

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: A NEED ANALYSIS ON ENGLISH COURSE IN ISLAMIC BANKING DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at analyzing the type of English skills needed by the students of Islamic Banking (Perbankan Syariah) in IAIN Metro and figuring out the materials relevant to their needs. This was a qualitative study involving 25 students and 20 alumni who were working or had ever worked in the banks or BMTs. The data were obtained by employing interviews, questionnaires, documentation, and then analyzed by using Miles and Huberman model. The findings reveal that most of the students have less skill in English. However, the language skill that is needed at most by the students is speaking skill as the communicative skill and vocabulary as the language skill. It is also discovered that there are some problems, such as limited references, lack of supporting facilities, and learning duration that are encountered by both lecturers and the students. Then, referring to their needs, the materials do not yet accommodate the content focus in which the students can learn English related to banking issues. This research recommends that the syllabus should be revised and English should be taught in an integrative approach.

Keywords: English for Specific Purpose, Islamic Banking, need analysis

INTRODUCTION

Among a number of factors that need to be paid attention in generating the working competence of university alumni, a foreign language is a skill which plays an important role in the various fields of works. In the global economy, English language proficiency greatly plays a key role to professionals at both the national and the international level (Rajprasit et al., 2014). Today, English is considered a vehicle which enables its speakers to take part in the international market (Lauder, 2008). Therefore, the ability to use English both actively and passively very frequently becomes one of the requirements to work in a company. In other words, English ability can be a basis that eases people to find a job.

Since the purposes of learning English are varied from person to another person, there is a so-called English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to suit English with the needs of learners. For this situation, need analysis (NA) is undoubtedly necessary. The emergence of need analysis starts to be well-known in the mid-1970s when the learner-centered approach communication focused is chosen to teach a foreign language (Boroujeni & Fard, 2013). Furthermore, in managing foreign language program, need analysis is a

vital aspect of material development (Tzotzou, 2014).

The field of banking, like many other fields, often requires English ability when selecting candidates of employees. A study concludes that there is a need for English among the bank employees. Therefore, it is urgent to design a syllabus that matches the students' needs (Mohammadzadeh, Barati, & Fatemi, 2015). For those students of Islamic banking, English materials should contain not only linguistic aspects but also authentic materials that are possibly used to support their future jobs.

Wu and Chin (2010) have highlighted that although English is not the means of oral communication in their daily work setting, employees in the financial industry prefer to take training courses which help them develop spoken interaction skills, such as business conversation and presentation skills. Furthermore, they find that self-study is a crucial aspect of English learning for banking and finance professionals in Taiwan. Courses and materials designed for these learners should take into account the flexibility and support needed for self-directed learning. More significantly still, in light of the inseparability of content and language inherent in financial English, future ESP work in this domain requires continual collaboration among ELT professionals, applied linguists, and domain experts.

Regarding to the importance of ESP for people working in the field of banking, many researchers have found it essential to spot the light on the big advantages gained by applying the English language in various banks' works as a superb communication tool, electronic dealings language, and global understanding tool between the nations. However, it is not an easy thing to design a specific English material for the students of the banking department. From the research conducted by April (2012), it is found that the students need actual materials relating to their major. These actual materials are expected to encourage the students to study English well. She also finds that the lecturers for the ESP course must be a lecturer from the related department finding.

Trying to prepare ESP materials for the students of Islamic banking department, Masruddin (2016) has designed appropriate English materials for Sharia Economy and Sharia Banking study program. The materials are developed with the task-based approach and communicative approach.

Adewumi and Owoyemi (2012) have stated that there must be a need specification of bankers toward English in order to focus on certain types of English. Moreover, according to them, to equip the employee candidates before they become part of banking works, there must be an English syllabus designed based on the needs of banking workers. To know these needs, a need analysis is an appropriate way and later can be used as a consideration in material development.

At State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Metro, particularly in Islamic Banking department, English syllabus is not yet designed based on the students' lacks, needs, and necessities. As a result, the materials given to the students are often not suitable for the students' expectation. If this problem is not solved soon, English taught to the students will probably not help their future jobs. Due to the essence of foreign language competence, especially English communication skill for the students who study Islamic banking, a need analysis to make a material content is adjusted with the students' needs. Therefore, this research is attempted to know the students' needs on English course by conducting need analysis so that the possibility of inappropriate materials taught to the students of Islamic banking department in IAIN Metro could be minimized.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach with the case study type. The research investigates the problems and the needs of the students majoring Islamic Banking department in IAIN Metro when learning English course. The results of the need analysis research are expected to be a constructive and contributive input for English syllabus and material development in this department. 25 students of Islamic Banking department are involved in this research by interviewing and distributing them some questionnaires. Furthermore, to deepen the result analysis, the researcher also involves 20 alumni of IAIN Metro who are working, and those who have ever worked in the field of banking or Baitul Mal wa Tamwil (BMT), a microfinance institution that operated on the principle of profit sharing, fostering a micro, and small business. The researcher invites the alumni to have the group discussion to talk about their experience and their needs in English when working in the company.

Data collecting methods used in this research are documentation, interviews, and questionnaires.

Documentation is intended to document all of the data necessary both in the form of a soft file and hard file. The interviews and questionnaires are given to the students of Islamic Banking department, the lecturer of English subject, and the alumni of IAIN Metro who are or had ever worked in the field of banking, either sharia or conventional. The alumni who work in the conventional bank are given a chance to deliver their perception of the use of English in banking.

The data are then analyzed by using the explanation descriptively and interpretatively. The descriptive analysis is to describe and analyze the problem and the students' needs in the process of learning English. To analyze the data, the researcher employs Miles and Huberman model that is consisting of some steps namely: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data display, and (4) data verification (Alhojailan, 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of the researcher's interview with the first year students of Islamic Banking department shows that the majority (23 people or 92%) of them positively perceived of the importance of English language for the students of Islamic banking department. They realize that the lessons related to their major are definitely much more important than English. However, they consistently believe that the English language is necessary to learn and to master as well. These findings are in concordance with the result of the research by Arslan & Akbarov (2012). They have stated that:

"Their field courses are more important for them, but this does not change the fact that they know they need to learn the language at least for the sake of their studies as the medium of instruction at university is English. They also think that being able to use the language will be beneficial for them in their future jobs."

In another research, it is recommended that internal motivation of English learners can be the product of an ESP program where the learners' needs, nature of students' majors, and their specialized needs should be seen as the focus of attention (Tabatabaei & Mokhtari, 2014). This shows that the ESP teachers may not deny the existence of the students' perception of it.

Knowing the students' perception is necessary because it is one of the influential factors in learning. According to Lindsay and Norman in Pickens (2005), perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to give birth to a valuable experience of the world. Furthermore, the perception is belief or opinion referring to the motivation in doing something (Lai, 2011). From this definition, it can be understood that whether the motivation is positive or negative, it could be influenced by someone's perception or opinion. It is because motivation is one of the factors that influence learning achievement. As it is stated that the motivation of learners significantly affects their willingness to take part in the process of learning (Al-Othman & Shuqair, 2013). In other words, the rate of student learns a new language depends on their individual motivation. If the students learn a language that they considered important, it will be very much different from those who think that English is not necessary.

This research has found that the reasons why they learn English are different from one another. The diversity of reasons is because of the different perceptions of the students. These reasons are necessary to be known in order to know their learning willingness that further affected to the learning achievement. It can be seen in Figure 1.

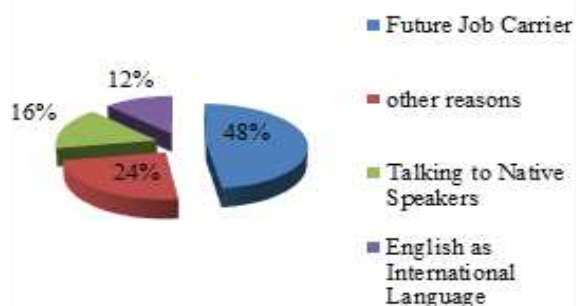


Figure 1 The Reason of Why English is Important

From Figure 1, it could be seen that the international status as one of the most widely spoken languages makes the students sure that English is important to learn. This status of English as an international language is recognized by not only the university students but also people outside of academic lives. Nowadays, many lecturers with non-English background spend part of their time to learn English. Due to its globally widespread, English is called global language (Nguyen, 2008). The status as a global language is definitely reliable because even though not the most widely spoken language, it is the most spread language where it is learned by the majority of countries around the globe.

In relation to the students' reasons for recognizing that English could support their job carriers, this phenomenon has been indeed a wide trend. It is stated in the research by Warschauer in Yang (2010) that many people whose native languages are not English need a foreign language, in particular, English to support and develop their daily works. This is becoming more important when people work in a company with a good reputation. Some necessities involve English; for example, presentation, negotiation, and cooperation with international colleagues. Meaning to say, English clearly has a strategic role since it can connect a group of people with different languages but have a similar intention of doing business together.

Besides the two abovementioned reasons, there are also some students who simply answer that the reason why English is an important language, and therefore they need to learn English. The other few students also answer simply like they want to be able to understand the meaning of English songs or films. Even though these reasons seem in academic, they could give a positive impact on the students' willingness in learning English.

In the process of need analysis, there are three aspects, as elaborated by Hutchinson and Waters that must be paid attention and then investigated. They are lack, necessity and wants. In this case, lack is the students' weaknesses that must be known by the teachers in order to be able to determine the best treatment for reducing the weaknesses (Songhori, 2008). To figure out the students' ability in the English language, the researcher interviews the students of Islamic Banking department and gives them questionnaires. The students are given a chance to describe their English competence based on their own opinions.

The result of the questionnaires shows that according

to the students, they have the low ability in grammar. It is about 22 people (88%) who answer about this ability. The rest, three people (12%) are even on the lower level than the previous numbers. This condition shows that English skill, according to the students' opinions is grammar. After an in-depth interview conducted by the writer, it is known that they feel that their grammar is the worst skill because they are repeatedly faced with grammar materials when learning English subject. In other words, they feel that other skills of English are not as bad as their grammatical competence. This is because they are rarely in a situation where they could learn other skills.

Then, something that attracts the researcher to see is the students' speaking skill. Even though this skill has five people with the criteria 'good' or 20%, it has the most criteria 'very bad', namely 11 students or 44%. Meanwhile, the rest is nine or amounted to 36% have stated that their speaking is in the criteria 'bad'. This phenomenon shows that if the criteria 'bad' and the criteria 'very bad' are accumulated, speaking skills would be the skill with the lowest ability. The third lowest skill is listening to the criteria 'bad' 44% and the criteria 'very bad' 20%. Then it is followed by the fourth lowest skill, namely writing and vocabulary that has same percentage, namely the criteria 'bad' 48% and the criteria 'very bad' 12%. Meanwhile, the rest 40% is in the position of criteria 'bad'. The last level of low ability is reading. This skill can be the best level of the students' ability in English because it has the lowest percentage of criteria 'bad' or 'very bad'. This skill is reading with criteria 'bad' 24% and criteria 'very bad' is 28%. And the rest 48% is in the position of criteria 'good'.

To find out what kind of English skill is needed, the researcher distributes the questionnaires to 20 alumni. The findings show that one of six skills that consist of communicative skill (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and language skill (vocabulary and grammar), speaking skill is in the highest percentage. The number of all skills according to the alumni is speaking 14, vocabulary 12, listening 11, reading 7, writing 4, and grammar 0. The result shows that the students' weaknesses and the alumni's perceptions about which skill is needed most are different. In other words, when referring to the students' weakness, namely grammar, the lecturer should prioritize the teaching of grammar. In contrast, when based on the alumni's experience, speaking skill should be prioritized instead of grammatical skill.

Furthermore, to strengthen the data about language skill that is needed most, the researcher interviews the alumni of Islamic Banking department. There are 20 alumni who described their opinions about what English skill they need the most based on their experience of working in the banking sector. From their experience in the banks or BMTs, the skill that should be mastered by the employee of a bank is speaking skill. This competency is necessary in order to equip them when interacting with foreign customers commonly available in the banks in big cities. Besides, foreign language competence becomes a plus and the bargaining point for the job applicants when they compete to get a job in banking sectors.

To compare the alumni's opinions and the students' opinions, the researcher distributes the questionnaires again to them. The result shows that not only the alumni but also the students who think that speaking is the most necessary skill. It means that they share more or less similar opinion. Uniquely, even though in the result of need analysis their grammar is the lowest ability, the students of Islamic

Banking department expect more to master the speaking skill instead of other language skills. Furthermore, if the opinions of the students and the alumni are accumulated, the percentage of the most needed skill can be seen in Figure 2.

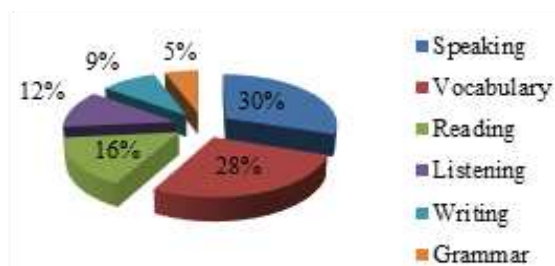


Figure 2 The Percentage of the Most Needed English Skill (Alumni and Students)

Figure 2 shows that among the communicative skills, speaking is the most preferred one. Meanwhile, in the aspect of language skill, the students perceive that they need vocabulary skill more than other skill. This data also shows that those six skills, even though in the different number of percentage, are all needed. As a consequence, the teaching of ESP in Islamic Banking department is needed to accommodate all of the skills in an integrative way (integrative approach). This preference is also in concordance with what is said by alumni who already experience working in the banking sector. Although a bank employee needs to comprehend English language skill, he/she must prioritize speaking skill. This is because oral communication skill is necessary for the world of employment (Ahmad, 2016).

It is true that the teachers do not necessarily always design the language program based fully on the students' needs and wants. Nevertheless, it is important for the teachers to listen and then try to do maximum efforts to accommodate their needs. This is in line with the terminology of learner-centered approach in which the students are seen as a partner in the process of decision making about the selection of materials and the teaching methodology for the sake of learning objective accomplishment. In the context of university level, embedding the employability-related issues into the curriculum should become an aspect that is prioritized (Pegg et al., 2012).

Based on the syllabus components of ESP, the researcher is trying to analyze the existing syllabus in the Islamic Banking department. In this case, the research attempts to get to know the needs of English materials from two sides. First is from the students and alumni's perspectives and the second is from the expert's theory of ESP.

The opinions of the students who are pursuing the bachelor in Islamic Banking are intended to know one of the components in need analysis, namely wants, something the students want from the subject that they learned. To know the students' wants, some questionnaires are given to 20 students. Those questionnaires consist of some statements related to the types of materials that they want when they take English class in Islamic Banking department. Based on the response given by the participants, it is known that 16 (80%) participants have said that the English materials for Islamic banking should also be completed with basic language skill.

Meanwhile, in need analysis, the necessary components must also be fulfilled. Necessary is simply understood as the needs that must be met when they got

a job. To investigate this, the explanation from the alumni is important because they have directly undergone working in the banking sector. Specifically, they already experience the role and the benefit of English in banking workplace. Regarding whether or not to incorporate the basic language skills in learning English for Islamic Banking, the alumni also argued that, in addition to wanting to gain knowledge of English for banking, they are also assessed the basic ability (listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.) that cannot be released from their English module. The next challenge is to decide the components of English materials for Islamic Banking correctly. The components should meet the students' need and at the same time is based on the empirical theories.

The design and development of English subject matter for ESP that the researcher used in this research is according to the concept developed by Hutchinson and Waters as cited by Widodo and Pusporini (2010). In the model, four elements must exist in ESP material; first is input, containing text, dialogue, recording, diagrams, or forms of communicative material based on needs that have been analyzed first. This input is intended to provide stimulus materials for activities, new forms of language materials, the proper use of language, themes/topics for communication, and opportunities for learners to use the knowledge learned.

Second is the content focus that contains non-linguistic content (specifically the field in which the learners are involved) should be explored to create a useful communicative atmosphere in the classroom activities. The third is language focus. Since the ultimate goal of ESP teaching is to use the target language, learners should be given the opportunity to use the language into various activities, learning how it can be used in real conditions, and then practicing all of them simultaneously. And the last is the task. The main purpose of language learning is the use of the language itself. Teaching materials that are designed and developed should lead to communicative tasks in which the language skills and lecture materials that have been studied can be linked simultaneously to a unit.

Based on the teaching materials mentioned model, the researcher adapts it to the design of English material for undergraduate students of Islamic Banking. It can be seen in Figure 3.

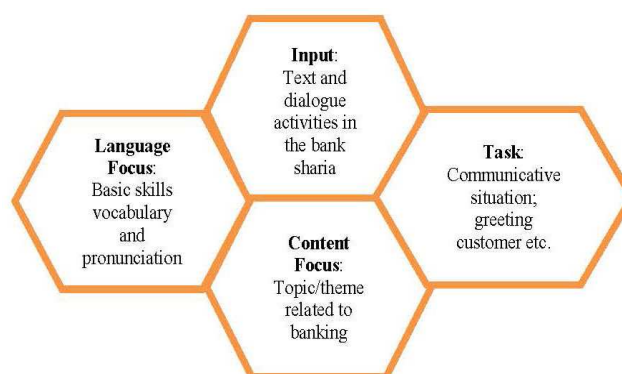


Figure 3 The Design of Material Development for Banking Adopted from Hutchinson and Waters in Vičić (2011)

The components should be included in every chapter or unit in the module used in English classes in Islamic Banking department. This also needs the support of policies to make sure the availability of the components in the

syllabus and lesson plan. Furthermore, to create the model of material development for English course, it is necessary to conduct further and more in-depth research, in particular, Research and Development (R and D) research by which the lecturer could design and directly implement the material development in his classes.

Adjusting course materials should start with syllabus arrangement. This is meant to anticipate the possibility of the shifting of lecturers to teach ESP because sometimes when the lecturer is changed, the materials are also changed. Here, need analysis is used to identify what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training (Hossain, 2013).

Course material is very important because it has something to do with teaching method. The sequence of instructional activities is needed so that the delivery of teaching materials can be submitted systematically and the learners can easily follow the content of the material provided by the educator who must master the teaching method (Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung, Chung-Chieh, 2011). Course materials and teaching methods also have possibilities that are related to learning motivation. In the context of English teaching, Wang and Meng (2011) have stated that course books or textbooks undoubtedly contribute to improving the quality of EFL learning and teaching. It is undeniable that textbooks make a positive contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning activities of English for foreign learners.

For the students of Islamic Banking, as the results of this research stated, the emphasis is the ability of communicative skills. Therefore, the subject matter should also lead to material that allows students to be stimulated to practice speaking skills. Some materials that can be used as an alternative teaching English in the Islamic Banking program are; (1) addressing costumers, (2) working with the numbers, (3) telling the time, (4) product identification, (5) describing occupation/bank clerk activities, (6) asking direction to the bank, (7) filling out banking forms, (8) opening a bank account, (9) meeting people at bank, (10) Islamic banking terms, (11) credit financing, (12) the function of money, (13) conventional versus Islamic bank, (14) current issue in the bank. By focusing the material on the ability to speak, such as communicative material related to banking activities, it is expected that students have a wider opportunity to hone their English skills while keeping in mind the context of the world of work that they are likely to attend.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research there are four conditions in the conclusion. The first is in the aspect of communicative skill, speaking skill is most needed by the students of Islamic Banking. Meanwhile, in term of language sub-skill, the majority of the students prefer vocabulary. Second is the teaching of English in Islamic Banking department needs to be done in an integrative approach, namely the incorporation of all language skills in every teaching and learning activity.

The third is the syllabus used in Islamic Banking department mostly contains language sub-skill. Thus, the syllabus still cannot reflect the objectives of Islamic Banking department, one of which is to enable the students of Islamic Banking to criticize various opinions in the

economic, financial, and banking sectors. And the fourth is some of the obstacles faced by both students and lecturers of English for Islamic Banking department are, among other things, limited references to banking English, unavailability of facilities to practice English contextually, and lack of learning duration of banking English.

However, this research has two major limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed. First, this research is still focused on a need analysis and does not cover yet what kind of materials can be effective to teach English to the students of Islamic Banking. Second, the research participants involved in this research are taken from only one university in which might be different from those in the same department other universities.

In light of the above limitations, the future researches are proposed. The research can take benefit of the result of this research, especially the design of English material for Islamic banking. The future research can be in the form of Research and Development (R & D) that aims to disclose whether the design of English material meets the needs of the students in the Islamic banking department. Also, the other qualitative and quantitative research with more broaden samples are necessary to conduct.

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