

NEEDS ANALYSIS ON DEVELOPING A SYLLABUS OF ENGLISH FOR THE STUDY PROGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS UNIVERSITAS BRAWIJAYA

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Abstract: *Needs analysis plays an important role in developing curriculum of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This study investigated the needs and views of Study Program of Development Economics (SPDE) students of ESP courses. There were three types of instruments used, a set of questionnaire for the students of SPDE, interview checklists for the English lecturer and the head of study program, and documents. The result of the study showed that the syllabus should facilitate the ability to communicate in English on academic, general, and vocational situation in the economics field. The English course should also focus the students on reading skill.*

Keywords: *Needs Analysis, Development Economics, English for Specific Purposes*

INTRODUCTION

In Universitas Brawijaya (UB), English is taught as a compulsory subject for non-English departments and is categorized as a general lecture (*Buku Pedoman Akademik Universitas Brawijaya, 2016*). By having English course in all non-English departments, it is expected that all students have good fluency in English. Study Program of Development Economics (SPDE) of UB offers an English course as one of the compulsory subjects provided in its curriculum. Based on Academic Guidebook or *Pedoman Akademik Program Sarjana 2016/2017* of FEB, this course is conducted in one semester, which

is in the first semester of three credits.

English for Specific Purposes is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on learners' reason in learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:19). The teaching of ESP is, in many ways similar to the teaching of English in general although there are some features that are typical in different specialized subjects and that ESP should be recognized as an approach. Robinson (1991:19) viewed ESP as an enterprise, involving education, training, and practice and drawing upon three major realisms of knowledge namely language, pedagogy, and

students'/participants' specialist area of interest. Whereas, Richards and Rogers (2001:107) saw ESP as a movement that seeks to serve the language needs of learners who need English in order to carry out specific roles (e.g. student, engineer, nurse) and who need to acquire content and real-world skills through the medium of it rather than master the language for its own sake.

In general, ESP teachers face similar problems like those faced by teachers of English for general purposes such as learner factors and methodology. Abbot (1978, cited in Budianto, 2003:19) states that ESP teachers will have to face three kinds of problems; materials writing, students' motivation, and responsibility of contents. In short, ESP must be seen as an approach, not as a product. ESP is not a particular kind of language methodology. It is an approach to language learning based on the learners' needs to understand the message conveyed in the reading materials presented to them. This may mean that the students are the users of the language rather than the learner of the knowledge.

Unfortunately, based on personal experiences and casual observations conducted by the researcher, there are two main problems in the teaching of English in SPDE. Firstly, there is no well-designed syllabus of English course found in this study

program. The absence of the syllabus has contributed to the existing problems encountered by either the lecturer or students as there is no statement over the goals of objectives, instructional materials and media, teaching-learning activities, assessment, and time allocation which are supposed to determine how the EAP course is going to be delivered (Nurisma, 2013:8). Secondly, the materials used were taken from the textbook or even downloaded from the Internet for the sake of availability. This might affect the flexibility of the materials.

The conditions above lead the impacts to two parties, the teachers and the students. On the teacher's side, this may take the result of the teaching itself. The absence of the syllabus may take the teaching to a terrible situation since syllabus functions as the guide for teaching. On the student's side, this will lead to their satisfaction of the course. They will think that the teaching is disorganized and unplanned since the class has no course guideline.

This study aimed to investigate the needs and views of SPDE students towards ESP. Since the syllabus has not been developed yet, this study is intended to find information for the syllabus development. Needs analysis as the first step of developing syllabus becomes important to conduct.

This study is intended to investigate needs and views of SPDE students of ESP courses.

Needs Analysis

The first and considered as the very basic step to do is the needs survey. It is considered to be the most important step in developmental research. Howkey (1980, cited in Budianto, 2003:35) says that the needs survey is a tool for course designer. In accordance to this statement, the importance of needs survey focuses on its role as a starting point or a guide for course design, syllabus design, and material selection. The purpose of this step is to find out the needs of the learners for whom the syllabus is intended. It is conducted to obtain as much information as possible in any given situation about the learners and their purposes in acquiring the target language, about the lecturers or instructors and their expectation, about the economics and their needs in the real working world. It also includes the identification of the communication requirements, personal needs, motivations, characteristics of the learners, and any information related to the program. Three important aspects that should be considered are the informants, the instruments, and the procedures of needs survey.

METHODS

Participants

The study was conducted at the odd semester of 2016/2017 academic year in FEB-UB. The subjects of the study were the first-semester students of SPDE-FEB-UB in English language class. The English course students were those who were studying English in the first semester. The students were taken from 2 (two) classes with the total amount of 55 students. Another participant was the lecturer who was teaching in the current semester in the specific study program. This study also involved the lecturer of SPDE as subject specialist teaching the content of major subjects of Development Economics and also the head of SPDE. The purpose of this step was to match the subjects or topics of discussion focusing on students' needs.

Instruments

There were three types of instruments used in this stage: questionnaire, interview, and documents. These instruments are based on Olshtain and Dubin (1992) that in the situation in which there was no syllabus, the syllabus design was based on the information gathered in the fact finding, needs survey, through material in use, lecturers, and students.

A. Questionnaire

Questionnaire is considered to be the most common instrument used. Questionnaires are documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in the sample (Borg & Gall, 2003:222). In this study, the questionnaire was given to all students as the subject of this study. It contains the questions to gather data about the characteristics, needs, and wants. The questionnaire given to the students consisted of 14 (fourteen) questions. They were divided into 4 (four) different parts. The first part was the objective of learning English, the second was the method in teaching English, the third was the material used in English course, and the fourth was the evaluation applied in English course. This questionnaire was made based on the needs and the objective of this study. Therefore, it also invited respondents' comments and suggestions. It was presented in Bahasa Indonesia as the students' native language to avoid ambiguity and misunderstood.

B. Interview

A series of focused interview was carried out to the subject specialist and English course lecturers. Brown (1995:49) states that individual interviews allow for gathering personal responses and view privately. The interview itself was divided into three different parts. The first was interviewing English language

lecturer. This was intended to gather information about the current English teaching and learning in SPDE. The second interview was conducted with the subject specialist. This was intended to gather information concerning the suggestions, comments, and opinions of the English program relevant to the English syllabus. The subject specialist is the lecturer of SPDE who is teaching the major subjects of Development Economics. The third interview was conducted with the head of SPDE. The objective of this interview is similar to the interview with subject specialist.

C. Documents

The collection of documents is permitted to get valuable educational policy such as curriculum and strategic plans of the institution. The document was the blueprint and the guideline of the teaching material and policy in the institution. The most common method of recording data collected during observation was field notes. The field notes contains two components, the descriptive part including a complete description of the setting: who, when, and what was done and the reflective part including the researcher comments on the events (Ary et al., 2002:431)

Meanwhile, the data from the interviews were in the form of information, opinion, and

suggestion. They were coded based on each item, then classified, and finally, changed into percentage. The highest number of the percentage of the data that showed respondents' preference was reported descriptively. Finally, this result was taken into account in designing the English syllabus for the students of SPDE.

Data Collection

There were three things to do in conducting the needs assessment. The first was spreading out the questionnaire to the students of SPDE. The questionnaire was given to 2 (two) classes of SPDE academic year 2016/2017. The second was conducting the interview with the subjects, they were the English course lecturer, subject specialist or the lecturer of SPDE who taught the subject of Economic Development, and the Head of SPDE. The third is studying the document of to get valuable educational policy such as curriculum and strategic plans of the institution.

DISCUSSION

The Result of Analyzing Questionnaires from the Students

The questionnaire for the students consists of three variables, they are the objective of learning English, the methods used in learning English, and

evaluation. Concerning the objectives, the question was intended to find out the objectives that students want to achieve in learning English.

Most students (68.2%) stated that they learn English for communication. The second variable is the methods they do when they learning English. For about 69.5% students prefer to go on discussion when they are in English class. In using media during English learning, 54.6% students think that teaching media are very important. Most students (54.8%) state that the media which are suitable in language learning are audio visual. Talking about the compatibility of their present study with the English they learn in the English course, 92.7% students agree and 81.1% students think that the topics they discuss in English class is appropriate with their present study. English skill they need to learn is speaking (64.5%) and reading (10.5%). The students (74.6%) also think the material they need in English class talks about general topics and topics in their study areas. In learning English, they also experience difficulties. About 37.1% students have difficulties understanding the words in listening, 42.6% students have problems in making sentences in speaking practice, 40.3% students have difficulties in understanding the contents of the texts, and 45.7% students have problems in

grammar accuracy when they write.

In conducting the evaluation, 28.7% students agree with the assignments and they do the group assignments (34.2%).

The Result of Analyzing Interview Data with the Head of the Study Program and the Subject Matter Specialist

The interview covered three variables, they were the general aspects of SPDE, the general aspects of English course, and the general aspects of the teaching in SPDE. The general aspects of SPDE covered three questions. The first was about the profile of SPDE's graduates. Concerning the first question on the profile of the graduates of SPDE, the lecturer explained it based on the document of SPDE. The graduates of SPDE, based on the competence, are those who have career as policy maker in economics of development field and local government's finance. They are expected to be able to compose design of policies suited with the materials in the study program. The materials include government and local government's finance, economics and human and natural resources, as well as Islamic economics and banking. The second question was the opinion of the lecturer toward the improvement of the teaching of English in SPDE. The lecturer

stated that the teaching of English in SPDE should not only introduce English to the students but also introduce the subject taught in SPDE. This also answered third question about the efforts of the faculty to improve the teaching of English. The faculty itself understands that teaching media are needed in the teaching. Therefore, some classes are equipped with audio visual devices to support teaching learning process. It is expected that it is also useful for English course.

The second variable was the general aspects of English course. It covered six descriptions. The first was the objective of English course. Based on the explanation, the objective of English course in SPDE was making the English course as the medium for the students to practice English in the area of Development Economics.

The second question dealt with the skills needed in English course. The secretary of the department stated that the students should be trained with speaking skill as the students should be able to communicate in English. Reading also became another skill to be trained since the students would deal with some sources of their study in English.

Topics to be given in English course became the next question for the lecturer. As the objective of English course in

SPDE, it is expected that the topics of the materials deal with the subjects and topics to be discussed in the study program, such as banking, economics and human resources, local economics, and Islamic economics. The topics should be converted in reading and speaking skills as most lecturers ask the students to read journals and paraphrase or present the topics from journals as a part of assessments. Therefore, the lecturer suggested to give more emphasize to reading and speaking skills.

The next question dealt with teaching methodology and evaluation. The participatory method, where lecturer and students discuss about specific topics, then the lecturer ask the students to present the opinion became the suggestion from the lecturer as the suggested teaching methodology. As other subjects, the lecturer also suggested to evaluate students through their English writing ability and their speaking performance.

The last question is the frequency of English course in SPDE. The lecturer thinks that English course is not enough to be offered in once in students' whole study. They are good in knowledge about Economy, but somehow they will be poor in communication skill, especially in English.

The third variable dealt with general aspects of the

teaching in SPDE. It covers two questions. They are the use of English in assessing students and the requirement to use English in class. Based on the information from the lecturer, the teaching is presented in *Bahasa Indonesia*, but most of the materials and journals that the students should read are in English. The students could present the result of their works either in *Bahasa Indonesia* or in English.

The Result of Analyzing Interview Data with the English Lecturer

The interview with English lecturer covered two variables, they were general aspects of English course and general aspects of SPDE's class. The general aspects of English course covered nine descriptions. The first question dealt with the instructional objective of the English subject at SPDE. The objective of English subject which is also stated in the course outline is to empower students with essential knowledge of communication used in business and ability to apply this knowledge in comprehension and production. This course itself focuses on effective communication (written and oral) in varied business activities. The second question was about the syllabus used in teaching English in SPDE. As stated previously, this course had no syllabus. The

one this course had was the course outline which was used in all departments in Faculty of Economics and Business.

The third question is the topics given to the students. The topics were already stated in the course outline. The teaching media used to deliver the materials are audio visual and audio which were also stated in the course outline.

The fourth question dealt with language skills given to the students. The lecturer stated that this course focused on reading and writing. She thought that when the students practice writing, they need to read first. That is why reading was also taught in this course. Reading strategies were also introduced. Then, she also explained that she also put speaking in the skill she specified for communicative reason. This is in line with fifth question about language skills students should master after they took the English course. Based on course outline, the skills students should master are speaking and writing. The next questions dealt with assessment. Based on course outline, there were six assignments. In measuring students' competence in the course, the lecturer used structured assignments and quizzes. This answered last question the question about kinds of assessments to measure students' competence.

The second variable was the general aspects of SPDE class. It had two descriptions. The first was about problems of teaching ESP course. The lecturer stated that the first difficulty in teaching ESP was the students' English ability. Since the students came from different background, their English ability is somehow varied that made some students discouraged and they did not want to participate in the classroom, especially for students with low ability in English. The second problem was the students' attitude toward English course. The lecturer stated that some students did not want to be active during the class session. They seem uninterested in the class session for English course is not their major lecture.

The last question dealt with the students' proficiency level. The lecturer stated that the level of the students in her class was elementary to intermediate. She assumed this criteria based on the result of the students' pretest score given in the first meeting.

The Result of Analyzing Document of SPDE

The third need analysis was the analysis of the document. The documents were analyzed to get clear direction and expectation of the course formally stated in the Curriculum of SPDE-FEB-UB. It was gained from the study program itself through the

explanation from the academic guide book and the secretary of study program. The academic guide book states the document of each study program such as the curriculum and learning outcomes.

According to the FEB's curriculum, there are 3 credits dedicated to English instruction in SPDE namely *Bahasa Inggris*. This course is presented in the first semester. The English course itself is taught only once in student's active study time. This is in line with the explanation from the secretary of study program. SPDE has the vision to become an internationally standardized educational institution in the field of applied economics corresponding to the dynamics of society.

CONCLUSION

From the result of the questionnaire and interviews, it can be concluded that the first goal of the English course is to equip the students with the ability to communicate in English on academic, general, and vocational situation in the economics field with the interlocutors mainly with their friends, lecturers, and colleagues in their work fields. The second goal is to give students reading skill; to enable students not only understand topic or main idea of an English text or articles standing but also the context and content through answering provided questions, finding

implicit and explicit meaning, skimming, scanning.

To motivate and encourage students getting involved in such activities, other than preparation and guidance, relevant topics of students' major in economics to which the students are eager to be exposed were carefully selected as medium of learning necessary knowledge of language systems and uses.

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