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THE OVERVIEW OF ESP DEVELOPMENT AND METHODOLOGY

Nurdin Noni

Abstract: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been developing from time to time. ESP itself is divided into two main sections, English Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). The delivery of ESP in Indonesia is facing some challenges yet many prospects are also occurring to some extent. The advancement of technology has been facilitating the teaching of ESP which is undoubtedly essential as supporting devices in the English Language Teaching. The big five phases of ESP development according to Hutchinson and Waters are parts of the process into a perfect accomplishment in teaching this subject. The methodology is designed to be a learner-centered where the students or learners should be more active in responding to every single materials brought into class. Teachers should function as facilitator only that mostly giving guidance during the learning process. Some recommendations are imposed to have a better delivery in the future. To maximize the output, materials should be specifically designed based on the needs.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, methodology, ELT, development, register

INTRODUCTION

English for specific purposes (ESP) has become a trending topic in English Language Teaching (ELT). ESP has been developed progressively to cater the needs of English skills which vary according to the learners’ discipline or occupational background. ESP in relation to specific field of studies is commonly called English for Academic Purposes (EAP). EAP may include, for example English for Economics, English for Medical Study, and English for Psychology. ESP in specific career or occupation is known as English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) or English for Vocational Purposes (EVP). EOP may include English for Secretaries, English for Teaching, and English for Tourism Industry. This article highlights some theories and concept of ESP which cover some points namely the origins of ESP and its development. In addition to that, this paper will also discuss methodology in ESP context as well as how technology in ESP is developed, the interactions between students or learners and teachers as the main component in the ESP learning process including challenges and prospects that ESP deals with in Indonesia as a non-English speaking country.

The origins and definition of ESP

The origins of ESP are closely associated with learners’ interest and needs in various specific disciplines, such as Business English, English for Medicine, English for Hotel Industry, or English for Secretary. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the emergence of ESP could be identified from three main reasons, namely the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics, and focus on the learner. In other words, the combination of the three factors seemed to point towards the need for increased specialization in language learning.

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1 Dr. Nurdin Noni, M.Hum, Dosen Bahasa Inggris FBS UNM Makassar
The demands of brave new worlds were due to the vast development in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale at the end of the Second World War era. This development promoted a world unified and ruled by two forces, namely technology and business which strongly triggered a demand for an international language. English was the language dominantly used in science, technology, and business in the post-world war, and since then English teaching became big business.

The revolution in linguistics, as the second reason was signified by the growing demand for English courses to cater learners’ specific needs. The way of teaching emphasizing the rules of English usage or defining the formal features of language usage was shifted to discovering the ways in which language is actually used in real communication. Widdowson in Hutchinson and Waters (1987) found that the language we speak and write varies considerably, and in a number of different ways, from one context to another. In English language teaching, this implied that there are important differences between one discipline and another, for example business English and English for science and technology.

These ideas married up naturally with the development of English courses for specific groups of learners. Therefore, the need of English teaching for certain group of learners could be identified by analyzing the linguistic characteristics of their specialization. The third reason, focus on the learner, was pointed out to be one of the characteristics of origin of ESP. At this point, learners were seen to have different needs and interests, which would affect their motivation to learn. This would also contribute to the rise of ESP. Learners would tend to be competent in communicating in English according to their field of study.

For broader understanding, Richard et al (1987) define language for specific purposes (LSP), as second or foreign languages used for particular and restricted types of communication (e.g. for medical reports, scientific writing, air-traffic control) and which contain lexical, grammar, and other linguistic features which are different from ordinary language. Sinclair in MCDonough and French (1981) further outlines that LSP is not a branch or specialized interest. It is simply language teaching of any kind placed in relation to its context. This implies that LSP is an approach to language teaching, not a subset of something else. In the implementation of language teaching, it is important to decide whether a learner or group of learners want to learn a language for general purposes or for specific purposes.

In relation to the teaching of English as foreign language, Richards et al (1987) define ESP as the role of English in a language course or program of instruction in which the content and aims of the course are fixed by the specific needs of a particular group of learners. These specialized needs are of interest of teaching ESP which in turn enables, for example, a technician student to read and work from a technical manual, a chemist to participate in an international conference.

ESP also deals with communicative as well as linguistic competence. Moreover, ESP puts more emphasis on the learner’s learning than on the teacher’s teaching. In relation to this, Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) put forward that ESP has its basis in an investigation of the purposes of the learner and the set of communicative guide to the de topics and ther and requirenments Hutchinson learning, that ‘approach’ not which all dcli learning proce: study (EAP: E for Occupation general nature EST (English Economics), a sub-divisions more special; English for B of English fo Civil Engineer English Of c category.

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The development in English courses since early 1960s is signified by the needs. The way of formal features of language is actually triggered by the teaching, this is a formal language process. Richards et al. (1987) pointed out that ESP is an approach to language learning, that is based on the learners need, thus ESP must be seen as an approach not as a 'product'. ESP, then, is an approach to language teaching in which all decision as to content and method are based on the learners' reason for learning process. ESP is divided into two main types, namely English for academic study (EAP: English for academic purposes) and English for work (EOP: English for Occupational purposes). It is also possible to distinguish ESP courses by the general nature of the learners' specialties. They are three large categories, namely EST (English for Science and Technology), EBE (English for Business and Economics), and ESS (English for Social Sciences). Each of the kinds has its own sub-divisions which have more specialized purposes. EBE, for example, can be more specialized into English for Economics, English for Finance and Banking, English for Business and commerce, and English for secretary. EST may consist of English for Medical Study, English for Computer Science, and English for Civil Engineering. ESS can be broken down into English for Psychology and Law English. Of course, there are more specialized subdivisions for each of the ESP category.

Dudley-Evans and St John (in Simin, 2012) put forward a definition of ESP as a modification of Streven's. They claim that ESP can be identified by its absolute characteristics. They further explain that with absolute characteristics, ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learners; ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves; and ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities. With Variable Characteristics, ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines; ESP may use, in specific teaching situation, a different methodology from that of general English; ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level; ESP is generally designed for intermediated or advanced students; Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

The Development of ESP

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP has undergone four main phases of development with a fifth phase starting to emerge. The five phases are as follows:

Phase 1: Register Analysis

The foremost idea initiating the register analysis is that in different situations and circumstances people will use different registers. Registers are specific terms or vocabularies which vary according to the situations. This analysis is often used to refer to vocabulary and grammatical features of these registers. The key object
was the pedagogic matter of promoting the ESP training more relevant to learners' needs. This analysis is only focused on the sentence level. Hence, the teacher should make a prior exploration to get information on the specific terms or vocabulary and grammatical features the learners need for their language training. To set up an English training for a group of law students, for example, a teacher should make an analysis to the situations that the learners usually experience or meet in order to get data about the registers they need.

Phase 2: Discourse or Rhetorical Analysis

This analysis moved up to the level above the sentence that is the relationship between the meaning potential of sentences and the realized meaning of utterances in context. It means that the focus was on the level of how sentences were combined in discourse to produce a particular meaning. This approach aims at making the learners become more efficient readers, by which they are aware of the fundamental structure of a text and the way in which language is organized to create the structure.

In a broader understanding, an article in the website of All About Linguistics of the University of Sheffield defines Discourse Analysis as a field of the social sciences that includes a wide variety of different sociolinguistic approaches. It aims to study and analyze the use of discourse in at least one of the three ways stated, namely language beyond the level of a sentence, language behaviors linked to social practices, and language as a system of thought, and more often than not, all of them at once. Analysis of discourse looks not only at the basic level of what is said, but takes into consideration the surrounding social and historical contexts.

Phase 3: Need Analysis or Target Situation Analysis

The concept underlying this kind of analysis is that the main point of an ESP training is to enable learners to perform effectively in a target situation, that is, the situation in which the learners use the language they are learning. Therefore, the ESP course design should be carried out by identifying the target situation and then doing an analysis of the linguistic features of that situation. These identified features will underlie the ESP course syllabus. In short, the target situation analysis apparently placed learner needs at the center of the course design process. This process is commonly known as needs analysis. According to Iwai et al. in Songhori (2008), the term needs analysis generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information, especially about the target situation, that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of learners.

More explanation of this analysis can be found in Robinson (1980: 27-29), Widdowson (1984), and Richterich and Chancerel (1978).

Phase 4: Skills and Strategies

The main idea of this approach is that there are common reasoning and interpreting process, which allow us to drag meaning from discourse in language use. Therefore, the focal point should rather be on the main interpretive strategies, which facilitate the student to deal with the surface forms. An emphasis on specific...
relevant to learners' knowledge. Hence, the teacher should introduce specific terms or concepts to the learners. For example, a teacher might explain the concept of subject registers. This approach aims to make the learning process more engaging and relevant to learners, and to ensure that the target language is taught in an authentic context.

About Linguistics

The field of the social linguistic approaches. It is said that the three basic principles of language learning, which will underpin a learning-centered methodology:

1) Second language learning is a developmental process. Learners use their existing knowledge to make the new information comprehensible. Their existing knowledge is an important factor in the success or failure of learning, and the good teacher will accordingly try to exploit what the learners already know. Incorporating the existing knowledge into the target language will downgrade the learners' learning burden or load. There is no need for learners to think hard about the topic or content of discussion. They will just focus and concentrate on the target language use. In other words, the learners do not need to work hard to grasp their understanding about, for example a reading text, because it tells about something they already know.

2) Language learning is an active process. It is not adequate for learners just to learn the necessary knowledge to make things meaningful, they must also use that knowledge. It is the language processing activity which is the important factor.
factor. Therefore, a teacher of English as a foreign language should bear in mind that learners should be encouraged to actively practice the target language they are learning. The teacher has to create situations which require learners to actively participate in the English language learning process.

3) Language learning is a decision-making process. In the traditional classroom the teacher made all the decisions. In other words, all aspects, such as teaching strategies, modes of interaction, materials, teaching aids, and evaluation, were entirely determined by the teacher. This was to avoid all possibilities of error. However, in communicative teaching, the learners have their part as decision-makers. The teachers should involve learners in decision making. He/she needs to ask for learners’ suggestion to be considered to include in learning process.

4) Language learning is not just a matter of linguistic knowledge. The main problem of second/foreign language learning is the mismatch between the learners’ conceptual/cognitive capacities and their linguistic competence. This is a particular problem in ESP where the learners’ knowledge of their subject matters may be of a very high level, while their linguistic knowledge is almost zero or of a low level.

5) Language learning is not the learners’ first experience with language. Every second or foreign language learner is already communicatively competent in one language, at least their mother tongue.

6) Learning is an emotional experience. The main point should be to promote the positive emotions by, for example:

- a. Applying pair and small group activities to build on existing social relationships;
- b. Providing students time to think and largely avoiding unnecessary pressure;
- c. Putting more emphasis on the process of getting an answer and less on the product.

7) Language learning is to a large extent incidental. We can learn a language incidentally, while we are actually thinking about something else. In problem solving approach, the problems to be solved are not necessarily language problems. The main point is that the problems should require the students to use the target language and thereby to fix the language into the matrix of knowledge in their minds.

8) Language learning is not systematic. Learners learn by systematizing knowledge, but the process itself is not systematic. Putting information in a systematic way will not guarantee learning. The learners must create an internal system.

English for Academic Purposes (facts in Indonesia).

English for Academic purposes (EAP) is a branch of ESP which is defined as teaching English with the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in that language. Hyland (2006), in this viewpoint, outlines that EAP is a broad term comprising all aspects of academic communicative practice such as: pre-tertiary, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching (from materials development to lectures and classroom tasks), classroom interactions (from teacher feedback to tutorials and group activities) and grant proposal writing assignment, doctoral, oral or EA. Pinvolve courses. It covers English for (Academic Purposes (ELP),

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and group activities), research genres (from journal articles to conference papers and grant proposals), student writing (from essays to academic papers and final writing assignments/theses), and administrative work (from course documents to doctoral oral defenses). Based on the discipline category, Bojović elaborates that EA involves pre-experience, simultaneous/in service and post-experience courses. It consists of English for (Academic) Science and Technology (EST), English for (Academic) Medical Purposes (EMP), English for (Academic) Legal Purposes (ELP), and English for Management, Finance and Economics;

As for in Indonesia, some evidence in regards with the teaching of English for Academic Purposes are found as in the following:

1) Crooks (1996) presents that the challenges of ESP teaching in Indonesia are mainly remaining on teacher and material design. Some suggestions are conveyed that if the courses in ESP were specially organized based on the needs of the students than it would be more effective. In addition to that, more diverse and greater varieties of materials should be offered to cater the different needs of the learners.

2) Nababan (1993) reiterates in his research that again material in ESP is sometimes designed not based on the needs of specific groups, moreover, vocabulary which is considered as the main register in this course quite often is being abandoned. Therefore, to reach the learning target, the initial step to trigger the learners should be started from vocabulary teaching to stimulate them to be more familiar with certain context prior to the real ESP teaching.

Challenges and prospects

Some challenges which have been explained above could be eliminated by fostering some techniques which are feasible and effective to apply in Indonesia. By referring to the first evidence illustrated by Crooks (1996) in his works that material should be carefully designed based on the learners’ needs.

Apart from that, the existence of technology is for sure bringing some effects into the ESP teaching and learning process. New technology means new register to be fully comprehended both by teachers and learners. There should be a kind of synchronization among the groups who involve in this subject.

However, the prospects are very promising as this subject is undoubtedly required to support the students’ achievement in a more specific way and it is believed that this subject to be able to lead them into brighter career plans.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The concluding remarks can be highlighted in the following points:

1) ESP puts more emphasis on the learner’s learning than on the teacher’s teaching.

2) The development of ESP has been marked by five approaches, namely register analysis, rhetorical or discourse analysis, target situation analysis or need analysis, skills and strategies, and learning-centered approach.

3) There is nothing specific about ESP methodology. The principles which underlie good ESP methodology are the same as those that underlie sound ELT methodology in general. Similarly, at the level of techniques the ESP
teacher can learn a lot from General English practice. In other words, the classroom skills and techniques acquired in General English teaching can be usefully employed in the ESP classroom.

4) Challenges are still remaining on teacher and material design and the prospects predicted are promising to be able to carry this subject on with some modifications based on the needs.

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