Designing Model of Business English Material Using Communicative Approach

Andi Santoso[1]
Universitas Indraprasta PGRI
e-mail: unindradosen4@gmail.com[1]

Ricky Eka Sanjaya[2]
Universitas Indraprasta PGRI
e-mail: sanjayaricky460@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT
This paper tries to provide a simple and communicative model of business English materials that can be applied in the classroom. In this regard, the language skill taught is speaking with the targeted micro-skills of business vocabulary and function-based language focus (grammar). A communicative approach is used in the development of the materials in order to facilitate the learners to use the language in various social contexts with interlocutors. Accordingly, the method of instruction is a role-play.

Keywords: ESP, needs analysis, business English materials, communicative approach.

INTRODUCTION (Times New Roman 12 bold)

It is widely recognized that, in the context of English language teaching, the area is fragmented into: English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In relation to ESP, it is common that it has been involved in English Language Teaching/ELT, both in the teaching of English as a Second Language/TESL and in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language/TEFL (Nababan, 1994).

In terms of ESP, this area has the same methodology as that of EGP; nevertheless, the most significant difference lies upon themes or topics presented in ESP. Generally speaking, the teaching of ESP (TESP) is conducted in vocational areas such as: business, economics, history, agriculture, medicine, engineering, informatics, physics, biology, chemistry, tourism, and so forth in which themes or topics in certain materials are based upon such areas. For instance, those who are involved in business should be taught English for Business where the themes or topics are related to business.

For that reason, English teachers who are involved in TESP are required to design ESP syllabus and materials based on learners needs and a content subject. However, for instance, in Indonesia, many English teachers, who are teaching in ESP areas, have difficulty designing such teaching syllabi and materials for some purposes. For example, ESP books are rarely available in bookstores. In addition, they have trouble deciding themes/topics involved in their specialist students. In a linguistic aspect, most teachers have difficulty understanding and using technical vocabularies appropriately. Most importantly, in this case, the teachers have trouble designing the materials more communicatively to have appropriate materials for students so that they can interact with

their specialist atmosphere. Therefore, it is indispensable to design a model of Business English materials using a communicative approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to language learning and teaching on the basis of specified learners needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Robinson, 1991). In this instance, needs analysis is crucial to conduct, since this analysis aims at specifying as closely as possible what learners have to do through a medium of English. Briefly, ESP is an approach to language learning in which all decisions on contents and methods are based on specific disciplines, occupations, and activities (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Robinson, 1991).

By implementing an ESP approach, particular ELT activities are to get some benefits of it. Wright (1992) proposes that such benefits embrace learning speed, learning efficiency, and learning effectiveness. First, in terms of learning speed, ESP brings about a quicker acquisition of required linguistic points in that it rests upon the pattern of a native speaker s acquisition of language for specific purposes learners can learn English in a content-based context. Second, concerning learning efficiency, on an ESP course, learners optimally use their learning resources; all of which are expected to bear on acquiring specific, pre-identified linguistic items and skills. Therefore, obviously, needs analysisError! Reference source not found. is of pivotal importance here, because it allows teachers to determine the specific requirements of learners. Related to learning effectiveness, upon a completion of an ESP course, learners are ready to use language appropriately and correctly in vocational purpose-related tasks (e.g. reading technical books, practicum guidebooks, etc.) in which the tasks have been identified by a means of needs analysis. In such a way, learners can improve their English as they focus on.

Therefore, ESP courses should be developed through comprehensive needs analysis identifying what learners need to do in English, the contexts in which they will do it, and in what current level of English. In other words, ESP teachers are required to select activities in their teaching materials in order to move from texts to tasks based on learners specialist areas (Schleppegrell, 1991).

2. NEEDS ANALYSIS

In principle, an ESP approach commences with needs analysis (learners needs). In ESP, learners needs are frequently highlighted related to performance what the learners will be able or expect to do with the language at the end of a course of study (Richards, 2001). Therefore, the needs analysis should be comprehensively conducted. Wright (1992) proposes that good needs analysis be comprised of: a) placement testing designed to know a starting level of courses, b) linguistic needs analysis contents and required language skills/components, c) learning needs analysis geared to identify learners attitudes towards teaching methodology, learning tasks, and activities, and d) learners perceptions analysis used to investigate learners perceptions of themselves and others as part of their learning/professional community.

In a broad sense, Robinson (1991) categorizes needs analysis into: Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA). The former focuses on learners needs and expectations at the end of a language course. The latter is related to

what the learners should start in learning the language and investigating strengths and weaknesses. It may be concluded that needs analysis should involve TSA and PSA.

Thus, in the TESP, needs analysis is applied to investigating what learners should learn with English and how they use it under vocational situations (Schleppegrell, 1991). This is because the needs analysis is designed to: a) gain more input about instructional contents, designs, and activities, b) develop such input, and c) explore the contents of ESP instruction related to learners vocational interests used as a stimulus .

Practically, the needs analysis can be carried out through various instruments. The following are the commonly used instruments: tests, questionnaires, observations, interviews, case studies, and informal consultations with sponsors, learners, or stakeholders (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991).

The following are model of needs analysis questions proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987):

➢ The PSA Analysis Framework:
  - Why is the language needed?
    ✓ For study
    ✓ For work
    ✓ For training
    ✓ For on-the-job training
    ✓ For a combination of these
    ✓ For some other purposes
  - How will the language be used?
    ✓ Skills involved : listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.
    ✓ Activities applied : oral presentation, role-play, discussion, etc.
  - What will the content areas be?
    ✓ Subjects : medicine, biology, agriculture, engineering, economics, etc.
    ✓ Themes/Topics
    ✓ Levels : students, technicians, teachers, administrators, etc.
  - Who will the learner use the language with?
  - Where will the language be used?
  - When will the language be used?
➢ The Learning Analysis Framework:
- Why are learners taking the course?
    ✓ Compulsory or Optional
    ✓ Needs
    ✓ Promotion, etc.
- How do the learners learn?
    ✓ What is their learning background?
    ✓ What is their concept of teaching and learning?
    ✓ What methodology will appeal to them?, etc.
- What resources are available?
- Who are the learners?
- Where will the ESP course take place?
- When will the ESP course be conducted?

By conducting needs analysis, teachers can identify their learners needs: PSA and TSA in the hope that the ultimate goals of TESP could be embodied. Thus, the needs analysis findings can serve as an input of designing ESP areas. One of the needs analysis products is syllabus materials design and development.

3. ESP SYLLABUS AND MATERIALS DESIGN

Prior to designing materials, it is common to determine or analyze a syllabus. The syllabus is designed to investigate learners entry and exit levels, instructional contents, scopes and orders of instruction, and instructional content planning. In outline, a syllabus is comprised of: a) needs analysis, b) objective formulation, c) a selection of instructional contents, d) a design of instructional contents, e) a selection of instructional activities, f) a design of instructional activities, and g) a selection of instructional evaluation. A framework of syllabus can be categorized into:

- Situational, designed based on different situations and communicative skills related to a particular situation;
- Topical, designed on the basis of certain topics to be applied to target language;
- Functional, designed based upon particular language functions;
- Structural, designed related to sentence patterns (language focus);
- Notional, designed in the light of conceptual categories, such as duration, correction, and description;
- Skills, designed on the basis of certain language skills and components; and
- Task-Based, designed based on various activities to meet language targets learned.

In teaching any subject, designing materials should be based on the existing syllabus. To obtain suitable contents of the materials, a content-based paradigm is applied; the materials are oriented towards learners vocational areas. Therefore, to recognize their vocational areas, their content syllabus is required to select themes/topics treated in the materials. To sum up, the materials should cover specialist language and contents; in this case, they do represent activities in which learners are interested. In doing so, Brennan and Naerssen (1989) suggest that ESP teachers be able to establish and maintain a contact with specialist teachers. In this regard, ESP teachers and content teachers should cooperate with each other in designing or even in developing suitable ESP materials based on students specialist areas.

Therefore, Hutchinson and Waters (1994) recommend that the ESP teachers take three things into account: a) positive attitudes towards ESP contents, b) a knowledge of principles of a major content subject, c) and an awareness of how much the language is utilized in conveying the content subject. Finally, the ESP teachers will focus greatly on selecting materials regarding students content subjects by investigating students needs.

Thus, in terms of materials design or development, Hutchinson and Waters (1994) provide four elements of model ESP materials.

1. Input: This may be texts, dialogs, recordings, diagrams, or any piece of communication data depending upon the needs you have defined in your analysis. This input is geared to furnish stimulus materials for activities, new language items, correct models of language use, a theme/topic for communication, and an opportunity for learners to use their existing knowledge and the subject matter.
2. Content focus: Non-linguistic content (learners specialist areas) should be exploited to bear meaningful communication in the classroom activities.
3. Language focus: Since the final goal is to use language, learners should have a chance to take the language into pieces, learn how it works, and practice putting it together again.
4. Task: The ultimate purpose of learning language is language use. Materials designed or developed should lead to communicative tasks in which language skills and learners content subject matter are tied together through the unit.

RESEARCH METHOD

DESIGNING A MODEL OF BUSINESS ENGLISH MATERIALS USING COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

Since the goal of English teaching activities is to have learners become communicatively competent based on their specialist area (e.g. business), a communicative approach is applied. Therefore, to implement such an approach, it is essential to design the materials related to communicative purpose applied to classroom activities (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). In this article, model ESP materials that are discussed are Business English, which focuses on a speaking skill. Before coming up with such materials, it is important to highlight a communicative approach itself.

In the communicative approach, communicative competence is taken into account; in this case, learners should be able to use the language appropriate to a given social context. In doing so, they should need to know linguistic forms, meanings, and functions in which such matters should be appropriately applied based on the given forms, social contexts, and interlocutors roles. In other words, the learners should be able to negotiate meaning with their interlocutors. In real classroom activities, learners ought to be able to use the language a great deal through communicative activities, such as role-plays, games, problem solving, and so forth. These activities can be implemented in pairs, triads, small groups, and whole groups.

In other words, the communicative approach focuses mainly upon: 1) greater attention on the role of the learners than on the external stimuli learners; 2) greater attention on the learning process rather than on the products; 3) greater attention on the social nature of learning rather than on students as separate, decontextualized individuals; and so on (Jacobs and Farrell, 2001).

To design the materials using the communicative approach, it is crucial to set up a syllabus most suitably called functional . This syllabus focuses heavily on some expressions of target language (*Could I speak to...*, *Could I have your...*, *Could you tell...*, etc.).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the model Business English materials, a speaking skill is of great focus. This material uses a role-play activity to boost communicative activities. In this case, a target structure treated in the material is Telephone English: taking and leaving messages. Moreover, the target vocabulary practiced is related to business, the level of learners in the material is lower intermediate. The duration allocated for classroom activities is 20 minutes. This material is simply designed. The ultimate goal of the material is to get students to actively communicate in pairs. In this regard, this material helps students to have fluency and confidence in using the language. In classroom activities, each individual has a sheet of tasks to perform in turn. The situations are differently given to each individual to enable them interact with each other.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, the model of Business English materials using a communicative approach tries to enable learners with business-related interest to communicate the target language actively in which they can perform the tasks given based upon various social

interactions with their partners as interlocutors, especially in spoken forms. To do this, the learners should be provided with the knowledge of linguistic forms, meanings, and functions in which the themes or topics are under the umbrella of business.

References

Brennan, M. and M. Naerssen. 1989. *Language and content in ESP*. ELT Journal 4/33: 196-205.

Hutchinson, T. & A. Waters. 1987. *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge: CUP.

Jacobs, G.M. and T. Farrell. 2001. *Paradigm shift: Understanding and implementing change in the second language education*. TESL-EJ, 5 (1).

Johns, A.M. and T. Dudley-Evans. 1991. *English for Specific Purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose*. TESOL Quarterly 25: 297-309.

Larsen-Freeman, D. 1986. *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nababan, P.W.J. 1994. *ESP materials preparation in a Foreign language situation*. In Rosemary Khoo: *The practice of LSP: perspectives, programmes, and projects*. Singapore: SEAMEO-RELC.

Richards, J. C. 2001. *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.

Robinson, P.C. 1991. *ESP Today: A practitioner s guide*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Schleppegrell, M.J. 1991. *English for Specific Purposes: A program design model*. English Teaching Forum 29, 19-23.

Wright, C. 1992. *The benefits of ESP*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.