning as well as the learning time, teaching media, and assessment technique which facilitates and motivates them in learning the language is also gathered.

To collect the data from the personnel of the Human Resource Department, interview based on the interview guide is conducted and recorded. The participation of the human resource personnel is on voluntary basis.

The same activities are also performed in collecting the data from some of the operators. The operators are chosen

randomly, and based on their voluntary participation; the interview is conducted and recorded. The data collection from the feedback toward the set of questionnaires is performed firstly by handing out the set of questionnaires to the operators. Oral explanation about how to respond to the set of questionnaires is conducted. The operators are assured that their responses are confidential as they are not obliged to provide their names in the questionnaires sheets. Then, the operators are asked to give responses to the questionnaires by giving true information needed. Answers are given to any question that possibly occur prior or during their activity in responding the set of questionnaires. Once they are finished, the set of questionnaires are collected and coded.

Needs Analysis

The data related to the operators' target needs reveal the operators' necessities which shows that 86% of the operators stated that the goal of their learning English is to improve their personal quality, 33% of them learn English to get promotion in their work place and 26% of the operators learn English as it is demanded by their job and to keep up with the global world. Related to where the operators use their English, most them use it at home for the sake of practicing, some others use it at work place and educational institution since they want to use it in a real context as demanded by their job and to get feedback for the sake of their better English, while few others use it anywhere as long as English is needed. Therefore, it is obvious that all operators admitted that English is important as what was emphasized by all the three operators interviewed. They argued that English is very important to them as they have to deal with it almost everyday since everything related to machinery they work is in English.

Other information revealed is that all of the operators use English to communicate orally especially when they have to deal with expatriate colleagues, execute business negotiation and deliver a presentation. It is also used when they read manuals and journals related to their job as an addition to another use of English; to write report. These uses are due to the operators’ job description; maintaining and operating machines, analyzing process, reading industrial journal, writing report, and reading manual in which speaking is mostly needed, followed by reading, listening and writing. The speaking topics often encountered by the operators are casual conversation topics and topics related to their job which they often use to speak with their friends, colleagues, expatriates, and

their family. The same topics go for listening topics as casual conversation topics and job related topics are the first two topics out of four topics that are often encountered by the operators, while the two other topics are topics related to machinery and business conversation. On the other hand, in reading, topics related to their job found in articles is on the top of the list surpassing the necessity of reading manuals, formal letters, and general issues which come in order from the most to the least encountered. Finally, topics in writing which is necessary for the operators are topics related to job reports, business letters, meeting notes, memos, articles, and documents to vendor. The findings related to the operators’ necessities gained from the interview is shown in the following Table 3. 1.

Table 3.1 Data about the Operators’ Necessity based on the Interview with the Operators

Variable	Indicator	Description	Response
Target needs	Oral explanation from operators about necessity, lacks and wants related to English in their job	Necessity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of English • The Use of English 	Very important Operating machine Deal with expatriate Reading journal EOP Business Presentation

Based on the interview with the human resource and development personnel, it can be concluded that English is very important for operators because all machines used in the factory and all processes involved in the production are in English. Although there is no certain policy in both companies about English competency for their operators, both companies aired the same arguments that their operators have to have knowledge

about English related to machinery and how they work and English for daily conversation so that eventually English speaking atmosphere is in the workplace everyday. It is also expected that the employees perform better in their job as their English proficiency improved. Table 3.2 is presents the data related to the operators’ necessity.

Table 3.2 Data about the Operators’ Necessity Based on the Interview with the Human Resource Department Personnel

Variable	Indicator	Description	Response
Target needs	Oral explanation from Companies’ HRD personnel about necessity, lacks and wants related to English for operators	<p>Necessity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of English • The use of English for operators • Policy related to English for operators 	<p>Very important because all machines used and process involved are in English</p> <p>Conversation</p> <p>English related to machine and how it works</p> <p>English related to fertilizer production process</p> <p>No certain policy from the company. It’s merely policy from the Human Resource Department to improve the employees’ proficiency in English to help them perform better in their job. Yet, there is no specific target from the HRD.</p>

The set of questionnaires and the interview with the operators also resulted in the information about the operators’ wants in learning English. Based on the interview, it is found out that mastering English related to their job and improving their confidence in using English are their target of learning. Meanwhile, the operators’ wants dealing with the kinds of English they want to learn lead to information that almost all of them want English for casual conversation and English related to their job though few of them also want English for test.

The data gathered both from the interview and from the responses toward the set of questionnaires show that discussion is the operators’ favorite teaching techniques as all of them want it. Aside of discussion, most of the operators also want to have presentation and role play employed in the teaching-

learning activity, while few of them chose to include lecturing as the teaching technique. All of the operators also stated that they want the teacher to use instructional media in the teaching-learning process. Dealing with methods of evaluation, 80% of the operators want the evaluation to be in the form of essay, while 60% of them want it to be in the form of assignment, 53% want it to be in the form of multiple choice and only 26% want it to be in the form of direct error correction. On the other hand, the operators seem to agree with the time allotment and distribution as well as the schedule of the course since no one interviewed stated any objection of the setting by arguing that the time allotment and distribution are enough and that they have no problem with their schedule of learning English. The following Table 3.3 and Table 3.4 present the data about the operators’ wants explained above.

Table 3.3 Data about the Operators’ Wants based on the Result of the Interview with the Operators

Variable	Indicator	Description	Response
Target needs	Oral explanation from operators about necessity, lacks and wants related to English in their job	Wants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target in learning English • Teaching technique which facilitates learning • Time distribution • Time allotment • Learning time/schedule 	EOP Improving confidence Group discussion Enough Enough No problem

Table 3.4 Data about the Operators’ Wants based on the Result of the Set of Questionnaires Given to the Operators.

Variable	Indicator	Description	Response	%
Target needs	Written information from operators about necessity, lacks and wants related to English in their job	Wants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching technique • Kinds of English • Evaluation methods 	Discussion Presentation Role play Lecturing Casual conversation English for test English for job Multiple choice Essay Assignment Direct error correction	100 80 66 40 93 46 86 53 80 60 26

Information about the operators’ lack can be concluded from the feedback given to the set of questionnaires handed out to the operators as well as from the interview with the operators and human resource departments’ personnel. It was revealed that all of the operators have problems in reading related to their limited vocabulary. Only one operator stated that his problem in reading is also due to his lack of grammar knowledge. Lack of vocabulary is also the main problem for the operators related to their speaking

skill, while pronunciation and lack of confidence contribute significant barrier for them to speak in English tough few of them also said that their poor grammar also demotivate them to use the language. Grammar also becomes minor problems for the operators when it relates to their listening skill - the same goes to the native speakers’ pronunciation, too. The operators put vocabulary as their primary problem in listening. It makes them find it difficult to comprehend the ideas of the listening

materials they listen to. On the opposite of what happens in the other three skills where lack of vocabulary becomes the main obstacles for the operator in using the language, it becomes a small problem to the operators when it is compared to their lack of grammar knowledge when they have to write in English. In conclusion, the operators are still struggling with their vocabulary and grammar mastery, and they also need to practice more as from the interview the operators said that their less practice in using the language is one of their problem in mastering the language.

Other problems had by the operators dealing with the language skills is their busy schedule that makes them have not much time to learn the language. Not to mention

that the English taught does not really fulfill what they need is shown by the data that 11 out of 15 operators stated that the English taught does not really fulfill their needs. Ten of the operators mentioned that the material taught is just too much, 4 of whom said that it does not match their needs and one of them said that it was too difficult. Based on the interview it was unearth that the materials helps the low level students, yet it is less challenging for high level students. Almost half of the operators argued that the duration in each meeting is not enough. It is just too short and there are too few meetings in each level though two of the operators did not agree with this opinion. Table 3.5 below shows the findings related to the operators' lacks.

Table 3.5 Data about the Operators' Lacks based on the Result of the Interview with the Operators and the Human Resource Departments' Personnel

Variable	Indicator	Description	Response
Target needs	Oral explanation from Companies' HRD personnel about necessity, lacks and wants related to English for operators	Lacks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operators' English competence for their job • Operators' job description 	Those who are university graduate generally have sufficient English for their job, but the high school graduates need to improve their English to perform better in their job and improve their personal quality. Operating machines Analyzing process in producing fertilizer
Target needs	Oral explanation from operators about necessity, lacks and wants related to English in their job	Lacks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs fulfillment • Time distribution • Time allotment • Problems in learning English 	Quite match in a sense that it helps the low level students, but less challenging for high level students Not enough Enough Less practice Lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge

The interview with the personnel of the human resource department of the two companies also resulted in the information that leads to conclusion about the operators' lacks in English. From the interview, it is found out that the operators' job description is mainly to operate machines and analyze the process related to producing the product. Meanwhile, the employees who are university graduate generally have sufficient English for their job, but the high school graduates need to improve their English to perform better in their job and improve their personal quality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the operators' necessity relates to the policy set by the industrial corporations as the sponsor. However, deriving from the findings of this study which have been elaborated in detail in the previous sub chapter, it can be concluded that there is no certain policy from the company about their competence in English; yet the human resource department as the one in charge of improving the employees' quality argues that the operators' target situation mainly relates to communicating orally in form of delivering presentation and building conversations about topics related to their job as well as daily life issues which are performed at the workplace and at home. The operators also have to read manuals and articles related to their job in order to improve their personal quality and to perform better at work. To function effectively in the target situation, therefore, the operators need mainly to develop their speaking and listening skills. However, improvement of their reading and writing skills are also become another important focus of the attention in the syllabus as all of the operators argue that they use English to read manuals, while most of them also use it to write report related to their job. In short, the operators' necessity in learning English

deals with topics related to their job and daily life issues, thus they need to improve all language skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The operators' wants which are reflected through their responses toward the set of questionnaires and interview with them deal with their target in learning English, teaching technique, kinds of English they need, teaching media, methods of evaluation and the learning time. The data disclosed the fact that actually their target in learning English is to get more knowledge about English related to their job and to improve their confidence in using English. Therefore the operators prefer presentation techniques to role play as a teaching-learning activity. However, discussion is their most favorite technique to be practiced; while lecturing is none of the teaching technique wanted by the operators.

The operators' favorite teaching technique is in line with their wants of English as a means of oral communication. They also argued that the use of teaching media facilitates their learning. Yet, when it comes to the learning time which refers to the meeting duration lasting for 90 minutes and conducted for 25 meetings, half of the students stated that the learning time is barely enough while another half argued that it is not enough. The students' willingness to learn and challenge themselves with their English is reflected through their response that they prefer essay to assignment as the evaluation technique.

Information about the operators' lacks which means the discrepancy between the necessity and what the operators already know are reflected through the operators' problem in learning English. From the interview with the operators it is revealed that their lack of vocabulary and grammar

knowledge become their biggest problem. This statement is strengthened by the response toward a set of questionnaires handed out to them showing that lack of vocabulary becomes the biggest problem in almost all of the language skills. Related to the four language skills, there are four problems faced by the operators in total. Those problems are the operators' lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar knowledge, pronunciation and confidence.

Other problems had by the operators are associated with the materials and their needs' fulfillment. It can be conclude that they think the materials are too much; yet, their needs of learning English are not fully fulfilled by the materials they get from ETC's class. However, it does not mean that the materials are not helping them improving their English proficiency. It is just that they do not think that they get enough materials related to their job. The materials indeed help them with their general English and even give them general knowledge about business English, but not technical English as they need it.

The operators' busy schedule and work load are another important issue that prevent them to be actively present and involved in the learning activity as their learning schedule and their job often crash. Their low attendance makes them think that they have limited time and chance to learn and practice to use the language and it leads to a relatively slow progress in their English proficiency's improvement.

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