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ESP: PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE TEACHING MATERIAL AT A VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

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Abstract

This research was aimed at describing how an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teacher provided ESP materials for the teaching of ESP at vocational school of SMTI Banda Aceh. The design of this study was a descriptive qualitative research. The research study was conducted at a vocational school specialized in industrial technology (SMTI) in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. We used documents collection to obtain the data. We classified the data into three categories of ESP material: material selection, material adaptation, or material development (Vicic, 2011) and then we analysed the content of materials suggested by Wallace (1992): (1)adequacy; (2)motivation/interesting, (3)sequence, (4) diversity, and (5) acceptability. The result of this research study showed that the ESP teacher mostly used the first way, material selection, to provide ESP materials. He selected materials from the readily-available textbooks. In addition, he did not seem to adapt nor develop any materials. His lack of knowledge of material development has restricted him from developing new and (probably) more attractive materials. Regarding to the content, generally, the textbook used was good enough and specified to ESP need. This study, however, was only limited to the process of selecting materials and describing its contents. Further research studies need to be conducted regarding to the process of teachers delivering/ teaching ESP using those materials. We, therefore, suggest other researchers to conduct a research study on this matter.

Keywords: *ESP, materials, content analysis, vocational school.*

INTRODUCTION

English language is commonly taught in two areas; English for General Purposes (EGP) or General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Hutchinson & Waters (1987). The distinction between ESP and GE is showed in the way the learning purpose is defined and implemented (Widdoson, 1983). While GE class stresses general rule of English language teaching, concentrates on the four skills of language, grammar, and language structure (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), ESP focuses on needs analysis, text analysis and the training of learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their academic or professional situation (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998). In addition, ESP class meets the learner's need or specific purpose of learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

ESP is taught in non- native English Speaking countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. People in EFL countries including Indonesia, learn English not only to fulfil the school curriculum requirement or to pass standardized English proficiency tests, but also learn it for their professional fields of work (Bracaj, 2014, p. 41). The purpose of teaching and learning of ESP in many non-native English

countries is to provide the learners with the practical English communication in various situations and challenges in their future jobs (Islam, 2014) *as well as* emphasizing on equipping learners directly on what they need in their fields (Harding, 2007, p. 6).

In Indonesia, vocational education can be recognized in secondary program of education that is SMK (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*). Industrial Technology Secondary Vocational School or *Sekolah Menengah Teknologi Industri (SMTI)* is the vocational school in Banda Aceh which prepares the students to be intermediate employees who are able to work autonomously in the industrial fields. The purposes of this vocational school reflects on its vision, Implementing the quality education and industrial training in order to prepare independent, superior, skilful and productive industry Human Resource in medium level (SMTI Profile).

In term of school subject matters, the vocational school of SMTI Banda Aceh, moreover, compulsorily applies English as one of the main subject matters. Furthermore, Teaching English in SMTI is considered as teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) since the students learn English for a reason or a need related to their future professionalism jobs.

One of the most important issues regarding the teaching of English for Specific Purposes is about how the teacher provides the materials. Graves (1999) argues that ESP teaching materials can be rearrange after figuratively cut up into components in order to suit the learners' needs, abilities, and interests in their courses (p. 27). This means that ESP materials are sometimes appropriate for the content or to the learners' needs but sometimes need to be modified; the teachers have to adapt or develop materials in order to fit the required context. Material selection, adaptation, and development are important ways in providing materials in ESP teaching (Vivic, 2011).

When it comes to supplying learners with specific texts, exercises and tasks, ESP teachers can adapt materials originally designed for other purposes and/or edit published materials for their particular teaching contexts (Hyland, 2006). The range of options suggested for the purpose is enormous and includes such adapting strategies as deleting irrelevant material, simplifying materials or activities, modifying materials or activities to make them either more demanding or more accessible to the learners (Bocanegra-Valle, 2010).

There are, however, situations in which teacher develop or tailor the materials because of some causes such as the lack of ready-made materials (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015, p. 15). The decision to use teacher-tailored texts also functions to meet learning target. With teacher-designed texts offering 'enriched input' flooded with exemplars of the target structure (Ellis, 1999). It is, therefore, interesting to know how an ESP teacher tries to solve ESP materials problems and for that case, we developed two research questions: (1) How does the teacher at SMTI school provide ESP materials for students? And (2) What are the descriptions of the content of the material used by the teacher? Even though the study on ESP has been widely published, but, none study has been conducted in vocational school in Banda Aceh, and we assume that this research study will fill the gap for future reference.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ESP Material

There are three important ways in providing ESP Materials, Material selection, adaptation, and development (Vivic, 2011). When carefully provided, materials nevertheless meet for ESP learners' specific needs (Ellis and Johnson, 1994). Furthermore, Hutchison and Waters (1987) support that there are three possible ways in providing teaching materials in ESP course: select from existing materials: material evaluation, write own materials: material development, and modify existing materials: material adaptation.

The materials selection process is greatly facilitated by the use of systematic evaluation procedures that help to determine whether selected materials are consistent with the needs of learners (Nunan, 1998). He continues that it starts with the evaluation of the appropriateness of individual textbook units, texts or activities against some simple criteria that help decide whether the content and genre are relevant for a particular purpose.

The decision on whether to use readily available textbook or tailor-made materials is primarily based on the learners' subject area (Vivic, 2011). In readily available textbook, the selection of structures, vocabulary, skills, functions, and so on is conditioned by the textbook to a large extent and can be extended into other areas that teachers find relevant to their students (Vivic, 2011). A

final factor is that psychologically a textbook represents something concrete and thus gives a measure of progress and achievement throughout the course (Haycraft, 1987).

METHODS

The method applied in this study was qualitative research. The data was taken from document collection. The material used by the teacher became the primary data for this research study. We categorized the data into two things: the processes of material selections and the description of the content of the material.

At the first stage, we collected the document (teaching materials) used by the teacher. The next step, we described it; the description meant to provide information about how the ESP teacher provided the teaching material for ESP class and followed by our comments about the contents of the material in general. The description is based on the criteria suggested by (Wallace, 1992), material selection criteria are: firstly is adequacy; the selected materials should contain appropriate language and information about the course. Secondly is motivation; they should present interesting content in order to help students be active and work hard in order to understand better. This criterion should be respected in order to make students' work more effective. Thirdly is sequence; It is important to have materials that are related to the lecture. There must be a relation to previous texts, activities, topics not to miss the sense of a lesson. Next is diversity; the selected material should lead to a range of classroom activities, be a vehicle for teaching specific language structure and vocabulary, and promote strategies. And finally is acceptability: It should contain acceptable cultural customs and language.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Material Selection

The results show that the teaching material was the readily-available text book which was specialized to the vocational school grade 1 for concentration of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and industrial engineering.

While we conducted the preliminary study through teacher interview, the teacher conveyed that he tried to do some adaptations from the textbook selected. However, we found the fact that he did not obtain any documents related to material adaptation since the teacher did not save it nor document it. Nonetheless, we argued that the teacher also provided ESP teaching materials for the grade 1 students of SMTI vocational school in another way that is material adaptation.

Indeed, the teacher did not use material development as he assumed that the material selection from the readily-available text book and a bit of adaptation from it are complete enough for the teaching of English for specific purposes due to the fact that English teaching in vocational school was dominated by General English since the students are still lack of knowledge about General English.

The textbook provided was specialized to the grade 1 students of vocational school with the concentration of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and industrial engineering. In addition, it based on vocational school curriculum.

The Content of the Material

The textbook used did not exactly focus on industrial technology language terminology, but it was more specific to using English communication in the context of company or industry working area. Moreover, the textbook, selected contained technical vocabulary (*as discussed in the discussion section*). It reflects the purpose of vocational school that is to prepare the learners for careers that are based on practical activities and occupation in which the learners participate.

This also means that although the textbook was not really specific to the industrial technology language terminology, it was consistent to the needs of vocational learners; to have practical communication in any related work environment and relevant occupation, such as technician, engineer, mechanic, operator, electrician, and even secretary. This is in line with what Harding (2007) states that ESP learning aims at equipping learners directly what they need in their vocations. The descriptions of the textbooks are as follows: firstly, adequacy. The textbook used by the teacher contained appropriate language as the language used in the text book was easily understood by the vocational learners. In addition, the textbook totally provided information about the course. It

showed in the topics discussed and studied, including identifying occupation, describing objects, and instructions, prohibitions, and warnings. All topics were in the context of work environment.

Secondly, motivation. The textbook presented interesting contents; the materials were mainly visualized by pictures which could attract students' attention to learn. In addition each topic provided a dialogue or a conversation related to the students' need for their future jobs, thus it obviously made them active in the learning.

Thirdly, diversity. The selected textbook led to a range of classroom activities. Every topic in the textbook presented a variety of classroom activities, for instance; studying the picture at the beginning of the lesson, writing expression related to the topic, checking understanding of the given text, practicing dialogue, and listening comprehension.

In summary, the textbook selected by the teacher is a good ESP material which is relevant to the context of using English in the student's future working environment, even though the textbook did not provide a very specific language in the context of industrial technology. We would also describe the specific contents of the book, as follows:

In unit 1, greeting and introducing with the dialogue topic was about "Automobile Assembling Industry". The unit allowed students to practice greeting employees in a company as well as introducing the position and job desk of every worker in a company. Indeed, this unit was relevant to the future job of the SMTI students. Furthermore, it was a good material for ESP teaching.

Unit 2 was about parting and thanking with the text topic about "The Vocational School Farewell Party". This part mainly discussed about the school farewell activities and it also provided expression about leaving taking and thanking. So, this unit was general English content since it did not show any particular idea in the context of working area or company or industrial environment.

It was better to do adaptation by modifying the content. Hutchinson and Water (1987) suggested that factors related to the learners' age, gender, social class, occupation, religion, or cultural background perhaps may not suit the target learners, so contents may need to be changed. Unit 3 mainly discussed about nationality and occupation with the topic about "International Meeting". This unit was somewhat relevant to the vocational students' need as they had to know many professional occupations and different nationalities.

Unit 4 was relevant and specific to the SMTI vocational school students' need because this unit was about identifying objects. It introduced things in the workshop and studied about engine petrol. It provided students to get to know the tools or things used in technical working area.

For the next unit, Unit 5, the textbook provided number and studied the symbol of mathematics. The vocational students need these for accounting and writing and telling contact number. Moreover, the task which was provided in the textbook, allowed students to master a skill of accounting.

Unit 6 of this textbook described the objects. The objects described were specifically technical things, such as machine, gear wheel, carburettor, reaper, fire extinguisher, and many others related to the machine. This unit also contained the function of the objects. Furthermore, the objects were visualized by clear pictures. Therefore, this material was completely English for specific purposes teaching material.

Unit 7 was about describing activities. This unit became relevant to the students' needs due to the topic provided that was "workshop activities". However, the content of the text, dialogue, and task was not specific enough to the workshop activities of career in industrial field or company working environment. It was, therefore, indeed needed to do material adaptation by addressing omission. The teacher may add important items, such as vocabulary, activities, or grammatical rules (Hutchinson and Water, 1987). In addition, the tasks might need to be added if the existing ones may contain insufficient practice (Hutchinson and Water, 1987).

Unit 8 provided material about making request and offers. If we take a look to the topic, this unit seems like general English material. However, the textbook provided specific dialogue about receptionist and guests in a hotel. This topic was relevant to the need of women vocational students who intended to develop their careers in the term of hospitality.

The last unit, Unit 9, was completely specific and relevant to the students of vocational school as the textbook discussed about instruction, prohibition, and warnings. Furthermore, the text provided in this unit was about work safety that the students really need to understand and practice as one of

the skills in the industrial working area. In addition, the task allowed students to identify signs, warnings, and instructions as well as to express those utterances in the real work communication

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The teacher used readily-available textbook. The textbook contained English materials which were specific to the vocational students' needs in using English communication in the context of common working area. The textbook's contents were relevant to any future occupations related to the provided vocation's concentration at SMTI of Banda Aceh. The book used was good enough but we suggest that the teacher should also do some adaptation from the material selected and develop teaching material to the students' need in the specific term of technology, industry, chemical engineering or other specific language terminology used in technical working area in order to provide students completely what they need in their future jobs.

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