

THE LEARNERS' NEEDS IN PREPARING THE ENGLISH COURSE MATERIALS: THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Pikir Wisnu Wijayanto

Telkom University

pikirwisnu@tass.telkomuniversity.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to identify the learners' needs based on the students' perspectives as one of the considerations for preparing the English course materials. The identification was done by investigating the students' perspectives which focused on the learners' needs in terms of the English course materials. This research adopted a quantitative method to investigate the learners' needs. The sample of the study consisted of 30 students of Computer Engineering at School of Applied Science in Telkom University. The data were collected and generated from their perspective answers on the questionnaires. The results showed that the main purpose of learners to learn English was for study. Then, the English language content areas should be general English which focused on management or administration. The English language to be used should deal with speaking and vocabulary that emphasized on the presentation skills in a meeting in order to develop their professional communication.

Keywords: Students' perspectives, learners' needs, and English course materials.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are some challenges to prepare the English course materials, such as to identify, investigate, select, create, modify and develop the materials that are suitable for the learners. One of the most challenging issues concerning the English course materials preparation is that the materials should be exclusively or essentially subject specific. It is also difficult to identify subjects that learners need, want and are ready to learn based on their knowledge and experiences they have. Most of them have different needs, wants and interests, and those things could influence their motivation in the learning activity. Therefore, conducting the need analysis (NA) has an essential role in preparing the English course materials. It aims to specify the learners' needs and what they have to do through the medium of English based on some perspectives. In short, NA is basically a *fact-finding* process through which scientists collect the data in order to decide the educational materials as well as the teaching approaches for a given English context.

Need analysis has generated a lot of interest among teachers, students, administrators as the internal stakeholders and graduates or alumni, and industries as the external stakeholders. As the major stakeholders in the learning process, learners are actual receivers of the course and teachers are close as the observers of their students. This is a situation, the demands of a mutual teaching-learning perceptive between them are needed. The need has never been more sensitive than it is now due to the standard shift in the work situation. NA in a broad sense means a tool that is administered to determine the current level of understanding of English language among students and turns out to be a starting point to fulfill what students lack in terms of language usage competence in familiar, unfamiliar and similar industrial situations. Therefore, in preparing the English course materials, it should emphasize the awareness the learner's need. Basturkmen (2010) stated that currently, it is important for all teaching practitioners to investigate the learners' needs as the requirement in order to develop an effective and successful teaching and learning syllabus in various fields of language learning. The preparation of English language course is not only important for encouraging the learners to enhance the specific skill or ability they need, and but also to be fully carrying out the performers in the perspectives they want.

This research aims at identifying the students' perspectives on the learners' needs in order to prepare the English course materials for the students of Computer Engineering study program in School of Applied Science of Telkom University (SAS Tel U). The identification done by investigating the students' perspective which focused on the learners' needs in term of the English course materials. The students of SAS Tel U are required to have English proficiency in relation to communication skills in a global standard with the religious character, and great nationality. It is hoped that they can contribute to the development of the nation directly, and compete in the global market-place. They learn English to gain and develop appropriate knowledge and skills through English in their own subject areas and for their real life. It is hoped that if they have studied English during their universities years, it would be easy for them to adapt to their work conditions and would be easily employed in industries. Therefore, by conducting this research, it is hoped that, it would help the learners to practice the theory during the course for their studies related to communication activities performance and in their real work context as IT specialists in the future. This research may also become "a grand design" which provide the English practitioners such as the teachers, curriculum developers, materials designers, and institutional authorities, with a clearer view of preparing the English course materials, and enable them to rethink the objectives of current English curricula.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

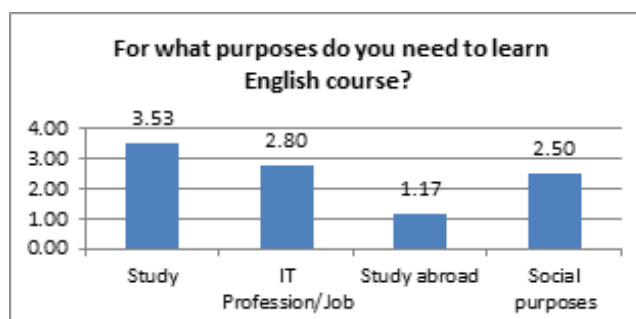
This study adopted a quantitative method to investigate the learners' needs viewed from the students' perspectives to prepare the English course materials. Cohen et al. (2011) recommended the purpose of quantitative research is to test a theory or check a claim. In order to be as objective as possible, the research tries to minimize any effect that their own particular beliefs, values and opinions might have on the information. In this research, the questionnaires used in this research was focused on learners' needs in term of the English course materials that are related to their requirements of English competency that should be mastered by the Computer Engineering students. The sample of the study consisted of 30 Computer Engineering students from School of Applied Science at Telkom University. The data were collected and generated from their perspective answers on the questionnaires

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were several parts of research findings that would be discussed related to the learners' need of English course materials according to the students' perspective, as follows.

3.1 The learners' purposes to learn English course

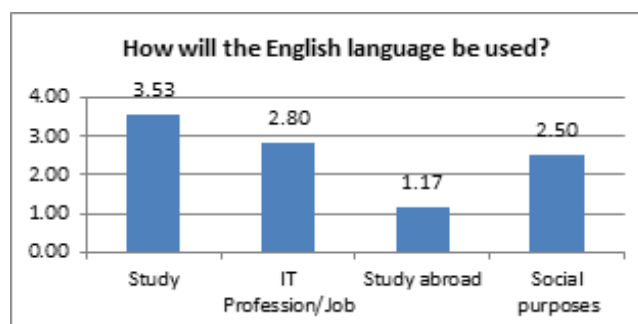
Figure 1. The learners' purposes to learn English course



According to the students' perspective as stated on the figure 1 above, the main purpose for most of the learners to learn English course was for study. It meant that they only learn the English course just to fulfil their obligatory in following the English subjects.

3.2 The English language will be used for learners

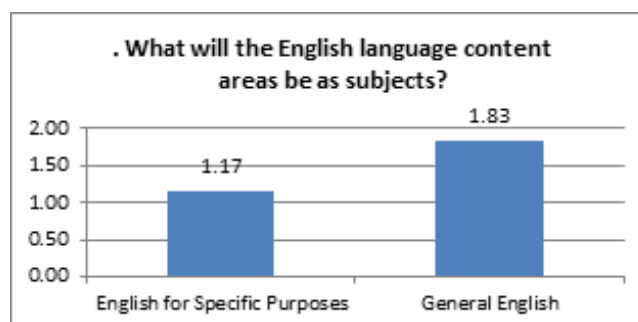
Figure 2. The English language will be used for learners



Similar with the learners' purpose to learn English, the students also gave their perspectives on the English language would be used in the course. They chose study as the main purpose to learn English.

3.3 The English language content areas would be as a subjects for learners

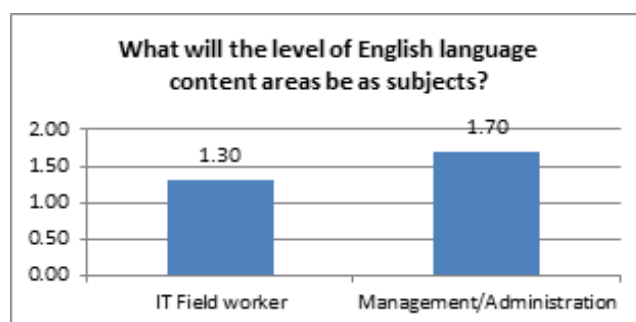
Figure 3. The English language content areas would be as a subjects for learners



According to the figure 3 above, the main priority of English language content areas that would be as subjects for the learners was General English. It was quite astonishing that most of the students had the same perspective on it. It could be stated that even they work as the IT specialists in the future, it didn't mean that they had to be given the English for Specific Purposes related to their major in IT field as the main priority. Generally, in the work setting, English for general communication is needed more in order to support the job or profession.

3.4 The level of English language content areas would be as a subjects for learners

Figure 4. The level of English language content areas would be as a subjects for learners



Meanwhile, in term of the level of English language content areas that would be as a subjects, most of the students had a perspective that, they learn and use general English as a subject for their course which the level of language in the management or administration. It was in line with the faculty's policy which stated that as the diploma students, they were prepared to support the management in the company after they graduate.

3.5 The English language would be used for learners in term of language skills

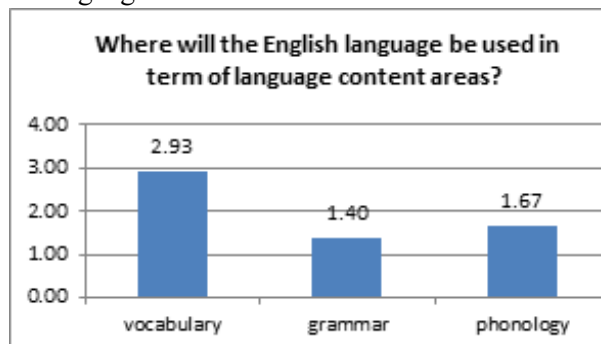
Figure 5. The English language would be used for learners in term of language skills



As illustrated on figure 5, most of the students agreed that speaking was the main priority in the English language skills followed by the listening. It could be concluded that by developing the learners' skills in speaking, it would enhance the learners' fluency in spoken interactions with colleagues or co-workers. It was also in line with the purpose of learning English on figure 1.

3.6 The English language would be used for learners in term of language content areas

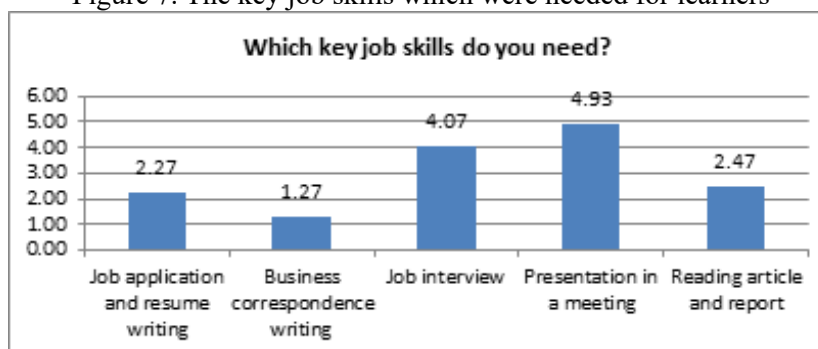
Figure 6. The English language would be used for learners in term of language content areas



Besides choosing the main priority into speaking proficiency in the English language skill, the respondents also chose vocabulary as the main content area of English.

3.7 The key job skills which were needed for learners

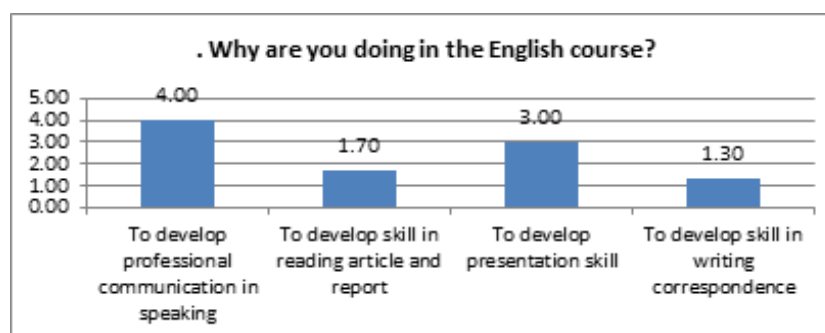
Figure 7. The key job skills which were needed for learners



Related to the key job skills which were needed by the learners in the English course materials, most of them chose the presentation in a meeting as the most essential material should be delivered in the English course. This key job skill was support the productive skill in terms of speaking they chose previously.

3.8 The reasons of learners doing in the English course

Figure 8. The reasons of learners doing in the English course



According to the respondents, the main reasons of the learners doing in the English course was to develop their professional communication in speaking. It was also in line with the respondents' previous answer, that the speaking was the main priority of language skill that should be used in the English course, in order to enhance the learner's ability in English communication.

4. CONCLUSION

This research aimed at identifying the students' perspectives as the internal stakeholders on their needs in order to prepare the English course materials. The research results showed that according to the respondents, the main purposes of learners to learn English were for social purposes. Then, they chose the general English as the main priority subjects of English language content areas for learners, and it should focus on management or administration. They also gave their choice to the English language be used. It should only deal with speaking and vocabulary which emphasized on the presentation in a meeting to develop their professional skill in communication.

This research findings and discussion could become "a grand design" and provide English practitioners with a clearer view of preparing the English course materials and rethinking the objectives of current English curricula, by involving the external stakeholders as the users of the students in the future. For further researchers, it is better to conduct the follow-up qualitative interviews of representative to more deeply explore quantitative results. In short, the qualitative findings would be used to describe, explain, refine, clarify, extend or argue quantitative results.

5. REFERENCES

- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes World Journal*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Cohen, L., Mannion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education (7th ed.)*. Routledge Falmer: London
- Dana. (2015). Communicative Strategies in Teaching English for Specific Purposes World Journal. *The Proceedings of the International Conference European Integration - Between Tradition and Modernity*. Tîrgu-Mureş Romania, 22-23 October 2015, pp. 642 – 647.
- Mansouri, A. N. H. (2010). Teaching English to Students of Science and Technology. *Sino-US English Teaching Journal*, 7 (2), pp. 17-29.
- Tavakoli, H. (2012). *A Dictionary of Research Methodology and Statistics in Applied Linguistic*. Rahnama Press.
- Wijayanto, P. W. (2017). Graduates' Perspectives on the Learners' Needs to Prepare the English

Course Materials. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*,
5 (1), 57-68.