

NEED ANALYSIS: MEDICAL ENGLISH FOR INDONESIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Demanding the need of English usage has raised particular study for specific group of students. Medical English is particular English used by medical school of students. As part of ESP, Medical English needs a lot more concern than General English. However, Indonesian Medical school students are still struggling both in General English and their special need of Medical English. This paper is presented based on the previous study "Need Analysis: Medical English for Japanese Medical students" presented in ASIAN EFL Journal Vol.55 October 2011 regardless the Japanese context. The subjects of this paper are restricted to Indonesian Medical students from Brawijaya Medical School Malang and STIKES Kenedes Malang. Need analysis concerns with the identification of student's competence in the four language skills, students and faculty staff perspective on the important of Medical English, the reasons why they need English, the priority of skills, and types of medical text they exposed to through questionnaire, test, and secondary data analysis. This paper is also as critical reviews on the previous study in its strength, weakness, and contrast with this study.

Key words: ESP, Medical English, Need Analysis, Critical review

INTRODUCTION

General English might provide students' need in communication but a broad scope of English has risen the particular specific term in English. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a consideration that all language teaching should be guided to the specific learning and language use needs of identified groups of students – and also sensitive to the socio cultural context in which these students will be using English (Johns and Price-Machado, 2001).

The theoretical basic of ESP itself is providing need for students. It is noted that history of ESP itself is moving based on the needs of students of the students of science, there calls for the need of the English for Science and Technology or simply all decisions on the content and method are based on the students' reason for learning (Tickoo, 1988).

Hutchinson and water (1987:2) described ESP shift into language – centred approach into learning – centred approach. However, the ideas of language – centred approach is not totally leave behind since it has provided some very important into the nature of specific language needs. They proposed the ideal ESP is based on need of learning and the development of instruction, syllabus, and materials have to be based on that perspective.

Hutchinson and water (1987) also wrote the trigger of the development of ESP was the point when people accepted English as International language. It creates a new generation of learners who knew specifically why they were learning a language – businessmen and –women who wanted to sell their product, mechanics who had to read instruction manuals, doctors who needed to keep up with developments in their field and a whole range of students whose course of study included textbooks and journals only available in English.

ESP is also a revolution in linguistics of how to describe the characteristics of using formal language for researching how language used in real communication. Providing the joyful of learning to trigger motivation of students is in line with SLA (second Language Acquisition) theory from Krashen (1985). An assumption which gives this approach a basis is what kind of relevance being offered to English course and learners' needs and how to improve learners' motivation so that it can make them better and faster in learning English (Iragiliati and Rachmajanti, 1996).

As quoted from Huang (2010), there are not enough English teachers who know the subject knowledge, or specialists who can speak good English. Most College English teachers know only English but little or nothing about the subject knowledge. This leads to their lack of confidence when they teach subject-based English. Huang also stated that In China, ESP has not yet been emphasized and developed in the TESOL field because it has been generally thought that ESP study is a narrow area of research and does not have its own theories. However, recently, with the Chinese economic growth, China needs more and more interdisciplinary experts who know both good English and how to deal with international communications.

Rodis et.al (2011) reported the struggle faced by Japanese Dental School students when they were sending abroad and had to use specific term in their field as proposed in ESP (in this case Dental English). In the case of Dental English, Japanese Dental schools have integrated this course into their curriculum but yet still need to be developed.

In line with the arguments promoting ESP, Li (2010) argued on recognition of ESP majors is needed by the teachers and learners of ESP as well as by the relevant institutions. They complained that their command of language skills is not proficient and their knowledge in a certain field is not sufficient either. This may get them into an inferior position in the human resource market.

Based on Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), ESP refers to the wide area that focuses on all aspects of the specific-purpose teaching of English including the academic (EAP) and vocational/occupational (EOP) frameworks. ESP approach aims to develop the students' language skills in order to support their study or research in the content area (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). An ESP curriculum is composed of linguistic features and registers or discourse analysis in the academic field. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) characterize ESP as a distinctive pedagogical approach which emphasizes specific learner needs as it recognizes their subject-matter expertise.

So far it can be stated that ESP: (1) focused on the learners' need and wastes no time; (2) relevant to the learner; (3) successful in imparting the learning; (4) more cost – effective than General English. (Stevens in John and Machado, 2001). Long and Richards (1986) even claim that ESP programs are said to be far most cost effective once they exist

by providing the skills that the students will use after the ESP course is over. It is also said that ESP provides motivation for learners with satisfying learners' needs more than general English course. This is due to the fact that ESP has been a material – based concept meaning that its underlying principle is a direct correlation between descriptions of scientific text and learners' language needs (Ramani in Chamberlain and Baumgardner, 1988).

The main interest of the ESP movement can be broadening into various interest as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). English for Academic Purposes (EAP) can be defined into some branches as English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE), English for Medical Purposes (EMP), and English for the Law (ELP). English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) is divided again into two major branches which are English for Professional Purposes (EPP) and Vocational ESL (VESL). English for Professional purposes includes English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and English for Business Purposes (EBP). Vocational ESL (VESL) deals with Pre-employment VESL, Occupational – Specific VESL, Cluster VESL, and Workplace VESL.

This paper is discussed on EMP as English for Academic Purposes since it discusses the practical use on Medical Students by correlating it with the previous study by Rodis et.al entitled *Needs Analysis: Dental English for Japanese Dental Students* presented in ASIAN EFL Journal Vol.55 October 2011. Rodis and his colleagues explored the needs of dental students taking Dental English at one of the dental schools offering the course. They gathered the data from surveys and entries by students on the Student-Teacher Shuttle Card.

Rodis and colleagues are official lecturers from Okayama University's Dental School whom assistants and associate professors of that institution. Based on their 3 years-survey, from 2008 to 2010, they reported that the students' response on having more units of the course integrated into the 6-year curriculum show how important Dental English will be for students as future dentists. They also emphasized on the used of Student-Teacher Shuttle Card to deliver communication between students and teacher to construct a better teaching-learning process. They considered this instrument had encounter students shyness as common problem in Japanese students.

English for medical purposes and the practice

English for Medic covers two important targets that are English for doctors and non-doctors such as nurses, pharmacists, and laborer. By concerning ESP is different from ESL (English as Second Language or general English) and the most important difference lies in the learners and their purposes for learning English, we have to consider the need of students on Medical field to fulfill their goal in learning.

In the future the Medical students should be able to read medical terminology and also write to complete hospital admission or diagnosis and orders. Medical terminology is a specific terminology which is used to achieve the purpose of communication in the health care field efficiently and precisely, such as in writing diagnosis and nurses' notes (Radu, 2008).

Radu (2009) noticed that attention to learners' needs is a key element in any definitions of ESP. Therefore, EMP is intended to help the medical student who is planning to study medicine in English.

Naruenatwatana and Vijchulata (2010) found that English plays a very vital role in medical studies because the medical students have to read medical textbooks and professional journals which are mostly written in English. Therefore, medical students need to use English for studying their subject matter and also for their careers in the future.

As review from Rodis et al (2011) Medicine or dentistry in countries where English is not the official language of instruction has started to integrate English into their respective curriculum. These include English courses that emphasize on medical and dental etymologies, terminologies and conversation in countries like Hungary, Greece, Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia.

In the context of Indonesia, Iragiliati (2007) found that some of the medical doctors or specialists are reluctant to improve their English Language competence as they consider that they have mastered the English language. She also found that Medical student in general do not show that they have English good English competence. At Medical Faculty Brawijaya University Malang, East Java, complaints about the lack of English language competence has been informed by the lecturers as well as from the students themselves.

It is obvious that the students' English competence need to be improved if the medical institution is to produce professional medical doctor for the coming years and facing the global competition in medical service. Providing the EMP as their special need is considered obligatory for medical institution.

Providing the ideal ESP (EMP) class

It is discussed earlier; EMP is helping the student for medical purposes. EMP is a specialized English course for students or for those working in nursing and medical areas. EMP may include job-related English skills such as medical terminology (Lee, 1998).

Radu (2009) convinces that many problems in EFL classes are the result of teachers not paying attention to learners' interests and ignoring students as a source of essential information. Students' analysis can provide the information on students' possession and what they want to achieve.

Satisfying learners' need also makes them more motivating than general English courses. This is due to the fact that ESP has been a material-based concept meaning that its underlying principle is a direct correlation between descriptions of scientific text and learners' language needs (Ramani in Chamberlain and Baumgardner, 1988). As a result, the materials that are their primary concern should be provided to raise motivation.

A contrast may arise when learners' need or belief is different with the goal institution. The institution may consider the four language skill is needed for learners but learners may say they only need one particular skill for their study. For example, if a group of medical students only needs to know the ways how to read many written information such as textbooks, journals, manuals, and many others, in their field of specialization, a great amount of class time should be devoted to reading skills instead of equaling the amount of class time to all four language skills (Long and Richards, 1986). However, it is

needed to be underlined that students should have a reasonably good command of general English in order to learn ESP successfully.

As ideal ELT classroom, EMP is also need teachers' role for the success of learning. Brown (2001) suggested some roles of teachers which are as controller, as director, as manager, as facilitator, and as resources. The teachers jobs is facilitating a practical syllabus and also an EMP teacher must have some general knowledge of the students' specialist subjects, take advantage of his/her language background and thoroughly tip the well of students' experience in both their specialist subjects and their language background.

THE NEED ANALYSIS

Needs analysis, also known as needs assessment, has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Finney, 2002). It generally refers to activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students (Iwai et al., 1999). The presence study used 2 kinds of instrument which are questionnaire and interview.

METHOD

Participant

In this study, the participants are from two different medical institutes which are STIKES Kenedes Malang (Institution A) and Medical Faculty Brawijaya University Malang (Institution B). 20 participants are from STIKES Kenedes Malang and 20 others are from Medical Faculty Brawijaya University Malang. This study also involved two English lecturers from those two institutions.

Instrument

This study conducted questionnaire and interview to gather the data. The questionnaire items of this study comprised different types of questions in order to elicit detailed information from the respondents in three areas as follows: motivation and interest, need, study skills, materials, and classroom activities and exercises. The multiple-choice responses were on a Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Altogether 25 items were devised and administered to the 40 students. The complete list of the questions can be found in Appendix 1. In order to obtain feedback and gather further information, a semi-structured interview was conducted to the English lectures from those two institutions, two lectures from each institution mentioned above.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The data shows that most of participants are eager to learn English and have a good English background. However, it is found that 24 % students from institution A do not like English subject whereas 100% students from institution B like English subject. All of participants (100%) do understand the important of English subject in their field. It is also justified by interviewing the lectures. Both lectures from institutions A aware that their students are relatively lack of English competence and low in motivation. They confessed

that they had conducted pre-test and the result showed that their students have difficulties in even Basic English competence. Contrary with that case, lectures from institution B are in line with findings that their students are highly motivated in English with good ability in Basic English.

The result also showed that students from both institutes are acknowledged the difficulties of specific term (Medical English) as the constraint in their study. In total 97% of students from both institutes have the same opinions. 89% of the students convinced that knowing grammar is not enough to get comprehension on the text. 60% of the students got difficulties in doing the task.

As the case of students from institution A, they feel they need more in General English area rather than EMP itself. It is found that from the note they presented in the questionnaire in advance of their lectures to give a statement of their expectation in for English subject. As it is quoted here, *I do not understand well in English grammar so I hope I can learn about English Grammar* (translated-student opinion on their wants for English classroom).

All lectures stated that there no syllabus and materials provided by the institution. All the burdens are conducted to the lectures. Based on the interview it was known that the total credit for English subject at Institution A is 8 credit points (SKS). The distribution of course is general English (2 credits) in 1st semester and 2nd semester and Medical English in 3rd and 4th semester. Whereas, institution B only English administered through 4 credits of '*Bahasa Inggris*' (English Subject).

According to Rodis et.al (2011) there is still no study that has exclusively looked into developing a common Dental English curriculum for dental schools in Japan that is based on Ministry of Education-approved course context and needs analysis of learners. That practical problem is seem to be happen on EMP as well in Indonesia especially for the case of the two institution where this presence study conducted. Rodis et al (2011) also noted that if the course is only offered during the early years, students will soon forget it since all subjects in the senior years will be taught in mother tongue (Japanese). In contrast, offering the course only in the senior years will also put more loads on students since they will have to take more clinical and practical courses. They suggested the course is offered regularly and further integrated into practical so the basic knowledge will be reinforced leading to the highest level of the learning pyramid where outcome measures would include the ability to analyze, create, evaluate and teach common scenarios within their professional lives.

Based on the questionnaire and interview, the focus of curriculum for Medical classroom is still struggling with Basic English Grammar. However, it is claimed that the students are directed to the journal and material related to EMP. All the teachers from both institutions admitted that the focus of their learning so far is through reading approach. It was also found from the questionnaire that reading and grammar were existed as the main center of teaching – learning process. An investigation of the materials used by the lectures found that lectures from both institution were using materials consist of vocabulary used in Medical terminology. Jurov (2008) defines the Medical Terminology as current based on providing knowledge about anatomical names of the human body. Students are directed to study the Skeletal system, Digestive system, Nervous system, Urinary system,

Reproductive system, Circulatory system, Respiratory system, Muscular system, the eyes and ears. On that understanding of Medical Term, both institutions have presented the circumstances on the area of EMP.

The study from Rodis et al. (2011) revealed Dental schools in Japan must develop a common core curriculum for the course while taking into consideration the changing trends and needs of students. A decision to provide more units and the use a common textbook will allow for standardized and comprehensive learning and the provision of modern language-learning facilities will also aid in proper pronunciation, listening comprehension and doctor-patient communication exercises. In line with that statement, the presence study on EMP for Indonesian students also promotes that more unit and modified textbook have to developed with providing doctor-patient communication exercises.

CONCLUSION

The previous study by Rodis et al (2011) promotes the development of a new curriculum in Japan that includes a well-defined Dental English course. Delimitation of the study led the study by only providing just one of Japan's dental schools. In contrast, the presence study had tried to investigate two different Medical schools in Indonesian context. The presence study on EMP classroom revealed unsatisfactory fact of the existence of syllabus, materials, and providing the ideal EMP classroom. However, the circumstances of motivation of student, background ability of General English Competence, and perspective of lectures as well as the students themselves in understanding the EMP lead the teaching-learning process into General English.

It is hoped a modification and a deep investigation on the development of EMP curriculum will be conducted by considering the Need of Medical Students. A continuum EMP and regularly conducted within semester during the students study is ideal course design for medical students' benefit. Due to the goal of students need in the future, it is hoped that more unit and modified textbook have to developed with providing doctor-patient communication exercises.

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