Needs Analysis as a First Step Designing English for Specific Purposes Programs

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Abstract--**This paper is aimed to investigate the perceived English language needs of students at Faculty of Law in University of Riau as a solid base of a syllabus for an ESP program by determining the needs of the participants. Therefore, it should be based on a careful and systematic need analysis which includes the purpose to learn English, the learners, and the specific English language skill that becomes the target. Two groups of students of varying proficiency levels participated in the study. A need analysis questionnaire was administered to collect data that was analyzed by using SPSS. It was concluded that the extent of ESP needs perception held by the students was very high, about 85% of students thought ESP courses are useful and helpful for the future job. Plus, the English skill needed most was speaking skill and students with the higher English proficiency held significant difference from the lower on interest in English learning.**

Keywords— ESP, law, need analysis, interest, language skill.

I. INTRODUCTION

English has become popular recently in non-English speaking countries or where English as Foreign Language is taught. Trade, economy, and the increasing of international communication in many other fields has emerged English for Specific Purpose in this globalization era. For the previous years, the learning has been limited to general English such as special lexicon or sentence structures. This approach mostly ignores the learners' interest that causes low motivation on learning process where it should be related to the learner's future job. As the result, it causes low performance in using English. Seeing this situation, higher education should design an ESP program that supports the university students to be able to compete in their future profession and career need.

Students in Indonesia learn English to fulfill the requirement of the school curriculum, to pass the examination, to complete the job qualification or to achieve certain position. In order to meet this demand, Indonesian government supports more educational institutions to offer ESP to meet the learner's career need (Kusni, 2013: 6). ESP learners are usually adults, who are familiar with the English language, since it has been offered at elementary, junior and senior high school. So it can be said that there is the basic knowledge or the fundamental background of general English or English for General Purpose (EGP).

In Faculty of Law Riau University, it is compulsory for the first year students to take English subject. It is a general English course which aims to increase the students' general proficiency. At university, the EGP should be replaced with ESP since EGP is a long existing practice in Indonesia's education. University students should learn ESP which is more specialized, more contextual and more advanced. Students learn English for a specific purpose, represented by studying subject matter, to gain and develop appropriate knowledge and skills through English. Chostelidou (2010;4511) suggests that ESP program should encompasses the learners' subject and academic needs. Moreover, Zhuoin

Sun (2010) emphasizes that the design of ESP program attracts the students' interest in language learning. It can be concluded that the teaching material is started from the needs of the students itself. ESP is very helpful to meet the globalization era by providing the students' future career needs because the proficiency related to their field of study.

English for Specific Purpose (ESP) focus on the specification of the goal and objectives, not to certain English jargon or register (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998, Hyland 2006, and Harding 2007). In addition, Hutchinson and Waters propose that ESP provides a detail and selective specification of goal which depend on certain discipline.

In order to deepen the understanding about ESP, here are some characteristics of English for Specific Purposes. Peter Strevens (1988, p.1-2) defines English for Specific Purposes by making a distinction between its absolute and its variable characteristics. He considers the absolute characteristics as the following:

- designed to meet specified needs of the learner;
- related in content (i.e. themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
- centred on the language appropriate for those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse and semantics;
- in contrast with General English.

For the variable characteristics, Peter Strevens (cf.1988) defines as restriction to the language skills to be learned (reading only) and use no teaching methodology.

Therefore, "English for specific purposes is a term that refers to teaching or studying English for a particular career (like law, medicine) or for business in general". (International Teacher Training Organization, 2005). There is a specification of the reason for which English is learned. Pauline C. Robinson (1989) describes English for Specific Purpose as a type of ELT (English Language Teaching) and defines it as "Goal oriented language learning. " (Robinson,

Pauline C.ed. Hywel Coleman, 1989, p 398) which means the student has the specific goal that is going to be reached. Based on this explanation, we can connect it to various specific targets such as English for Law, English for Medicine, English for Business, English for Accountancy etc.

ESP is programmed on the basis of needs analysis which includes the reason to learn English, the learners, and the specific English language skill that becomes the target. These should be on the basis of the results of a careful and systematic needs analysis. The choice of goals or objectives, materials, contents and methods of teaching are also based on the target learners" needs. So, the main focus of teaching ESP is to the process of determining English skill and components related to the students" needs and their field of study. The determination of goals and objectives of the ESP courses based on the needs analysis is essential to decide why ESP course is being taught and what the learners need to get from it.

Choosing ESP materials refers to the goals and objectives derived from needs analysis. The ESP materials may mean development of new material, collection and adoption of various materials, or adaptation of existing ones. According to Graves (1996) and Tomlinson (2011), in order to select materials some issues such as their effectiveness to achieve the goals, their appropriateness, and their feasibility should be taken into account. The source of materials can be, according to McDonough (1984), taken from published materials (textbooks, journals, magazines), from real speech (lectures, broadcasts, seminars, conversations), specially written, or simplified and adapted ones.

II. NEED ANALYSIS OF ESP

Needs analysis involves the assessment (Balint, 2010;26), it is the needs for which a learner or group of learners may require language (Ellis and Johnson, 1994). The selection of instructional materials should be based on a systematic analysis of the learners' needs for the target language. According to Nunan (1988), it is a process of gathering information about the

learners. Needs analysis is a complex process which is usually followed by syllabus design, selection of course materials, teaching/learning a course, and its evaluation (Bachman Palmer, 1996). Learners often find it difficult to define what language needs they have and cannot distinguish between needs, wants and lacks. Although these three concepts are interrelated, it is important for teachers to be aware of their encouragement on successful learning. Another stimulus for successful learning is adjusting the course to the changes in learners' needs. This implies the significance of ongoing needs analysis.

The conceptions of target needs and learning needs have been widely used in the literature. Target needs are understood as what the learner needs to do in the target situation; whereas learning needs are what the learner needs to do in order to learn. The analysis of target needs involves identifying the linguistic features of the target situation or learners necessities (what is English needed for), lacks (what learner does not know), and wants (what learner feels she/he needs) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 55).

I. Research Questions

Research questions are illustrated on the basis of the purposes of the present study as follows:

1. What English language skills do the students perceive that they will need the most in their future work?

2. Do the perceived needs of ESP differ among students by gender?

3. Do the perceived needs of ESP differ among the variety of the students' English proficiency levels?

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study investigated the perspectives and perception on the needs of ESP courses among students in Faculty of Law in Riau University, Indonesia. There were two data that are used in this study. The data of first-semester students were gathered by using questionnaire and the English proficiency that is taken from the result of TOEFL test. The participants were the first-semester students of Faculty of Law. From five classes with

224 total of the students, there were two classes that became the sample classes which consist of 100 students. The questionnaire that was used is a Six-point Likert scales questionnaire by Balint (2010). The questionnaire was adapted to find out the needs of Indonesian college students from the language point of view. In order to be trustworthy, the researcher collected the data to get the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to non-sample class. The items of the questionnaire were analyzed by using SPSS. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the instrument was .93. The validity test resulted 42 valid items of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the questionnaire was scrutinized by two English teachers to gain the content and face validity.

IV.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis of the first question was presented in Table 1. Table 1 describes about the interest of the students in learning English that are taken from the items of the questionnaire no 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Most of the students or more than 50% of the students were interested and very interested in learning English. Among the interest in learning English, item 3, 8 and 9 had the much highest percentages, 81%, 93% and 94% respectively, which concluded that most of the students all believed in having good English proficiency would be a good opportunity and a great help to their future career (Lee, 2016; 97)

TABLE 1. Statistic for the category of "Interest in learning English"

Item Number	Interest in Learning English	Percentage
3	I am interested in doing a study abroad program in an English-speaking country while I am a university student.	81%
4	I have a goal to get a job which requires English after graduating from university.	75%
5	I have a goal to work in an English-speaking country after graduating from university.	60%
6	I feel my current overall level of English ability is …	58%
7	Learning English is a challenge that I enjoy	59%
8	I want to learn English to be more educated	93%
9	I believe learning English is important to get a good job after graduating from	94%

	university.	
10	If taking ESP courses were optional, I would choose…	85%

Notes:
Option for Item number 10:1. to take them   2. to not take them

Table 2 presented findings about the importance of four English language skills which the students perceived. The mean scores of the perceived skills were 4.57, 4.65, 4.87, and 4.53 respectively regarding reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Speaking skill was concerned to be the most important skill but it also the skill that the students lack of. This finding correspond to what was revealed by Mohammed (2016;11) that speaking is found to be the most difficult skill.

TABLE 2. Descriptive statistic of mean scores of the perception on the importance of four English skills
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading	100	4.57	.608
Listening	100	4.65	.716
Speaking	100	4.87	.714
Writing	100	4.53	.588
Valid N (listwise)	100		

Table 3 showed the findings for perceived needs of four English skills toward gender difference. The importance and needs of speaking was the most concerned skill between male and female students (mean = 4.86 and 4.87 respectively). The result of the independent sample t-test showed that there are no significant differences between males and females, which meant male and female students held similar viewpoints on the importance of each English skill.

TABLE 3. Descriptive statistic of mean scores of four English skills by gender difference
Male

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading	49	4.37	.612
Listening	49	4.40	.720
Speaking	49	4.86	.718
Writing	49	4.23	.593
Valid N (listwise)	49		

Female

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading	51	4.35	.598
Listening	51	4.42	.709
Speaking	51	4.87	.712
Writing	51	4.33	.572
Valid N (listwise)	51		

The interest in English learning, reading, listening, speaking and writing among different English proficiency level was illustrated in table 4. As

seen in the table, students at higher proficiency level (advanced) showed higher mean score for interest in English at 4.18 compared with elementary at 3.67. Moreover, the perceived needs or importance of four language skills showed the highest at the advanced level and the lowest at the elementary level. Students at elementary level held highest needs on speaking skill (M= 4.19) and lowest on listening (M= 3.87), at intermediate level (M=4.33 for speaking, M=4.08 for reading, at the upper intermediate level (M= 4.39 for listening, M=4.06 for writing), and at the advanced level (M=4.85 for listening, M= 4.50 for reading)

TABLE 4. Descriptive statistic of means by different English proficiency level

Proficiency	N	Interest in English	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Elementary	46	3.67	3.94	3.87	4.19	3.93
Intermediate	37	3.97	4.08	4.15	4.33	4.13
Upper Intermediate	15	4.12	4.13	4.39	4.13	4.06
Advanced	2	4.18	4.50	4.85	4.80	4.57
Total	100	3.98	4.16	4.31	4.36	4.17

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to measure the perceived needs of four English skills and interest in English learning from the students of Faculty of Law. The major findings showed the needs perception held by the students were at high level, indicating students realized that four English skills were all important and needed to be much improved to make them more skillful, to improve their opportunity in employment and their future job performances. Among four language skill needs, speaking skill was the most needed one, followed by listening. Students at higher proficiency level held more interest in English learning than those at lower level, which showed the importance of motivation and the inspiration in English learning. In terms of gender difference, there is no significant difference between male and female. It means that the perception of both genders is similar toward English learning. The findings of this study could be presented as a useful suggestion to English teachers or stakeholders that students think and perceive that the communication skills need to be much more improved. It can be seen from the real professional world which is starts from job interviews. The interviewers directly make judgments and considered the first impressions. Being proficient in the language can give a good first impression

which means higher chances of getting the position one is applying for.

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